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BAKALÁRSKA PRÁCA

*Rozprávač v novele Muž, který spí Georgesa Pereca a jej
filmové adaptaci*

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*Narrator in novel Un homme qui dort by Georges Perec and its
film adaptation*

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ABSTRAKT

Táto práca sa venuje analýze a komparácii rozprávača v novele *Un homme qui dort* Georgesu Pereca a rovnomennej filmovej adaptácii Bernarda Queysanna s ohľadom na naratívne sprostredkovanie tém prázdnoty, radikálneho odmietania a existenciálnej voľby hlavného hrdinu. K danému zámeru je spočiatku pristupované prostredníctvom interpretácie ústredných tém vychádzajúcich z diela Martina Bubera. Prostredníctvom rozboru kompozičných elementov novely sa táto práca ďalej zaoberá naratologickou analýzou rozprávača v druhej osobe (opierajúc sa predovšetkým o koncepty autoriek Fludernik a Kacandes), ktorého chápe ako naratívny aspekt významne tvarujúci sprostredkovanie ústredných tém novely a amplifikujúci ich pôsobivosť. Práca s rozprávačom v novele je porovnávaná s prácou s rozprávačom vo filmovej adaptácii, sústrediac sa na formálne, resp. dramaturgické zmeny a špecifiká filmového jazyka, vychádzajúc z konceptov Bordwella a Gunninga. V závere sú zistené skutočnosti reflektované z naratologických a literárnovedných perspektív

ABSTRACT

This bachelor's thesis focuses on comparative analysis of narrator with regard to mediation of themes of emptiness, radical refusal and existential choice in the novel *Un homme qui dort* by Georges Perec and its film adaptation by Bernard Queysanne. For thematic interpretation, this thesis utilizes concepts from Jewish philosopher Martin Buber. Moreover, this thesis analyses the second person narrator from narratological perspectives, deriving significantly from the works of Fludernik and Kacandes. The narrator is viewed as an aspect of fiction which significantly shapes the mediation of themes central to the novel and amplifies their appeal. Treatment of narration in the novel is compared to the treatment of narration in its film adaptation, focusing, foremostly on changes in dramaturgy and specific aspects of film language, utilizing the concepts of Gunning and Bordwell. In conclusion, the outcome of the research is interpreted from perspectives of narratology and comparative literature.

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1. ÚVOD

Táto práca skúma, do akej miery sa naratívne aspekty (primárne figúra rozprávača) podieľajú na tvorbe, resp. artikulácii ústredných tém radikálneho odmietania, existenciálnej voľby a prázdnoty v novele *Un homme qui dort* Georgesca Pereca a v jej rovnomennom filmovom spracovaní, na ktorom sa Perek podieľal spolu s režisérom Bernardom Queysannom. Novelu možno považovať za jeden z najzaujímavejších naratívov napísaných v druhej osobe singuláru. Filmová adaptácia je pozoruhodná nielen spôsobom, akým sa vyrovnáva s experimentálnou povahou naratívu, ale i konštantnou prítomnosťou autora počas celej doby vzniku snímky. Zo scenáristického hľadiska ide o vzácny prípad možnosti (takmer) dokonale naplniť autorskú víziu, precízne pracovať s hľadaním prostriedkov pre remediáciu literárneho experimentu a testovať limity filmového jazyka. Táto snaha však nie je motivovaná primárne formalisticky, ale hľadaním vhodného jazyka pre vyrovnávanie sa s náročnou, no formatívnou osobnou skúsenosťou. Táto práca by teda mohla slúžiť scenáristom, ktorí sa vo svojej tvorbe snažia zobrazovať komplexné stavy ľudskej existencie a odkázať ich smerom k preskúmaniu jednej z možných ciest vyjadrenia.

Vo svojej práci vychádzam pri analýze novely z naratológie, konkrétne z textov autoriek Fludernik a Kacandes, pri analýze tematických aspektov sa opieram o prácu filozofa Martina Bubera. Pri analýze filmovej adaptácie vychádzam z teoretických konceptov Gunninga a Bordwella. Komparácia novely a filmovej adaptácie (zohľadňujúca, že autor predlohy je i scenáristom) umožňuje vnímať adaptačný proces v kontexte aktov voľby, ktoré sa najmä v prípade takto radikálneho naratívu a minimalistickej a experimentálnej filmovej adaptácie zásadne podieľajú na formovaní výslednej podoby a zosilnení pôsobivosti naratívu v jeho vizuálnej podobe.

Perec sa narodil v Paríži v roku 1936, ako jediný syn Iceka Judka a Cyrly (Schulewitz) Peretz, ktorí emigrovali do Poľska v dvadsiatych rokoch 20. storočia. Icek počas druhej svetovej vojny narukoval do francúzskej armády a zomrel na následky poranenia šrapnelom. Cyrila zahynula v koncentračnom tábore, pravdepodobne v Auschwitzu, okolo roku 1943. Perek svoje spomienky na rané detstvo a vojnové roky, ktoré strávil ako utečenec vo Francúzskych Alpách, zaznamenal v niektorých kapitolách *W anebo Vzpomínka z dětství* (Perec, 2016b). Vzdelával sa na štátnej internátnej škole v Etampes, neskôr na Lyceé Henri-IV, ďalej

v Sorbonne, kde dva roky navštevoval kurzy histórie a sociológie, avšak bez výraznejšieho entuziazmu. Dva ruky slúžil na vojne v parašutistickom oddieli, bol však vylúčený z aktívnej služby v Alžírsku. Po roku strávenom v Sfaxe (v Tunisku) a krátkom období, kedy pracoval ako prieskumník trhu, sa Perecovi v roku 1962 podarilo získať pozíciu archivára v medicínskom výskumnom laboratóriu v Paríži, kde zotrval do roku 1979. Zomrel v marci 1982 po krátkej chorobe (Bellos, 1995).

Perec sa rozhodol stať spisovateľom už v ranej adolescencii, no okrem niekoľkých recenzií a esejí o literatúre a filme až do tridsiatky nepublikoval. Jeho prvotina – *Les Choses* (v českom preklade *Věci*, Alena Novotná, Rubato, 2017a) ho takmer okamžite preslávila, o rok neskôr nasledovala novela *Un homme qui dort* (v českom preklade Lukáša Prokopa *Muž, který spí*, Rubato, 2016a), ktorá sa stretla s oveľa vlažnejšou odozvou. Perecove rané novely zdanlivo zdieľajú mnoho vonkajších znakov s avantgardnou fikciou 60. rokov 20. storočia, označovanou ako “nový román”. Perecovým novelám tiež chýba pevná naratívna štruktúra a silno vybudované charaktery, ale práca so znakmi, ktoré na prvý pohľad patria k dobovému štýlu, sa u Pereca výrazne odlišuje od postupov Alaina Robbe-Grilleta alebo Michela Butora a otvára novú, omnoho prístupnejšiu kapitolu v histórii románu.

Muž, který spí je vyčerpávajúcim prieskumom ľahostajnosti, vyplývajúcim z intenzívnej, zároveň čiastočne banálnej kontradikcie medzi pocitom prítomnosti a neprítomnosti vo svete. *Věci* i *Muž, který spí* vznikli predtým, než sa Perec dostal do kontaktu so skupinou *Ouvroir de littérature potentielle* (OuLiPo), teda predtým, než *OuLiPo* bolo známe mimo úzky okruh svojich vlastných členov. A hoci *Muž, který spí* nie je vystavaný podľa prísnych formálnych princípov ako Perecov najslávnejší román *Život návod k použití* (Rubato, 2017b), ide o vysoko remeselný, konštruktivistický text. Zárodok novely možno nájsť v jednej z mála zachovaných juvenílií – *Le Fou*, ktorá vznikla v roku 1956, v období, kedy Perec navštevoval psychoanalytické sedenia. Jeden z epigramov je prevzatý z Descartových *Meditací o první filosofii* – *O Bohu, o tom, že existuje*,¹ ktoré zrejme Perec študoval pod Jeanom

¹ “Zavřu nyní oči, zacpu si uši, nechám stranou všechny smyslové vjemy, vymažu ze svého myšlení také všechny představy tělesných věcí nebo (ježto je to sotva možné) je alespoň jako prázdné a nepravdivé nebudu vůbec brát v potaz – budu oslovovat jen sebe a prohlížet si sám sebe zevrubněji, a pokusím se tak poněmáhlu poznat se více a seznámit se sám se sebou důvěrněji.” (Descartes, 2003, s. 35).

Duvignandom v *classe de philo*.² Prvé stránky *Le Fou* sú pastišom Joyca, reprezentujúce chaotický prúd vedomia šialenca, nasledujúce sekcie sa zmenia na lucídne šialenstvo vedeckej správy. Výsledkom výskumu v oblasti sedemsto faktorov okamžitého formovania myšlienky (označené symbolom X) je súbor aforizmov.³

Muž, ktorý spí, narozdiel od tejto ranej, tematicky blízkej novely, sa však zaoberá šialenstvom iba minimálne. Ústredná premisa priamo vychádza z citovanej Descartovej pasáže – človek musí vyčistiť svoju myseľ od kontingentného poznania, aby odhalil, čo je pravdivé. “Descartes [...] objavil jasný dôkaz Božej existencie, Perecovi sa k ničomu podobnému dôjsť nepodarilo.” (Bellos, 1995, s. 125) Názov novely odkazuje na Proustovo *Hľadání ztraceného času*. Novela je konštruovaná podľa šiestich vzorov (Kafka, Melville, Lowry, Proust, Le Clézio, Joyce), pričom zachytáva intenzívnu depresívnu epizódu, ktorou Perec prešiel okolo dvadsiateho roku života. K téme depresie sa vracal prostredníctvom sebareferencie a adaptácie, najprv vo filmovom spracovaní v roku 1974, neskôr v roku 1987 v 52. kapitole románu *Život návod k použití*. Posledná variácia obsahuje postavu menom Grégoire Simpson, aludujúcu na Kafkovho Gregora Samsu (*Proměna*). Simpson sa jedného dňa zobudí, uvedomí si, že život sa mu javí neznesiteľný novým spôsobom a čoskoro zomrie skokom zo železničného mosta. *Muž, ktorý spí* však nekončí v beznádeji, ale na Place Clichy, čakaním, kým prestane pršať. Hrdina vykonal krok smerom k prebudeniu, je však otázne, aká dlhá bude nasledujúca cesta a či povedie naspäť do sveta živých. Novela sa v závere dostáva iba na hranicu, za ktorou sa rozprestiera vôľa pokračovať (Bellos, 1995, s. 258). Koniec je nielen literárne, ale i morálne vágny. Perec nielen umožňuje, ale dokonca “vyžaduje”, aby čitateľ prevzal zodpovednosť za interpretáciu diela. (Preto ho, i napriek autorovmu ateizmu možno interpretovať i spirituálne).

² Jean Duvignaud bol absolvent filozofie, ktorý učil Pereca v *classe de philo* v Etampes. Žiaci si ho pamätali predovšetkým preto, že ku študentom pristupoval akoby ich literatúra, politika, súčasné dianie a divadlo fascinovali rovnako, ako fascinovali jeho. Žiaci sa určite vzdelali vo filozofii, čo ich však fascinovalo oveľa viac boli Duvignaudove digresie – o pripravovaných hrách na Parížskych javiskách, výstavách, ktoré práve navštívil, nové čísla literárnych časopisov, klebety o spisovateľoch, umelcoch, intelektuáloch, o ktorých rozprával, akoby boli jeho priateľmi. Perec bol očarený, a zozbieral dostatok odvahy, aby svojmu učiteľovi prezradil, že má tiež sen stať sa spisovateľom. (Bellos, 1995, s. 117)

³ Reader will kindly note their poetic strength and metaphysical lucidity: Look at stars/ My (freedom)/ Rage for life, thunder of war, surname(sic)/Where does the extra-ordinary end?/Who is to blame? You MUST live BY night THE sun kills (those were his last words) (Perec, 1956, citované podľa Bellos, 1995, s. 125)

Novela je celá písaná v druhej osobe singuláru, pričom pre formu *tu* angličtina nemá ekvivalent. Zatiaľ čo *vous* (plurál) je slušným a formálnym spôsobom oslovenia v druhej osobe vo francúzštine (použitý napr. v Butorovom naratívne jazdy vlakom v *La Modification*), forma *tu* je familiárna, priateľská, za niektorých okolností tiež agresívna. Vo francúzštine taktiež nie je jasné, kto hovorí *tu* komu.

Vo filmovej verzii, na ktorej Perec pracoval spolu s Bernardom Queysannom, je skrátaná podoba novely čítaná na pozadí obrazov mladého muža, potichu performujúceho rutinné úkony sebaoptlačania, popisované v texte. Dochádza tým k rozčleneniu textu do dvoch naratívnych rovín – roviny rozprávača a roviny deskripcie. Voiceover číta ženský hlas, čím sa predchádza implikáciám, že ide o vnútorný monológ mladého muža na plátne, ktoré by mužský hlas bezpochyby vyvolával.⁴ Ide však o hlas vedomia (vo francúzštine podstatné meno ženského rodu *connaissance*), hlas jeho matky, alebo jednoducho hlas odlišný od jeho vlastného? *Muž, ktorý spí* (film, i novela) spája dva bežné póly komunikácie do jednej, autor a čitateľ (hovoriaci a počúvajúci) prestávajú byť oddeliteľní, ale zostávajú odlišní od postavy v texte i na plátne. „Rozprávač príbehu by pokojne mohol byť tým, komu je príbeh hovorený,” navrhuje Roger Kleman v recenzii Perecovej novely (Kleman, 1967, cituje Bellos v úvode k Perecovi, 1990, s. 7). Podľa Klemana je druhá osoba Perecovej novely „gramatickou formou absolútnej osamelosti” (Kleman, 1967, citované podľa Bellosa, 1995, s. 259).

V nasledujúcom odstavci považujem za nutné v krátkosti uviesť porovnanie jednotlivých jazykových verzií, z ktorých som vo svojej práci vychádzala, nakoľko moje úvahy priamo nadväzujú na Klemanov i Bellosov postreh týkajúci sa naratívu v druhej osobe (preto je dôležité, s akými jazykovými verziami som pri analýze pracovala ako so zdrojmi).

Film som po prvý krát videla s anglickými titulkami, pri písaní tejto práce tiež vychádzam predovšetkým z anglickej verzie. Knihu som prvý raz čítala v českom preklade, neskôr som za pomoci slovníka a priateľov – francúzštinárov prešla kľúčové časti vybraných kapitol v originálnej verzii. V tejto práci tak pracujem s kombináciou českého a anglického prekladu podľa toho, ktorý aspekt knihy práve analyzujem. (Pre porovnanie uvádzam prvú kapitolu vo všetkých jazykových verziiach

⁴ Porov. napr. hru Samuela Becketta *That time*, v ktorej je na javisku tvár, na ktorú doliehajú tri jej hlasy, ako príklad konvencie vizuálneho zobrazovania vnútorného monológu (Beckett, 1986, s. 388).

v prílohe.) Pri analýze rozprávača vychádzam z českej jazykovej verzie, nakoľko české ty – Vy je gramaticky ekvivalentné francúzskemu *tu – Vous*, zatiaľ čo angličtina túto kategóriu nerozlišuje.

Táto práca sa zameriava predovšetkým na to, do akej miery zvolené prostriedky prispievajú k artikulácii ústredných tém, resp. pocitov v čitateľovi a divákovi, činia ich sugestívnejšími, príťažlivejšími, umožňujú prenikavejší a hlbší emocionálny ponor a dokážu sprostredkovať radikálnejšie vcítenie. K rozprávačovi v druhej osobe teda nie je pristupované primárne ako k experimentálnej naratívnej stratégii, ale všímam si jeho dialogickosť, sugestívnosť – a potenciál bezprostredne vtiahnuť do naratívu a umocňovať identifikáciu s hrdinom, zároveň tiež ambivalenciu, scudzovací efekt a apostrofickosť ⁵daného typu rozprávača.

⁵ Apostrofa je rétorická figúra (grécke ἀποστρόφειν – otočiť sa preč), v ktorej je vec, miesto, abstraktná vlastnosť, idea, mŕtva alebo neprítomná osoba, akoby bola prítomná a mohla odpovedať. Klasickými príkladmi sú Goldsmithova úvodná pasáž v *The Deserted Village* “*Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain...*”, Antóniov výkrik v Shakespearovom Júliovi Cézarovi: “*O Judgement! thou art fled to brutish beasts*”, a Wordsworthov vášnivý appeal v *London 1812*: “*Milton! Thou should'st be living at this hour...*” (J. A. Cuddon, 2013, s. 66)

2. ĽAHOSTAJNOSŤ, RADIKÁLNE ODMIETANIE A EXISTENCIÁLNA VOLĽBA

Novelu otvára rozhodnutie študenta nepísať test zo sociológie. Miesto toho ostáva vo svojej izbe na Rue Saint-Honoré⁶ v blízkosti chrámu Saint-Roch, kde zvon odbíja dňom i nocou každú hodinu. Študent neodpovedá klopaniu na dvere, listom priateľov, ktoré pod ne vsúvajú, postupne sa odstrihne od svojho sociálneho prostredia, a snaží sa rekonštruovať sám seba v absolútnej izolácii. Izoláciu napĺňa sledom repetitívnych aktivít (pranie ponožiek v ružovom plastovom lavóri, jedenie rovnakého jedla v rovnakej lacnej reštaurácii, čítanie Le Monde od začiatku do konca). Repetícia postupne redukuje všetku ľudskú aktivitu na pláň ľahostajnosti. Hrdina vychádza von po zotmení a krúži mestom, bez cieľa – destinácie, stanovuje si umelé obmedzenia pre svoj *drifting*⁷ (počas jednej pochôdzky napr. musí prejsť okolo všetkých ruských reštaurácií v 17. okrsku, bez toho, aby skrížil niektorú z ciest, ktoré doposiaľ prešiel). Čím ďalej sa dostáva vo svojom výskume odchodu z kolobehu bežného života, resp. výskume života plného ničoty, tým výraznejšie sa okoloídúci, zákazníci v stánkoch s kávou, či tváre odrážajúce sa vo výkladoch obchodov, menia na odpudzujúce monštrá. Hrdina zisťuje, že v ničote nielenže nič nenachádza, ale že ho nič nenaučila, dokonca prestala byť osviežujúca. Vráti sa na Place Clichy a čaká, kým prestane pršať (Bellos, 1995, 248).

Napriek tomu, že Perec sa v novele priznane vyrovnáva s vlastnou depresívnou epizódou, ktorá ho postihla okolo dvadsiateho piateho roku života, redukcii na jedinú tému pri tematickej interpretácii nepovažujem za prínosnú. Sám Perec s režisérom

⁶ Izba popisovaná v *Muž, ktorý spí* je izbou, v ktorej Perec žil na čísle 203 na Rue Saint-Honoré, práca, ktorú hrdina vykonáva v knižnici, je prácou, ktorú Perec vykonával v Arsenale v prvých mesiacoch roku 1957, výlet na vidiek je Percovým výletom do Blévy (Bellos, 1993, s. 247).

⁷ Drifting – francúzsky dérive, patrí spolu s détournement medzi dve techniky na urovanie stavu vecí navrhované Situacionistickou internacionálou. Drifting predstavuje bezcieľne, rapidne perambulácie cieľené na rekonfiguráciu urbánneho prostredia, ktoré umožňuje tvarovať veci tak, aby determinovali situácie, človek, ktorý „driftuje“ namiesto využívania mesta dovolí mestu, aby využívalo jeho. Détournement – únos, subverzia, zneužitie, teda aktívne corollart dérive, podľa Situacionistov sa pravá podstata vecí nevyjavovala v ich správnom, konvenčnom použití, ale jedine v cielenom zneužití. Situacionistická Internacionála, založená Guyom Debordom, ovplyvnila mnohé umelecké smery – lateral thinking Edwarda Bona, výzdobu Hacienda Clubu v Manchestri –, i ich vplyv na Percovo dielo je nespochybniteľný. Perec sa so situacionizmom mohol stretnúť prostredníctvom textov jeho zakladateľa Guy Deborda, alebo Henriho Lefèvrehu. Situacionizmus okrem zrušenia práce presadzoval obnovenie náhľadu na veci za využitia spomínaných techník. (Bellos, 1993, 259). Pre záujemcov o viac informácií je možné nájsť anglický preklad všetkých vydaní žurnálu Situacionistickej Internacionály Internationale Situationiste na nasledujúcej adrese : <http://libcom.org/library/internationale-situationiste>, prípadne v publikácii Ford, Simon. *The Situationist International: A User's Guide* (Black Dog, London, 2004) ISBN 978-1-904772-05.

Bernardom Queysannom pri príprave kampane k filmovej adaptácii novely (viac viz. kapitola Filmová adaptácia) formulovali tému snímky nasledovne: “*subjektom filmu je radikálne odmietanie, mladý muž stojí pred existenciálnou voľbou, tvorcovia sa filmu usilovali dať hudobnú štruktúru, túto štruktúru možno nazvať symfonickou.*” (Bellos, 1995, s. 382). Hoci sa druhé dva body vzťahujú iba k filmovému spracovaniu, u ktorého došlo k viacerým formálnym zmenam v procese tvorby scenára, pri dramaturgii i strihu (opäť viac viz. kapitola Filmová adaptácia), radikálne odmietanie a existenciálna voľba nielen konštituujú tematickú nadstavbu, tak, ako ju interpretoval autor, ale umožňujú nahliadať na novelu zo súčasných východísk a tiež prizmou diel, s ktorými autor mohol, alebo nemusel byť oboznámený (ako inšpiračné zdroje nie sú dohladateľné) a ktoré otvárajú ďalšie interpretačné perspektívy. Nakoľko sa však táto práca zameriava predovšetkým na spojenie medzi využitím naratívnych a kompozičných postupov pre intenzívne sprostredkovanie prežitku radikálneho odmietania bežného kolobehu života a existenciálnej voľby, bude i tematická interpretácia prispôsobená tomuto zreteľu.

Za najprínosnejšiu pre pochopenie ich sprostredkovania pritom považujem interpretáciu naratívu v druhej osobe na základe konceptov, ktoré Martin Buber artikuloval v spise *Ja a ty*. Novela *Muž, ktorý spí* sa odohráva v takmer dokonalej osamelosti, hrdina je jedinou postavou naratívu, na krátky čas sa síce vydáva za rodičmi, tí však majú skôr charakter epizódnych postáv, ku ktorým sa vzťahuje skrz rozhovory a drobnú, až “detskú pomoc” (s matkou sa pri raňajkách rozpráva o jej zdravotných problémoch, otcovi skočí po cigarety). Hrdina sa ocitá uprostred ničoho - dištancuje sa od priateľov, sveta sa zúčastňuje iba ako pozorovateľ, jeho skúsenosť je však recipientovi sprostredkovaná v druhej osobe singuláru. Podľa Bubera (1923, s. 38) ten, kto hovorí “Ty”, síce nezíska “niečo”, ale ocitá sa vo vzťahu. Hrdina je teda napriek svojej osamelosti oslovovaný - je oným “Ty”, povolávaným do vzťahu. Ale s kým? Ani jeho minulé ja, ani hlas matky (nakoľko je jednou z postáv bez akejkoľvek indície, že by mohlo ísť o rovnakú entitu) sa nejavia ako pravdepodobné varianty. Ide o hlas jeho vedomia, alebo iba hlas vedomia odlišného od jeho? Z Perecových poznámok a úvah k novele i filmovej adaptácii sa dozvedáme iba, že hrdina neprehovára sám k sebe, teda, ten, ktorý hovorí “Ty”, je niekto iný, ako ten, komu je “Ty” adresované. Na podobnej, ale obrátenej forme (rozprávanie centrovane okolo zakúšajúceho ja oslovujúce “Ty” - v tomto prípade Božské) sú založené *Vyznania* -

autobiografické spisy sv. Augustína, v ktorých Augustín popisuje svoje skúsenosti z ranného detstva a oslovuje Boha, ako hybnú silu svojich skutkov:

“exceperunt ergo me consolationes lactis humani, nec mater mea vel nutrices meae sibi ubera implebant, sed tu mihi per eas dabas alimentum infantitiae, secundum institutionem tuam, et divitias usque ad fundum rerum dispositas. tu etiam mihi dabas nolle amplius, quam dabas, et nutrienbus me dare mihi vell quod eis dabas: dare enim mihi per ordinatum affectum volebant quo abundant ex te.” (Augustin, 397–398, citované podľa Fludernik, 1993, s. 294)⁸

Perec však neoslovuje Boha, a stotožňovať predpokladaného adresujúceho s Bohom by bolo prehnanou interpretáciou. Podľa Bubera (1923, s. 38) však “Ty” nemusí vzťah vo svojej skúsenosti postrehnúť, pretože ako “Ty” vie viac než ako “Ono”, a dostáva viac než si samo ako “Ono” uvedomuje. Buber v tomto paradoxe nachádza kolísku skutočného života.

Pri *Muž, ktorý spí* takýto náhľad umožňuje pochopiť plnosť a prekvapivú radostnosť pocitu, ktorý prežíva čitateľ v kontraste s prázdnotou, osamením a mizériou protagonistu, čitateľ sa totiž dostáva do role oslovovaného “Ty” - môže teda pociťovať vzťah s adresujúcim, zároveň sa cíti byť oslovovaný a zároveň má k dispozícii možnosť vcítiť sa do popisovanej situácie hrdinu. Prežíva súčasne osamelosť, i blízkosť, plnosť a prekvapivú krásu - drsnú a intenzívnu - pretože sa na ňu naráža na odvrátenej strane vecí - v ničote. Takto možno depresívnu skúsenosť, typickú pocitmi ľarchy, viny, osamelosti, ktorá nepominie, oddelenosti od sveta, ktorých prestal existovať, “stratu seba” transformovať na zážitok s až mystickým potenciálom, ktorý naopak umožňuje nachádzať bližší, intenzívnejší a čistejší vzťah ku skutočnosti a životu, nakoľko vzťah pretrval i do miest a časov, kde sa zdalo, že osamelosť je neporušiteľná. Sprostredkovanie podobnej skúsenosti druhou osobou singuláru ju umožňuje vnímať ako stretnutie s bytím a dianím ako so svojim protajškom - ako s jediným súcnom (Buber, 1923, s.63).

⁸ “Potom ma prijalo potešenie ľudského mlieka. Ale ani moja matka, ani moje dojky nenaplnily si prsia samy, lež Ty, Pane, dával si mi skrze ne detskú potravu podľa svojho ustanovenia a bohatstva podľa povahy vecí. Ty si mi dal pud, aby som nechcel viac, ako si Ty dal, a mojím živiteľkám ochotu, aby mi dávaly, čo si im Ty dal. Lebo zdravý cit im diktoval, aby mi daly to, čo od Teba dostaly v hojnosti.” (Augustín, 397-398,)

Buberove myšlienky objasňujú i deštrukčnosť stavu ľahostajnosti, nakoľko človek, ktorý bezprostredne nenávidí, má k láske bližšie, než taký, ktorý je bez lásky i nenávisť (Buber, 1923, s. 49). Ľahostajnosť je ako stav rezignácie na účasť na živote (i v snahe vyhnúť sa niektorým negatívnyim javom ako napr. povrchnosti) je kľúčovou charakteristikou hlavného hrdinu “*Jsi jen neurčitý stín, tvrdé jádro lhostejnosti, nezúčastněný pohled unikající pohledům. Némé rty, pohaslé oči*” , Perc, 2016, s.26), zároveň však nie je vnímaná ako hrdinova prirodzenosť. Študent sa musí ľahostajnosti, rovnako ako osamelosti, trpezlivosti a mlčanlivosti, naučiť (Perc, 2016, s.46).

Ľahostajnosť je s vývojom naratívu dynamicky interpretovaná i ako koncept- pričom Percova interpretácia korešponduje resp. môže byť obohatená Buberovým výkladom. Ľahostajnosť totiž zároveň “*nemá ani počátek, ani konec: je to neměnný stav, tíha, netečnost, kterou by nedokázalo nic otřást.*” ale aj “*[...] rozpouští jazyk, plete znaky.*”(Perc, 2016, s. 73). Vedie k trpezlivosti, strate očakávaní a volnosti, ale spôsobuje neschopnosť voľby. Prináša nekonečný čas, ale znemožňuje reagovať. (Perc, 2016, s.73). Je negáciou hierarchie, i priorit, nespôsobuje však “netečnost” iba neutrálnosť, oberá subjekt o schopnosť rozlišovať (medzi krásou a škaredosťou) a redukuje ho na pohľad a pohyb (Perc, 2016, s.76). Nadôvažok- je zbytočná “*můžeš chtít nebo nechít, co na tom záleží. Odmítnutí je ale zbytečné. Nezaujatost nic neznamená. Lhostejnost je stejně marná jako hněv. Domníval jses, že proklouzneš [...] ale žádný zázrak, žádný nenadálý objev.Svět se nepohnul a ty ses nezměnil. Jiného člověka z tebe lhostejnost neudělala. Nezemřel jsi. Nezbláznil ses.*” (Perc, 2016, s.111-112) neprináša poznanie, a neumožňuje zmenu.

3. LITERÁRNO- HISTORICKÉ POZADIE NOVELY

Úvodná kapitola, popisujúca proces zaspávania, vychádza z Perecovej práce laboratórneho asistenta André Hugelina, vyhláseného francúzskeho odborníka na spánok, ktorý v roku 1967 pracoval na výskume elektrokortikálnej aktivity spojenej so spánkom a bdením. Kapitola je subjektívnym, ale verným prekladom procesu, ktorý sa počas zaspávania odohráva medzi viečkom, retinou a cerebrálnym kortexom, ktorý Hugelinova téza popisuje s elektrochemickou objektivitou. Perecov jazyk je výsledkom juxtapozície inšpiračných východísk, nakoľko sa opieral i o rozprávanie popisujúce zaspávanie v *Hledání ztraceného času* Marcela Prousta, predovšetkým vetu: „*Spící člověk udržuje v kruhu kolem sebe pořadí hodin, posloupnost let a světů.*” (Proust, 1979, s. 18–19). Pisár Bartleby porazí newyorskú právnu prax rozhodnutím neurobiť nič, Proustov spiaci muž je pánom sveta. Zdvojené volanie po nečinnosti v dielach Hermana Melvilla i Marcela Prousta ukázali Percovi smer, akým by mohol viesť novelu, v ktorej sa pokúšal konfrontovať svoje spomienky na depresiu (Bellos, 1995, s. 191).

Ultimátne nóvum textu spočíva v na prvý pohľad skrytej skutočnosti – korpus Perecovej autobiografickej novely pozostáva z viet z kanonických diel svetovej literatúry – Kafkovho *Procesu*, Melvillovho *Pisáre Bartlebyho*, Danteho *Pekla*, Joycovho *Odysea*. Jednu kapitolu otvára Diderotov *Rameauv Synovec*, veta o prírode pochádza od Lamartina, trochu zlovestný strom zo Sartrovej *Nevolnosti*, veta o slnku pochádza od Le Clézia, množstvo fráz od Rolanda Barthesa. V liste sprevádzajúcom rukopis adresovaný vydavateľovi Helmlemu z roku 1967 Perc napísal: „*Táto kniha sa výrazne líši od Věcí, ale je mi bližšia, určite Vám spôsobí silné bolesti hlavy, vlastne som využil podpory množstva autorov, medzi inými Kafku, Melvilla, Danteho, Joyca... pričom najlepšie je, že si to ani nevšimnete.*” (Perc, 1967, citované podľa Bellos, 1995, s. 259).

Znalosť jednotlivých textov pre recepciu naozaj nie je nutná, prvotný význam naratívu nevzniká kumuláciou, prepájaním, či juxtapozíciou referencií, ale je prítomný v námete, umiestnenie diela do priestoru presne vytýčeného použitými dielami svetovej literatúry však tvorí rovinu, ktorá recepciu významne prehĺbuje a obohacuje, a umožňuje čitateľovi vydať sa na vlastnú cestu hľadania odkazov. Znalosť nie je predpokladom, ale výrazne zvyšuje i možnosť vcítania sa prostredníctvom alúzie na

postavy ako K z *Procesu*, či Písař Bartleby z rovnomenného titulu, alebo Stephen Dedalus z *Odysea*.

Modifikovanú nepriznanú citáciu pozdvihli na úroveň doktríny *détournement* práve Situacionisti, bola obľúbená predovšetkým u autorov ako Ludwig Harig⁹ a Raymond Queneau.¹⁰ “Zatiaľ čo podľa Roberta Klemana je druhá osoba singuláru lingvistickou formou absolútnej osamelosti, koláž možno považovať za formu pokory.” (Kleman, 1967, citované podľa Bellos, 1995, s. 259). Perec o sebe v *Muž, ktorý spí* prehovára prostredníctvom slov iných, čím sa mu od vlastnej skúsenosti podarilo dištancovať. Túto techniku Perec rozvíjal už v novele *Věci*, pričom štýl vychádzal z Flauberta do tej miery, že Perec do novely vkladal skutočné vety z *Citové výchovy*. Modifikovanú nepriznanú citáciu možno taktiež považovať za účinnú metódu prenosu zodpovednosti- koláž prenáša zodpovednosť autora z obsahu viet na ich usporiadanie. Perec tento princíp pre svoju tvorbu objavil ešte skôr, než sa dostal do kontaktu s OuLiPo. (Bellos, 1995, s.250)

Pre účely tejto práce sa však nebudeme ďalej venovať interpretácii komplexného literárnohistorického pozadia textu a uprednostníme prístup k naratívu ako ucelenému tvaru, budeme sa zameriavať na prepojenie a vzájomný vplyv kompozície a premenlivosti naratívnych aspektov textu- teda rozprávača.

⁹ Ludwig Harig bol nemecký spisovateľ a literárny prekladateľ, navštevoval NPEA (Nationalpolitische Lehranstalt- internátna stredná škola, ktorá bola založená po prevzatí moci NSDAP v roku 1933, podobne ako v prípade Adof-Hitler Schulen alebo SS-Junkerschulen šlo o elitné vzdelávacie inštitúcie, ktorá mali vychovávať budúce vedúce osobnosti národných socialistov), v tom čase sa sám autor s národným socializmom indentifikoval- prerod na demokrata reflektoval vo svojich autobiografických textoch *We mit den Wolfen heult, wird Wolf* (Kto s vlmi vije, stane sa vlkom). Pracoval ako učiteľ, od roku 1974 ako spisovateľ na voľnej nohe. Udržoval intenzívny kontakt so Stuttgarter Gruppe a Maxom Bensom, prostredníctvom ktorého sa so svojimi experimentálnymi textami, predovšetkým Permutáciami stal významným predstaviteľom Konkrete Poesie. V 60.rokoch vytvoril Horspiel. https://www.sr.de/sr/home/nachrichten/panorama/schriftsteller_ludwig_harig_tot100.html

¹⁰ Raymond Queneau (1903-1976), bol francúzsky spisovateľ, autor niektorých z najvýznamnejších próz a poézie 20.storočia. Počas surrealistickom odbobia v 20.rokoch 20.storočia nadobudol zmysel pre verbálnu akrobáciu, čierny humor, a subverzívny postoj k autoritám. V roku 1960 založil Ouvroir de littérature potentielle (Oulipo). Medzi jeho najvýznamnejšie diela patrí Zazie v metru (1959, ktorá bola o rok neskôr sfilmovaná), Modrý kvet (1965), Ikarov let (1968). (Britannica,2018) Pre viac informácií viz. stránka o autorovi <https://web.archive.org/web/20080611145025/http://www.queneau.net>

4. ROZPRÁVAČ V DRUHEJ OSOBE SINGULÁRU A KOMPOZÍCIA NOVELY

Bellos uvádza hľadanie vhodnej formy pre zachytenie výzkumu osobnej skúsenosti centrálnej pre autorov pretrvávajúci sebaobraz ako jeden z významných faktorov pre Perecovu voľbu druhej osoby singuláru. (Bellos, 1995). Niekoľko rokov pred vznikom *Muž, ktorý spí*, Perec uvažoval o písaní novely v infinitíve, avšak možnosť zavrhol, nakoľko podobné rozhodnutia považoval iba za literárnu laboratórnu prácu, nie skutočnú literatúru. K otázke rozdielu medzi “skutočnou literatúrou” a literárnym experimentom sa Perec vo svojej tvorbe opakovane vracal.

Zatiaľ čo prvá osoba je pomerne prípustná, pretože čitatelia sú zvyknutí odlišovať skutočného autora od lyrického subjektu, pri recepcii autobiografie môže byť prvá osoba interpretovaná ako alternatívna, limitovaná postava v tretej osobe – napr. Sartrove *Slová*, kde je ja obdobné fiktívnemu hrdinovi Antoinovi Roquetinovi v *Nevlnosti*. Zástupné postavy v tretej osobe si však vyžadujú špecifické pozadie (meno, adresa, história, vzťahy, špecifický spôsob reči, obliekania, kariéru, emócie), ktoré Perec nepovažoval za dôležité pre zámery, ktoré v naratíve sledoval. Okrem iného bolo použitie tretej osoby pre účely písania o sebe v druhej polovici 20. storočia už štandardným nástrojom konvenčnej fikcie a spojiť autora so zástupnou postavou bolo príliš jednoduché. Druhá osoba sa Perecovi javila ako najlepšia voľba pre konfrontáciu osobnej skúsenosti, umožňujúca zaoberať sa ňou autenticky a odovzdať skúsenosti čitateľovi (Bellos, 1995, s. 258).

Novelu otvára výrazne introspektívne zachytenie fotochemického procesu popisovaného Hugelínovou tézou, (Bellos, 1995, s.191) práca s adresnosťou druhej osoby umožňuje náhle a bezprostredné vtiahnutie recipienta do procesu. Recipient sa ocitá uprostred evokatívneho popisu zaspávania (presná geometrická orientácia, navigácia, ktorá simuluje pohyb očí, vznik priestorov uprostred priestorov, štruktúra navzájom sa prestupujúcich objektov). Pocit blízkosti navodený gramatickou formou druhej osoby singuláru spolu s presným vedeckým jazykom umožňujú čitateľovi pomerne rýchlo sa stotožniť s adresovaným “Ty” prostredníctvom imaginácie popisovaného procesu:

“Známé šero pokoje, temný prostor, prerušený niekoľikoma detaily, kde pamäť bez nesenázi nalezá cesty, jimiž jsi tisíckrát prošel a které ti znovu vyznačuje tmavý okenní čtverec, obnovuje je odlesk umyvadla, police trochu jasnějším stínem knihy, zpřesňuje je černější masa pověšených šatů, střídá po určité chvíli dvourozměrný prostor jako obraz bez jasných hranic, který svírá velmi malý úhel s rovinou tvých očí a který jako by ti ne úplně kolmo dosedal na hřbet nosu, obraz, jenž ti nejprve musí připadat jednotvárně šedý, nebo spíš nevýrazný.” (Perec, 2016a, s. 13). Konkrétne priestorové určenie niektorých predmetov zároveň pôsobí scudzujúcim dojmom a umiestňuje adresované ty do iného priestoru – t. j. priestoru odlišného od priestoru čitateľa. Tým vzniká ambivalentná, sugestívna situácia ne-reality, na základe ktorej nie je jasné, či je ty možno interpretovať ako všeobecné (všeobecné oslovenie namierené na čitateľa, napr. “Keď budeš zlý, pôjdeš do pekla”), alebo apostrofické, (ktoré však v sebe všeobecné ty obsahuje, pretože má dvoch adresátov: referenta ty, a recipienta správy, teda čitateľa). Zároveň nie je jasné, či je rozprávač zároveň účastníkom deja, resp. jednou z postáv (homodiegesis), alebo sa nachádza na inej naratívnej úrovni ako vševediaci rozprávač (heterodiegesis). (Genette, 1980, citované podľa Fludernik, 1993, s. 219)

Takéto paradoxné východisko je mimoriadne emocionálne pôsobivé, dokonca priamo amplifikuje emocionálnu odozvu na strane čitateľa. Naratívne “Ty” je blízke všeobecnému “Ty” a seba-adresnému “Ty” do tej miery, že sa prvotný vzdalujúci efekt (Ide o mňa čitateľa? Alebo o Teba – postavu?) môže pretaviť do prehĺbenia empatie s (doplniť adjektívum) “Ty”. (Fludernik, 1993, 217-247).

V Západnej lyrickej a rétorickej tradícii je apostrofa spojená s emočnosťou, často náchylná k paródii, nakoľko sa ešte výraznejšie, než iné rétorické figúry usiluje uchvátiť recipienta. Štruktúru apostrofy možno vysvetliť prostredníctvom komunikačného obvodu, na ktorom je figúra založená. Podľa komunikačnej teórie pozostáva akákoľvek konverzácia z troch zložiek: adresujúci, správa, adresovaný, pričom v bežnej komunikácii sú úlohy adresúceho a adresovaného často zameniteľné. V prípade apostrofy však napriek vokatívnej forme nejde o dialóg. Adresovaný síce môže správu zachytiť, ale nedokáže odpovedať (nestáva sa hovoriacim). Apostrofa teda predpokladá dvoch adresovaných: adresujúci odosiela správu niekomu/niečomu, akoby predpokladal, že mu odpovie, napriek tomu, že mu niekto/niečo nemôže odpovedať. Recepčia správy pri apostrofe prebieha

prostredníctvom aktivizácie sekundárneho komunikačného obvodu – t.j. je prijatá čitateľom. Apostrofa preto rozlišuje medzi explicitným adresovaným a recipientom, teda medzi referentom “Ty” a čitateľom, správy sprostredkované apostrofou vznikajú s vedomím dvoch adresovaných súčasne (Kacandes, 1994, s. 330).

Pôsobenie natoľko zložitej receptívnej stratégie možno presvedčivo vysvetliť prostredníctvom diel židovského mysliteľa Martina Bubera a francúzskeho lingvistu Emile Benvenistu. Obaja (síce na základe odlišných východísk) vnímajú druhú osobu ako osobu vzťahu. Podľa Bubera popisuje “Es” (Ono) svet zakúšania, zatiaľ čo “Du” (Ty) umožňuje vstúpiť do vzťahu so subjektivitou Druhého a tým mu priznať osobnosť (Kacandes, 1994, s. 331). Pre Benvenistu v sebe akékoľvek použitie druhej osoby obsahuje predpoklad vzťahu k “Ty”, nakoľko “Ty” je označované vzhľadom k ja a nie je o ňom možné premýšľať za hranicami situačného nastavenia, v ktorom by ja nemalo pôvod. Iba gramatické kategórie prvej a druhej osoby môžu byť vo vzájomnom vzťahu, t. j. naozaj byť osobami, tretia osoba je “neosobou”. Intenzita emocionálnej reakcie potom vyplýva zo sily gramatickej formy druhej osoby „povolávať Druhé k bytiu“ alebo vďaka “neodstrániteľnej tendencii jazyka oživiť čokoľvek, čo adresuje” (Johnson, 1987, s. 191, citované podľa Kacandes, s. 331). Recipient sa tak stáva svedkom oživenia bytia, ktoré doteraz nebolo prítomné a stalo sa partnerom komunikačného aktu až prostredníctvom apostrofy. Nielen animácia, ale i ambivalencia znaku problematizujúca záležitosť referencie (otázka, kto je oživovaný a kto je povolávaný do vzťahu) pôsobia na čitateľa (Kacandes, 1994, s. 331). Táto neistota vyplýva z faktu, že zámeno druhej osoby je zároveň zámenom priamej adresnosti i zámenom apostrofy a to aj napriek vedomiu, že je adresované druhému. Iba vokatívna forma však nestačí na vyvolanie odozvy. Lingvistické vlastnosti zámena druhej osoby preto ponúkajú hypotézu, že recipient má tendenciu reagovať na apostrofu tak intenzívne preto, že sa ľahko stáva “Ty”, a cíti sa povolaný do vzťahu, ktorý sa prostredníctvom apostrofy vytvára. (Kacandes, 1994, s. 332).

Premenlivosť “Ty” na osi všeobecné vs. apostrofické je zásadným konštitučným prvkom dynamiky naratívu, ktorý modifikuje a prehľbuje emocionálnu odozvu na strane čitateľa. Perecov rozprávač nie je protagonistom, ale disponuje poznaním o minulosti i budúcnosti hrdinu, pričom oboje majú zovšeobecňujúci charakter. Alúzie na detstvo bezmenného hrdinu sú vzťahnuteľné na každého, kto sa dokáže identifikovať s typizovanými situáciami, ktorými je hrdinovo dospievanie vymeriavané:

“Jako by se pod tím poklidným a idylickým příběhem poslušného dítěte, dobrého žáka, férového kamaráda, pod těmito zjevnými, příliš zjevnými znaky růstu, zrání – značky tužkou na zárubni dveří na záchod, diplomy, dlouhé kalhoty, první cigarety, pálení po holení, alkohol, klíč pod rohožkou na sobotní večírky, ztráta panictví, první let, křest ohněm- odedávna vinula ještě nějaká jiná nit...” (Perec, 2016, s. 25–26).

Vrámci “predpovedí“ o budúcnosti tiež možno rozlíšiť dva typy. Lokálne predpovede sa viažu na bezprostredne nasledujúce udalosti v objektívnej realite, ktoré sú iba zaznamenané v opačnom poradí, napr.: *“Později, v den, kdy máš jít ke zkoušce, z postele nevstaneš. Není to promyšlené gesto, není to ostatně ani gesto, ale jeho nepřítomnost, gesto, které neuděláš, gestům se vyhýbáš. [...] Zvoní budík, nehýbeš se, zůstáváš v posteli, zavíráš oči. V sousedních pokojích se rozezvoní další budíky. [...] Vstáváš příliš pozdě. Pilné a unavené hlavy se tam právě v zamyšlení sklonily nad lavicemi. Trochu znepokojené pohledy tvých přátel se možná sbíhají v místě, které zůstalo prázdné.” (Perec, 2016, s. 18-19).* Prorocké predpovede nalievavo, útočne a s úzkosťou popisujú bezútešnú budúcnosť hrdinu, pričom v nich možno spozorovať autorovo vyrovnávanie sa s vlastnou depresiou, nakoľko sú veľmi podobné základnému náhľadu na budúcnosť človeka postihnutého depresiou, napr. *“Vůbec jsi nežil, a přesto je už vše řečeno, vše skončeno. Je ti jen pětadvacet, ale máš cestu vytyčenou od začátku do konce. Role jsou rozdané, stejně tak nálepky: od kolébky až k invalidnímu vozíku pozdních let jsou všechna křesla připravená a čekají, až se na ně dostane. Tvá dobrodružství jsou tak dobře popsaná, že se nikdo nezamračí ani nad nejdivočejší revoltou. Klidně si vyjdi na ulici a srážej lidem klobouky, pokrýj si hlavu odpadky, chod' bos, vydávej manifesty, vystřel z revolveru na jakéhokoli uzurpátora, který půjde kolem, a nic se nezmění: v noclehárně azylového domu už máš připravenou postel, na stole prokletých básníků leží tvůj příbor. Opilý koráb, ubohý zázrak: Harar je zájezd, pouťová atrakce. Vše je dopředu naplánované, do nejmenších detailů připravené: velké vzněty srdce, ledová ironie, duševní útrapy, naplnění, exotika, velká dobrodružství, beznadějí. Ďáblu svou duši neprodáš, do Etny se v sandálech vrhnout nepůjdeš, sedmý div světa nezničíš. Na smrt už jsi připravený: koule, která tě doprovodí, je už dlouho ulitá, plačky, které půjdou za rakví, jsou už vybrané. Proč by ses škrábal na vrcholky nejvyšších kopců, když pak budeš muset scházet dolů, a jednou dole, jak to udělat, abys nestrávil život vyprávěním, jak ses dostal nahoru? Proč bys život předstíral? Proč bys pokračoval? Copak nevíš, co tě čeká? Nebyl už jsi vším, čím jsi být měl...” (Perec, 2016, s.37)*

Novela pozostáva zo 16 kapitol, ktoré sa výrazne líšia zmenou charakteru rozprávača, okrem posledných pár kapitol sú za seba radené striedavo. Nepárne kapitoly sú introspektívnym, vedeckú objektivitu imitujúcim, alebo imaginatívnym záznamom percepcie hrdinu: *”Tma někdy začne kreslit nepřesný tvar pikového esa: je před tebou bod, odkud se rozbíhají dvě navzájem se vzdalující čáry a dlouhou oklikou se k tobě vracejí. Později je to oceán, temné moře, po němž se plavíš, a tvůj nos jako by byl hřbetem, nebo spíš přídí nějakého obřího parníku. Vše je černé. Není noc, není ani šero, to celý svět je černý, přirozeně černý jako na negativu nějaké fotografie, a jediné bílé, anebo snad šedé, jsou vlny vzedmuté tvým průjezdem po obou stranách nosu, podél očí, které jsou dost možná lodními boky, v místě, kam se kdysi vepisovalo pikové eso, jako kdyby bylo jen předzvěstí téhle stopy, bělavé a vlnící se brázdy, kterou před sebou hloubíš klouzáním černou vodou.”* (Perec, 2016, s. 64–65). Pasáž popisujúca vznik a zánik lode pripomína obraznosť Blanchotovej novely *Temný Tomáš*. “Ty” nepárnych kapitol osciluje medzi všeobecným “Ty” a “Ty” adresujúcim protagonistu, rozprávač osciluje medzi vševediacim rozprávačom a autorským rozprávačom so subjektívnou fokalizáciou v druhej osobe.

Párne kapitoly majú analytický a popisný charakter, podávajú konkrétne informácie zo života bezmenného hrdinu a objektívnej reality Paríža i dobové reálie. Ty je najbližšie ty adresujúcemu protagonistu v druhej osobe (resp. apostrofickému ty), miestami má charakter všeobecného “Ty”. Rozprávač sa približuje vševediacemu autorskému rozprávačovi so subjektívnou fokalizáciou, miestami má charakter sprostredkovania vedomia protagonistu v druhej osobe. Kapitoly pozostávajú zo zobrazenia rutinného diania (činnosti a pohyby študenta v objektívnej realite) v juxtapozícii s rovinou komentára, ktorý však nemá charakter vnútorného monológu, pohybuje sa len v rovine vševediaceho autorského rozprávača so subjektívnou fokalizáciou cez postavu, sprostredkujúceho fragmenty jej minulosti, i analyzujúcich komentárov vnútorného rozpoloženia hrdinu (blízke externalizovanému dialogizovanému sebaspytu), i komentárov usúvzťažňujúcich jeho rozpoloženie k stavu a očakávaniam spoločnosti (*„cítíš, že se pro život, jednání, práci moc nehodíš, chceš jenom trvat, chceš jenom čekání a zapomnění. Moderní život takové sklony obvykle příliš neoceňuje: viděl jsi kolem sebe, stále se upřednostňují činy, velké plány, nadšení, člověk s očima upřenýma na horizont, člověk hledící přímo před sebe. Jasný pohled, pevná brada, jistý krok, zatažené břicho. Houževnatost,*

iniciativa, zanícení, úspěch vyznačují dokonale jasnou cestu neobyčejně příkladného života, malují posvátné obrazy boje o život“ (Perec, 2016, s. 24) Tieto pasáže možno interpretovať i v duchu konfliktu medzi kapitálom a prácou, ktorý bol kľúčový pre Perecov náhľad na svet, hoci v novele *Muž, ktorý spí* nie je element sociálnej kritiky s prvkami marxistickej kritiky prevalentný.

5. FILMOVÁ ADAPTÁCIA

Perec oslovil Bernarda Queysanna s ponukou na filmové spracovanie novely *Muž, ktorý spí*, a čoskoro obdržal kladnú odpoveď. Tvorcovia sa najprv pokúšali prepísať statický text do formy konvenčného scenára, avšak ich pokus zlyhal, preto sa rozhodli text ponechať a použiť ho ako voiceover. Pritom sa snažili vyhnúť podobnosti s neorealistickými snímkami v duchu *Il Posto* Ermanna Olmiho a smerovali skôr ku fragmentárnej technike *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (1959) Alaina Resnaisa. Ďalším zdrojom inšpirácie pre nich bola i čiernobiela snímka *La Vie à l'envers* (1964) Alaina Jessua (anglický názov *Life Upside Down*), ktorá je pomalým, desivým, introspektívnym portrétom schizofrénie "zvnútra". (Bellos, 1995, s. 340)

Film získal 21. marca 1974 cenu Jeana Viga za najlepší film sezóny pre nového režiséra a bol nominovaný do francúzskeho výberu na medzinárodný filmový festival v Cannes, neskôr sa však Queysanne dozvedel, že film vybraný nebol. Napriek tomu film nakoniec bol uvedený v Cannes (plagáty už Queysanne nechal vytlačiť s nápisom "*Cannes Official Selection 1974*"), v nesúťažnej sekcii "*hors concours*". a 13. Mája (Bellos, 1995, str). Perec sa po získaní Renaudotovej ceny¹¹ poučil, že prestíž môže byť zmiešaným požehnaním, a nechcel, aby cena Jeana Viga spôsobila, že budú so svojim filmom zaraďovaní po boku Novej vlny, či k psychoanalytickej kinematografii, apod. (Bellos, 1993, s. 382).

¹¹ Renaudotova cena je francúzska literárna cena udeľovaná autorovi výnimočného diela pôvodnej tvorby publikovaného v priebehu uplynulého roka. Je pomenovaná podľa Théophraste Renaudota (1586-1653), ktorý založil *La Gazette* (neskôr *La Gazette de France*) – významný francúzsky týždenník. Cena vznikla v roku 1925 a bola prvýkrát udelená v roku 1926. Podobne ako Goncourtova cena, s ktorou súperí, je Renaudotova cena udeľovaná raz ročne na ceremónii v Parížskej reštaurácii. Medzi jej držiteľov patria Michel Del Castillo, Edouard Glissant, Michel Butor, Jean Cayrol, Louis Aragon, Louis Ferdinand Céline a Marcel Aymé (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1998).

6. KOMPOZÍCIA FILMOVEJ ADAPTÁCIE

Narozdiel od novely má filmová adaptácia matematickú konštrukciu, po prológu (tzv. časti 0), nasleduje šesť sekcií, ktoré Perec a Quyesanne pre jednoduchšiu orientáciu pri nakrúcaní a strihu nazvali *Rozkol, Učenie, Šťastie, Úzkosť, Monštrá a Návrat*.¹²

Týchto šesť sekcií je zameniteľných – pozostávajú z rovnakých objektov, miest a pohybov, ale sú snímané z rôznych uhlov a zostrihané do rozdielneho poradia podľa permutácii sestíny (123456, 615243, 364125, 532614, 451362, 246531). V priebehu adaptácie došlo k vynechaniu nepárnych kapitol – t. j. introspektívnych, perceptívnych a imaginatívnych. Z párnych kapitol, kombinujúcich popisnosť a analytický komentár, bol komentár vynechaný, nakoľko by podľa tvorcov obraz hrdinu prehovárajúceho sám k sebe mohol viesť k zjednodušeniu interpretácie iba na jednu z možných polôh rozprávača (vnútorný monológ) (Bellos, 1995, s. 381). Vynechaná je tiež kapitola zachytávajúca hrdinov niekoľkomesačný pobyt u rodičov na vidieku, ktorá je kľúčová nielen z hľadiska budovania pozadia vzťahov hrdinu, ale i z hľadiska kritiky spoločnosti (dopad premien spoločnosti na situáciu vidieka – vysídľovanie, premena zloženia obyvateľstva).

Adaptácia je založená na radikálnej naratívnej stratégii, kombinujúcej voiceover a repetitívny dej bez dialógov, zobrazujúci osamelého mladého muža sediaceho vo svojej izbe, ktorý si perie ponožky v plastovom lavóriku, hrá pinball, sleduje svoj vlastný obraz vo výklade obchodov, preskúmava odľahlé kúty Paríža. Hudba i voiceover sú rovnako ako zábery organizované v šesť-časťových permutáciách, potom zostrihané a zmixované “out-of-phase” s obrazom, okrem náhodných synchronizácií a záverečnej sekvencie, ktorá navodzuje dojem naliehajúcej nutnosti (Bellos, 1993, s. 381). Asynchrónny strih zvuku a obrazu vytvára ambivalentné pnutie medzi obrazom a slovom a zdôrazňuje prázdnotu, ktorá sa medzi nimi rozprestiera.

¹² *Rupture, Apprenticeship, Happiness, Anguish, Monsters a Return* (anglický preklad)

7. NARATÍVNY DISKURZ VO FILME

Rozhodnutie nechať čítať voiceover ženským hlasom (šlo o hlas herečky Ludmily Mikael) vzniklo z pomerne jednoduchých dôvodov už na začiatku vývoja filmu. Ten, kto hovorí “ty” v novele, nie je totožný s tým, komu je ty adresované, ale nakoľko ani jedna z osôb nie je určená, novela zotrúva v paradoxnej a pôsobivej ambivalencii. Na plátne je rovnaký efekt za použitia tých istých prostriedkov nedosiahnuteľný, pretože zobrazuje mladého muža (Jacques Spiesser). Perec pôvodne navrhoval detský hlas, alebo trasúci sa hlas starca, podľa Queysanna však neekvivalentnosť hovoriaceho a toho, komu je správa adresovaná, dokáže sprostredkovať iba ženský hlas. Ak voiceover číta ženský hlas, je jasné, že muž neprehovára k sebe, a k sebe neprehovára ani žena. V recenziách v dobovej francúzskej tlači bol ženský hlas interpretovaný ako hlas hrdinovej matky, hlas hrdinového vedomia alebo príznačne “hlas filmu” (Bellos, 1995, s. 383).

Intepretácia hlasu Ludmily Mikael ako “hlasu filmu” je prekvapivo podobná Gunningovmu konceptu narácie vo filme, v rámci ktorej sa vymedzuje voči Braniganovmu konceptu aktivity narácie a Bordwellovmu konceptu naratívneho diskurzu, ktoré zdôrazňujú neosobnú, z hľadiska recepcie výrazne subtilnejšiu inštanciu naratívu a odmietajú koncept rozprávača ako antropomorfizujúcu fikciu. Podľa Gunninga divák pristupuje pri recepcii k filmovému naratívu ako k entite vytvorenej ľudskou myslou, sústredí sa nielen na správu, ale i na adresujúceho (nie však na autora). “Filmový rozprávač” je teda “zosobnením” inštancie organizujúcej naratívny diskurz a korešponduje so silou, ktorú Peter Brook pomenúva *plotting* – teda design a zámer naratívu, tvarujúci príbeh a udávajúci jeho smerovanie, resp. zamýšľaný zmysel. Pojem naratív pritom zdôrazňuje, že nejde iba o naratívny diskurz, ale i o formu, ktorú nadobúda. “Filmový rozprávač” adresuje diváka prostredníctvom špecifických nástrojov média – prostredníctvom filmového jazyka (Gunning, 1999, s. 470–471).

Elaborujúc Gunningov koncept, s naratívnym diskurzom vo filme teda možno pracovať ako s viacrozmerým ekvivalentom literárneho rozprávača. (V porovnaní s literatúrou je nutné zohľadniť nielen obrazovú rovinu, ale i časovú rovinu, a v rámci

oboch konkretizáciu vizuálnej reprezentácie a ohraničenia v čase, teda stratu imaginatívnej roviny inherentne prítomnej v texte, a konštituujúcej jeho pôsobivosť.) Takáto interpretácia sa javí ako ideálny nástroj pre analýzu naratívu práve v prípade literárnej adaptácie.

Rozprávač *Muž, ktorý spí* v sebe spája elementy literárneho rozprávača a elementy filmového naratívneho diskurzu. Voiceover sa vynechaním imaginatívnych kapitol, i analyzujúco-sebadresných pasáží druhého typu kapitol konotácie i obsahovo výraznejšie posunul voči predlohe.¹³ Obraz je redukovaný na najrealistickejšiu rovinu naratívu – pohyby hrdinu, pohyby mestom, svetlo, zvuky. Dramaturgicky sa tým naratívna forma zjednodušuje, ale tiež uzatvára v každodennosti, z ktorej už nie je ponúkaný únik do roviny exponovanej hry svetelnosti, prienikov myšlienkovými priestormi, ale ani únik narúšajúci jednotu miesta, času a deja, t. j. výlet za rodičmi na vidiek. Voiceover tiež prejíma iba realistické pasáže z druhého typu kapitol, vynechávajúc pritom analytické pasáže (práve z dôvodu, že by na plátne pôsobili ako vnútorný monológ) a teda ďalej redukujúc i analyticko-reflexívnu rovinu naratívu.

Oproti novele teda dochádza k strate hneď niekoľko rovín naratívu. Vynechanie imaginatívnych kapitol možno vnímať z dramaturgického hľadiska ako nutný krok v rámci remediácie. Pôsobivosť týchto kapitol vyplýva z imaginácie popisovaných priestorov, možnosti ich sprítomnenia v recipientovi, konfrontácie s prítomnosťou daných priestorov v Druhom – v hrdinovi, a prostredníctvom snahy o ich zjednotenie, silného vcítania do hrdinu. Čitateľ objavuje krásu grafickej a geometrickej reprezentácie priestorov vlastnej mysle, zároveň si uvedomuje, že rovnaké priestory sú prítomné v Druhom, a Perecovým presným pripomínaním detailov izby, v ktorej sa hrdina nachádza, zároveň priestor pociťuje jasne ako cudzí, iný od vlastného.

V novele je budovaný most medzi myšlienkovými priestormi súčasne narušovaný, resp. čitateľ je nútený uvedomovať si hranice medzi ja a ty, a tým si jasne uvedomovať vzťah, ktorý by k Ty mohol nadobudnúť, a teda iným spôsobom vnímať i seba. Vo filme by podobný efekt, viazaný na slovo a predstavy, ktoré vyvoláva, nebolo možné dosiahnuť. Zameraniu na percepciu je blízky abstraktný, experimentálny film (Stan Brackhage, László Moholy Nagy), avšak pokiaľ by nepárne

¹³ Pre lepšiu predstavu o rozsahu vynechaných pasáží prikladám v prílohe anglické titulky k filmu s doplnenými časťami (vyznačené červenou) z novely, čitateľ tejto práce tak môže získať lepšiu predstavu o dramaturgickom zásahu, ktorý bol súčasťou adaptácie).

kapitoly mali byť adaptované podľa tohoto kľúča, pravdepodobne by to viedlo k triešteniu dramatického tvaru vkladáním nenaratívnych pasáží. Odstránením analytického komentára dochádza k čiastočnému odstráneniu reflexívnej, resp. filozofickej roviny. Filmový naratív je vo výsledku nielen oveľa realistickejší, ale redukuje sa i miera apostrofickosti, miera stotoženia s adresovaným ty, teda i sila emocionálnej zainteresovanosti recipienta.

Premena charakteru ty spojená s premenou charakteru rozprávača konštituujúca naratívne napätie v jednotlivých kapitolách je vo filmovej adaptácii potlačená, narácia je rozdelená do obrazu a voiceoveru, čiastočne zachovávajúceho reflexívny charakter. O oslovovaní, či apostrofickom efekte príbuznom s novelou síce v tomto prípade hovoriť nemožno, ale rozprávač (vychádzajúc z vyššie uvedenej Gunningovej analýzy) filmovej adaptácie je blízky vševediacemu rozprávačovi s elementami mediácie vedomia protagonistu. Nakoľko sú oba aspekty v prípade filmového naratívu oddelené (zvuk a obraz), zároveň môžu prebiehať v čase vedľa seba, táto dynamika naratívu je vyváženejšia, zároveň plnšia a dokáže čiastočne nahradiť absentujúcu apostrofickú funkciu rozprávača v druhej osobe.

Introspektívnu úvodnú kapitolu nahrádza vo filmovej adaptácii statický záber na dezolátnu mestskú krajinu podkreslený znepokojivou ambientnou hudbou (Obr.1), nasleduje záber strešného okna, švenk do študentovej izby odhaľujúci mladého muža v čiernom, sediaceho na posteli (Obr.2), zábery zo študentovej izby sú prestrihávané so zábermi auta smerujúceho vpred (Obr.3), až po príchod do budovy univerzity.



Obr.1

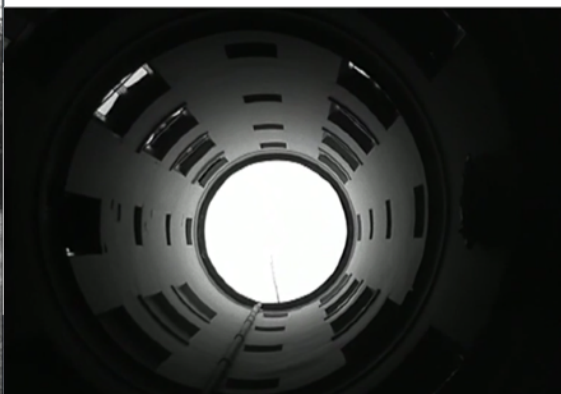


Obr.2

Reprezentácie vnútorného sveta charakteristické vedeckou abstrakciou či mystickou obraznosťou nahrádzajú obrazy mesta, miestami komponované spôsobom blízky experimentálneho filmu (na Obr.4 sa z átria stáva rotujúci, grafický element).



Obr.3



Obr.4

Fokus sa presúva z introspekcie na kontrast medzi externým svetom a vnútorným svetom hrdinu (ktorý však do značnej miery zostáva domnienkou, resp. je závislý na subjektívnej interpretácii, nakoľko predstava o ňom vyplýva z konfrontácie nemého zobrazenia rutiny mladého muža a voiceoveru, ktorý k nemu prehovára, ale jeho vnútorného rozpoloženia sa dotýka iba parciálne a nepriamo). Následkom toho je i mediácia tém posunutá od introspektívneho zobrazenia miestami až mystického prežívania k zovšeobecňujúcej, analytickej, grafickej reprezentácii. (Obr.5, Obr.6)



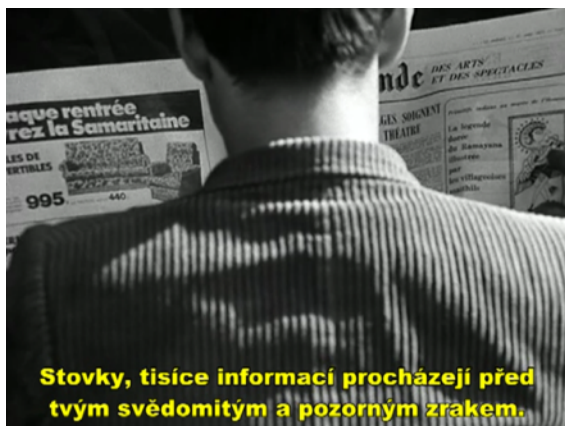
Obr.5



Obr.6

Štruktúrne, ale i obsahové zmeny v rámci naratívu ho neobohacujú o ďalšie témy, ale nedochádza ani k významnejšej redukcii tém. Vynechanie pasáže zachytávajúcej pobyt u rodičov na vidieku síce vedie k upozadeniu témy tradície (nielen z medzigeneračného, ale i z duchovného hľadiska), na druhú stranu vizuálny jazyk (ako príklad uvádzam montáž čítaných pasáží z denníka Le Monde (Obr.7) na pozadí vplyvných mužov vystupujúcich z auta Obr. 8) efektívnejšie mediujú pocit irreality a

vzdialenosti od prežívania. Tento pocit je amplifikovaný i striedaním detailov subjektívnych pohľadov s veľkými celkami drobnej postavy hrdinu strácajúceho sa v hmote mesta (Obr.9).



Obr.7



Obr.8



Obr.9

Z emocionálneho hľadiska posun od introspektívneho naratívu s analytickými, poetickými a duchovnými aspektami, k realistickejšiemu, ironickejšiemu a (ukotvením vo vizualite ranných 70.rokov dvadsiateho storočia časovo- i priestorovo konkrétnemu) filmovému spracovaniu môže na základe môjho pozorovania u divákov viesť k zmenšeniu hĺbky prežívania popisovaných emocionálnych stavov, prehĺbeniu pocitu odosobnenia i na strane recipienta. Na druhej strane personalizácia bezmenného hrdinu do podoby konkrétneho mladého muža (Jacques Spessier) síce redukuje možnosť sebaprojekcie "do hrdinu", ale prehĺbuje mieru empatie s druhým - ako s konkrétnou ľudskou bytosťou, s konkrétnym osudom a údelom.

8. ZÁVER

Zo skúmania a analýzy rozprávača v druhej osobe ako naratívneho aspektu vyplýva, že ide o nástroj umožňujúci pôsobivú mediáciu hraničných skúsenosti predovšetkým pre schopnosť vyvolávať silnú identifikáciu s oslovovaným ty na strane čitateľa, ambivalenciu vyplývajúcu z pnutia medzi prisúdením oslovovaného ty hrdinovi (v texte) či sebe ako- recipientovi, a inherentnú dialogickosť, ktorá pre svoje duchovné kvality bývala využívaná v náboženských textoch. Z hľadiska efektivity sprostredkovania a formovania tematických aspektov diela prispieva takýto rozprávač k amplifikácii naliehavosti tém a umožňuje prostredníctvom silnej identifikácie a vyvolávania pocitu zdieľanej subjektivity recipientovi obohacovať tematickú interpretáciu vlastnou perspektívou, ku ktorej zapojeniu je práve charakterom rozprávača pozývaný výraznejšie než v textoch s rozprávačom v prvej či tretej osobe. Dialogickosť kontrastuje s témou osamelosti, umožňuje k nej nachádzať nový, čistejší, konotačne menej zaťažený vzťah, ktorý potom môže byť transponovaný i na bohatšie vnímanie skutočnosti. Filmová adaptácia rozprávača v druhej osobe z princípu nedokáže zachovať jeho hlavné charakteristiky, avšak spôsob, s ktorým sa s radikalitou a ambivalenciou naratívu novely vyrovnáva Queysanne pri adaptácii *Muž, ktorý spí* - t.j kombinácia voiceoveru a nemého obrazu, pracujúca s veľkými detailami, veľkými celkami, repetíciou, hudobnosťou, umožňuje sprostredkovať pocit irreality, vzdialenosti od existencie i ľahostajnosti sofistikovaným a štýlovo čistým filmovým jazykom.

Záveru vyplývajúce zo skúmania rozprávača v druhej osobe a jeho filmovej adaptácie však nie sú prínosné iba teoreticky. Skúmanie radikálnych naratívnych foriem je dôležité i pre autorov (scenáristov, režisérov), ktorí sa vo svojej tvorbe snažia o reflexiu komplexných stavov ľudského bytia (napr. duševné ochorenia) nakoľko im môže ukázať jednu z ciest v rámci hľadania filmového jazyka vhodného na sprostredkovanie zložitej osobnej skúsenosti. Okrem iného, veľká miera subjektivity, introspekcie a intimity, ktoré táto naratívna forma ponúka, a štýlova čistota Queysannovej práce sú inšpiratívne i pre tematicky odlišne zamerané naratívy vyžadujúce si intimitu rozprávania.

Osobne ma k voľbe analyzovať a porovnávať vo svojej teoretickej bakalárskej práci novelu *Muž, ktorý spí* a jej filmovú adaptáciu priviedla adaptačná skúsenosť z

druhého ročníka bakalárskeho štúdia. Spracovávala som experimentálnu novelu *Koupelna* francúzskeho spisovateľa Jeana-Philippe Touissainta, zachytávajúcu príbeh mladého výskumníka v sociálnych vedách, ktorý sa jedného dňa rozhodne neopustiť kúpeľňu. Obe novely spája nielen jazyková oblasť, ale predovšetkým ich vyrovnávanie sa s rovnakým literárnym prúdom vo francúzskej literatúre druhej polovice 20. storočia - Novým románom. Perecova tvorba vykazovala spoločné vonkajšie znaky s tvorbou Micheala Butora a Allaina Robbe-Grilleta (absencia pevnej naratívnej štruktúry a silno vybudovaných charakterov), Perec však so znakmi na prvý pohľad príslušiacimi k dobovému štýlu pracoval osobnejšie, a zároveň filozofickejšie. Touissaint nadväzoval na postuláty Allaina Robbe-Grilleta z najmä kompozičného hľadiska, pre jeho tvorbu je charakteristické prekonanie vševediaceho rozprávača, psychologizácie postáv, rozrušovanie chronológie, rovnosť autora s čitateľom (absencia ambície vysvetlovať či popisovať svet spôsobom, ktorý by ponúkal akékoľvek rady na život, naplnenie čo úspech). Narozdiel od Pereca je ironickejší.

Pri adaptácii Touissaintovej novely som sa snažila nájsť spôsob, ako pútavo sprostredkovať subjektívne vizuálne vnemy, dynamicky pracovať s nehybnosťou a čakáním. Vychádzala som pritom predovšetkých zo štúdia textov z oblasti kognitívnych vied a niektorých postupov v súčasnom vizuálnom umení. Pri písaní tejto teoretickej práce som sa snažila lepšie porozumieť základom textu a jeho filmovej adaptácie - teda fungovaniu rozprávača v literárnej predlohe a jeho ekvivalentu (naratívnej diskurzu) vo filmovej adaptácii. *Muž, ktorý spí* bol pre tento účel mimoriadne vhodný i preto, že Perec bol nielen autorom novely, ale i autorom námetu a scenára a po celý čas sa zúčastňoval natáčania.

Ako pre autorku bolo pre mňa nesmierne prínosné môcť sledovať ako koncepčne premyslené dramaturgické zásahy do predlohy efektívne menia podobu a zvyšujú emocionálnu pôsobivosť filmového diela, ktoré napriek tomu zostáva verné pôvodnej vízii autora. Naratologická analýza mi umožnila lepšie chápať fungovanie rozprávača v druhej osobe ako "nástroja", tematická analýza vychádzajúca z diela Martina Bubera mi zasa sprostredkovala dôkladnejšie porozumenie podmanivej, duchovnej kvalite, ktorá ma uhranula pri prvom čítaní Perecovej novely. Analýza filmovej adaptácie (ktorá bola jedným z prvých filmov, ktoré som videla v začiatkoch svojich štúdií na FAMU) mi umožnila pochopiť, že čiastočne odlišné emócie, ktoré podľa mňa

v divákoch filmové spracovanie vyvoláva, pramenia nielen z dramaturgických zásahov ale najmä z inherentných kvalít (vizualita, konkrétnosť) filmového jazyka umocnených Queysanovým vizuálnym štýlom.

Myslím, že sa tejto práci darí zodpovedať zvolenú otázku, avšak počas čítania sekundárnej literatúry i písania tejto práce som musela pristúpiť k jej okliešteniu a redukovať pôvodný zámer zaoberať sa i analýzou budovania priestoru a práce s časom (teda analýzou časopriestoru) prostredníctvom rozprávača z dôvodov teoretickej komplexity a časovej náročnosti takéhoto skúmania. Avšak za predpokladu, že by som v skúmaní mala možnosť pokračovať s väčšími skúsenosťami na komplexnejšej úrovni (napr. v teoretickej diplomovej práci), považovala by som za podnetné interpretovať prácu s časopriestorom v novele prostredníctvom konceptov času-kryštalu (podobné konceptu čas-obraz Gillesa Deleuza), ruského filozofa, teológa, fyzika a elektrotechnika Pavla Florenského prípadne skrz parametrickú naráciu Davida Bordwella.

Skúmanie vychádzajúce z uvedených konceptov a teórií by dovolilo preskúmať duchovnú kvalitu z filozoficko- naboženského, zároveň filmovedného hľadiska a umožnilo tak scenáristom a režisérom lepšie pochopiť efektívne a pôsobivé sprostredkovanie spirituálnych, introspektívnych naratívov, či naratívov zachytávajúcích hraničné, prípadne prechodové životné situácie. Pokračovanie vo výskume by teda mohlo byť nielen inšpiráciou k vlastnému bádaniu, ale predovšetkým by malo pozývať k hľadaniu naratívnych stratégií objavujúcich nový, živý na skutočnosť i na zdanlivo odvrátenej strane existencie. Tento aspekt považujem za mimoriadne silný a prínosný i v prípade Perecovej novely *Muž, ktorý spí* a jej filmovej adaptácie.

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10. PRÍLOHY

1. Francúzsky originál, 1967, Paríž: Éditions Denoël.

“Dès que tu fermes les yeux; l’aventure du sommeil commence. A la pénombre connue de la chambre, volume obscur coupé par des détails, où ta mémoire identifie sans peine les chemins que tu as mille fois parcourus, les retracant à partir d’un reflet, l’étagère à partir de l’ombre un peu plus claire d’un certain temps, un espace à deux dimensions, comme un tableau sans limites sûres qui ferait un très petit nagle avec le plan de tes yeux, comme s’il reposait, pas tout à fait perpendiculairement, sur l’arête de ton nez, tableau qui, d’abord, peut te sembler uniformément gris, ou plutôt neutre, sans couleurs ni formes, mais qui, assez vite sans doute, se trouve posséder au moins deux propriétés: la première est qu’il s’assombrit plus ou moins selon que tu fermes plus ou moins frotement tes paupières, comme si, plus précisément, la contraction exercée sur la barre de tes sourcils lorsque tu fermes les yeux avait pour effet de modifier l’inclinaison du plan par rapport à ton corps, comme si la barre de tes sourcils en formait la charnière, et, par conséquent, bien que cette conséquence n’ait pas l’air démontrable sinon par l’évidence, de modifier la densité, ou la qualité, de l’obscurité que tu perçois, la seconde est que la surface de cet espace n’est pas tout régulière, ou plus précisément, que la distribution, la répartition de l’obscurité ne se fait pas d’une manière homogène: la zone inférieure, qui te semble la plus proche, bien que déjà, évidemment, les notions de proche et lointain, haut et bas, devant et derrière, aient cessé d’être tout à fait précises, est, d’une part beaucoup plus neutre comme tu commences par le croire, mais belle et bien beaucoup plus blanche, et d’autre part contient, ou supporte, une, deux, ou plusieurs sortes de sacs, de capsules, un peu l’idée que tu te fais d’une glande lacrymale, par exemple, à bords minces et ciliés, et à l’intérieur desquels tremblent, s’agitent, se tordent des éclairs très très blancs, parfois très minces, comme de très fines zébrures, parfois beaucoup plus gros, presque gras, comme des vers. Ces éclairs, bien qu’éclairs soit un terme tout à fait impropre, ont cette curieuse vertu de ne pouvoir être regardés. Dès que tu fixes un peu trop ton attention sur eux, et ils est presque impossible de ne pas le faire, car enfin ils dansent devant toi et tout le reste est à peine existant, en fait, il n’y a guère de vraiment sensible que la charnière de tes sourcils et ce très vague espace à deux dimensions plus ou moins perceptible ou l’obscurité s’étale irrégulièrement, dès que tu les regardes, bien que ce mot ne veuille plus rien dire, bien sûr, dès que tu cherches, par exemple, à t’assurer un tant soit peu de leur forme, ou de leur substance, ou d’un détail, tu peux être sûr de te retrouver, les yeux ouverts, en face de la fenêtre, rectangle opaque redevenant carré, bien que ce ou ces sacs ne lui ressemblent en rien. Ils réapparaissent, par contre, et avec eux l’espace plus ou moins incliné articulé sur tes sourcils, quelque temps après que tu as refermé les yeux, et, vraisemblablement, ils n’ont pas changé d’une fois à l’autre. Tu ne peux, pourtant, être tout à fait sûr de ce dernier point car, au bout d’un temps difficilement appréciable, et bien que rien ne te permette encore d’affirmer qu’ils aient positivement disparu, tu peux constater qu’ils ont

considérablement pali. Tu as maintenant affaire à une sorte de grisaille zébrée, appartenant toujours à ce même espace prolongeant plus ou moins tes sourcils, mais, dirait-on, déformé au point d'être constamment déporté sur la gauche, tu peux le regarder, l'explorer, sans bouleverser l'ensemble, sans susciter un réveil immédiat, mais cela est totalement dépourvu d'intérêt. C'est sur la droite que quelque chose se passe, en l'occurrence une planche, plus ou moins derrière, plus ou moins au-dessus, plus ou moins à droite. La planche ne se voit évidemment pas. Tu sais seulement qu'elle est dure, bien que tu ne sois pas dessus, puisque, justement, tu es sur quelque chose de très mou qui est ton propre corps. Il se produit alors un phénomène tout à fait étonnant : il y a d'abord trois espaces que rien ne te permettrait de confondre, ton corps - lit qui est mou, horizontal, et blanc, puis la barre de tes sourcils qui commande un espace gris, médiocre, en biais, et la planche, enfin, qui est immobile et très dure au-dessus, parallèle à toi, et peut-être accessible. Il est clair, en effet, même s'il n'y a plus que cela qui soit clair, que si tu grimpes sur la planche, tu dors, que la planche, c'est le sommeil. Le principe de l'opération est on ne peut plus simple, bien que tout te donne à penser qu'il te faudra beaucoup de temps : il faudrait ramener le lit, le corps, jusqu'à ce qu'ils ne soient plus qu'un point, qu'une bille, ou bien, ce qui revient au même, il faudrait réduire toute la flaccidité du corps, la concentrer en un seul endroit, par exemple dans quelque chose comme une vertèbre lombaire. Mais le corps, à cet instant, ne présente plus du tout la belle unité de tout à l'heure, en fait, il s'étale dans tous les sens. Tu entreprends de ramener vers le centre un orteil, ou ton pouce, ou ta cuisse, mais alors, chaque fois, il y a une règle que tu oublies, c'est qu'il ne faut jamais perdre de vue la dureté de la planche, c'est qu'il fallait procéder avec ruse, ramener ton corps sans qu'il se doute de rien, sans que toi-même le saches avec certitude, mais il est trop tard, chaque fois depuis longtemps déjà trop tard et, curieuse conséquence, la barre de tes sourcils se casse en deux et au centre, entre tes deux yeux, comme si la charnière avait tenu tout l'ensemble, et que toute la force de cette charnière se rassemblait en cet endroit, survient d'un seul coup une douleur précise, indubitablement consciente et que tu reconnais tout de suite comme étant le plus banal des maux de tête."

2. Anglický preklad, Andrew Leak, 1990, Londýn: Collins Harvill

AS SOON AS YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES, the adventure of sleep begins. The familiar half-light of the bedroom, a dark volume broken by details, where your memory can easily identify the paths your eyes have followed a thousand times (retracing them from the opaque square of the window, eliciting the washbasin from a shaft of reflected light and the shelving from the slightly less dark shadow of a book, distinguishing the blacker mass of the hanging clothes), gives way, after a while, to a two-dimensional space, something like a board of indefinite extension set at a very shallow angle to the plane of your eyes, as if it were propped not quite vertically on the bridge of your nose; the board might at first seem evenly grey, or rather, neutral, that is to say shapeless and colourless, but probably quite quickly turns out to possess at least two properties: the first is that it becomes more or less dark depending on how tightly, or loosely, you screw up your eyes, as if, more precisely, the force brought to bear on your eyebrows when you close your eyes had the effect of altering the angle of the plane in relation to your body, as if it were hinged to your eyebrows, and, consequently, although the only proof of this consequence is the evidence of your own eyes, had the effect also of altering the density, or the quality, of the darkness you perceive; the second property is that the surface of this space is not at all regular, or, more precisely, that the distribution, the allocation, of the areas of darkness is not homogeneous: the upper area is manifestly darker, whereas the lower area, which, to you, appears nearer (although, of course, the notions of proximity and distance, above and below, in front and behind, have already ceased to be altogether precise) is, on the one hand, much greyer, not, that is to say, much more neutral as you initially believe, but actually much whiter, and, on the other hand, contains, or supports, one, two, or several bag-like objects, or capsules, a little how you imagine, for example, a tear gland to be, with thin, ciliated edges, and within which, quivering, twitching, writhing, are some intensely white flashes, some of them extremely thin, like infinitely fine stripes, others much thicker, almost fat, like maggots. These flashes, although 'flashes' is a quite inappropriate term, have a curious quality: they cannot be looked at. As soon as your attention lingers on them too long, and it is virtually impossible to avoid this, since, after all, they are dancing in front of you and all the rest scarcely exists, indeed, all that is really perceptible is the hinge of your eyebrows and the very vague, more or less perceptible twodimensional space in which the darkness stretches away unevenly, but as soon as you look at them, although this word, of course, no longer means anything, as soon as you attempt, let us say, to satisfy yourself a little as to their form, or their substance, or a detail, you can be sure to find yourself back again, your eyes open, across from the window, itself an opaque rectangle becoming a square again, in spite of the fact that these little bags bear no resemblance to it whatsoever. However, they reappear almost as soon as you close your eyes again, and with them the more or less sloping space hinged to your eyebrows, and, in all likelihood, they haven't changed since the last time. But you cannot be absolutely sure on this last point, for, after an interval of time which it is difficult to estimate, and

although nothing enables you to affirm that they have actually disappeared, you are able to note that they have grown considerably paler. Now you are dealing with a kind of streaky grey drizzle, still part of this same space which is an extension more or less of your eyebrows, but distorted, apparently, to the point where it is constantly veering to the left; you can look at it, explore it, without shattering the whole, without causing yourself to wake up immediately, but this is not in the least bit interesting. It is on the right that something is taking place, a plank as it happens, somewhat behind, somewhat above, somewhat to the right. You can't see the plank, obviously. All you know is that it is hard, although you are not on it, since, precisely, you are on something that is very soft, and that something is your body. Then suddenly a truly amazing phenomenon occurs: first, there are three spaces which it is quite impossible to confuse, your body-bed which is soft, horizontal and white, then the bar of your eyebrows which controls a grey, mediocre, slanting space, and finally the plank, which is immobile and very hard on top, parallel to you, and perhaps within reach. Indeed, it is clear — even if by now this is the only thing that is - that if you clamber up on to the plank, you will sleep, that the plank is sleep itself. The principle of the operation is simplicity itself, even though you have every reason to believe that it will take you quite some time to accomplish: you would have to reduce the bed and the body to a single point, a marble, or perhaps, which amounts to the same thing, boil down the flaccidity of the body, concentrating it into a single spot, into one of the lumbar vertebrae, for example. But now the body no longer exhibits the fine unity that it possessed a moment ago: in fact it is spreading out in every direction. You try to draw in a toe towards the centre, or your thumb, or your thigh, but each time there is a rule you are forgetting, and this is that you must never lose sight of the hardness of the plank, that you should proceed with stealth, drawing in your body without it suspecting anything, without even knowing it yourself for certain, but it is too late, every time it is too late, and has been for a very long time, and, a strange consequence this, the bar of your eyebrows breaks in two, and in the middle, right between your eyes, as if this hinge had held everything else together, and as if all the force of the hinge were focused on this one spot, a precise and unmistakably conscious pain suddenly starts up, a pain which you recognise immediately as being nothing more extraordinary than a headache.

3. Český překlad, Lukáš Prokop, 2016, Praha: Rubato

Jakmile zavřeš oči, začíná dobrodružství spánku. Znamé šero pokoje, temný prostor přerušeny několika detaily, kde paměť bez nesnází nalézá cesty, jimiž jsi tisíckrát prošel a které ti znovu vyznačuje tmavý okenní čtverec, obnovuje je odlesk umyvadla, police trochu jasnějším stínem knihy, zpřesňuje je černější masa pověšených šatů, střídá po určité chvíli dvourozměrný prostor jako obraz bez jasných hranic, který svírá velmi malý úhel s rovinou tvých očí a který jako by ti ne úplně kolmo dosedal na hřbet nosu, obraz, jenž ti nejprve může připadat jednotvárně šedý, nebo spíš nevýrazný, bez barev a tvarů, ale nepochybně velmi rychle získá alespoň dvě vlastnosti: první, že ztemňuje, více nebo méně podle toho, jak pevně zavřeš víčka, nebo přesněji, jako by stažení vykonané na oblouku obočí, když zavíráš oči a chceš změnit sklon roviny vzhledem k tělu, utvořilo z obočí předěl, a následkem toho, ačkoli tento následek není prokazatelný jinak než svou samozřejmostí, se změní hutnost nebo kvalita temnoty, kterou vnímáš; druhou, že povrch tohoto prostoru není vůbec pravidelný, nebo přesněji, že rozdělení, rozmístění temnoty se neděje rovnoměrně: horní vrstva je nepochybně temnější, nižší vrstva, která se ti zdá nejbliž, ačkoliv je už zřejmé, že pojmy jako blízkost a vzdálenost, dole a nahoře, vpředu a vzadu naprosto ztratily svou přesnost, je z jedné části mnohem šedivější, to znamená nikoli nevýraznější, jak si zpočátku myslíš, ale opravdu mnohem bělejší, a k tomu obsahuje, nebo nese, jeden, dva nebo víc druhů váčků, pouzder, představuješ si je trochu jako slzné žlázy, se štíhlými obrvenými okraji, uvnitř nichž se třesou, chvějí, krouží velmi ostré záblesky, občas tenoučké jako velmi jemné pruhování, někdy tlustší, skoro tak tlusté jako červi. Tyto záblesky, i když záblesky je výraz naprosto nevhodný, mají tu zvláštní vlastnost, že se nedají pozorovat. Jakmile se na ně zaměříš trochu pozorněji, a je skoro nemožné to neudělat, protože před tebou tančí, zatímco ostatní věci sotva existují, a stěží jsou tak citlivé jako předěl tvého obočí a tento široký dvourozměrný prostor, více či méně zachytitelný, kde se nepravidelně rozkládá tma, ale jakmile je začneš pozorovat, třebaže tohle slovo už samozřejmě nic neznamena, jakmile si chceš například zjistit aspoň něco málo o jejich formě nebo podstatě, anebo nějakém detailu, můžeš si být jistý, že se ocitneš s otevřenýma očima proti oknu, tmavému obdélníku, který se znovu stane čtvercem, i když se mu tyto váčky v ničem nepodobají. Avšak opět se objevují, a s nimi i prostor více či méně nakloněný, rozkládající se ti na obočí, a to pravděpodobně beze změny chvíli potom, cos znovu zavřel oči. Přesto si v tom posledním bodě nemůžeš být úplně jistý, protože po těžko odhadnutelné chvíli, kdy ještě nic nepotvrzuje, že nadobro zmizely, můžeš prohlásit, že značně vybledly. Ted' máš co dělat s pruhovanou šedí náležející tomu samému prostoru, který ti prodlužuje obočí, řekněme ale zdeformovanému, a to způsobem, jako by se stále vychyloval vlevo; můžeš ho sledovat, prozkoumávat, aniž bys rozbil celek, aniž bys vyvolal rychlé probuzení, ale nemá to naprosto žádný smysl. To vpravo něco je, v tomto případě prkno, více nebo méně vzadu, více nebo méně nad ním, více nebo méně vpravo. Jistěže prkno není vidět. Jen víš, že je tvrdé, i když na něm nejsi, protože jsi právě

na něčem, co je velmi měkké a co je tvé vlastní tělo. Vzniká docela překvapivý jev: jsou tu tři prostory, které nelze zaměňovat, tvé měkké tělo, vodorovné a bílé, pak předěl tvého obočí, který ovládá šedivý, obyčejný, zešikmený prostor, a konečně prkno, které je nehybné, na povrchu velmi tvrdé, s tebou rovnoběžné, a možná dosažitelné. Je zřejmé, i když je to jen tohle, co je zřejmé, že vylezeš-li na prkno, spíš, a že tohle prkno znamená spánek. Podstata úkonu, i když si myslíš, že na její objasnění budeš potřebovat spoustu času, nemůže být jasnější: bylo by třeba redukovat postel a tělo do té míry, aby vytvořily jediný bod, kuličku, anebo, a to je totéž, omezit veškerou tělesnou ochablost a soustředit ji do jednoho místa, například do bederního obrátle. Ale tělo v takovém okamžiku už nepředstavuje tu krásnou jednotu jako před chvílí, ve skutečnosti se rozprostře do všech stran. Zkusíš si přitáhnout prst u nohy, palec, stehno, ale zůstává tu pravidlo, na které zapomínáš, a to, že nesmíš nikdy ztratit ze zřetele tvrdost prkna, to znamená, že jsi měl použít lest, vrátit se k tělu, aniž by zapochybovalo, aniž bys o tom ty sám s jistotou věděl, ale už je pozdě, od jisté doby je vždy už příliš pozdě, a – podivný důsledek – oblouk obočí se rozbíjí na dvě části a z prostoru mezi očima, jako by předěl dosud držel všechno pohromadě a jako by se veškerá síla tohoto předělu soustředila v tomto místě, tě najednou zachvacuje určitá bolest, bezesporu vědomá, kterou hned poznáváš jako tu nejobyčejnější z bolestí hlavy.

4. Titulky k filmu, do titulkov sú vložené pasáže z novely, ktorú sú vo filme vynechané (anglická verzia)

The Man who sleeps, Your alarm clock goes off, you do not stir, you remain in your bed, you close your eyes again. It is not a premeditated action, or rather it's not an action at all, but an absence of action, an action that you don't perform, actions that you avoid performing. You went to bed early, you slept peacefully, you had set the alarm clock, you heard it go off, you waited for it to go off, for several minutes at least, already woken by the heat, or by the light, or by expectation itself. You do not move; you will not move. Someone else, your twin, conscientious double is perhaps.. perhaps performing in your stead, one by one, performing in your stead, one by one the actions you have eschewed: the actions you have eschewed he gets up, washes, shaves, dresses, goes out. You let him bound down the stairs, run down the street, leap onto the moving bus, arrive on time, out of breath but triumphant, at the doors in the hall. Certificate of Advanced Study in General Sociology. First written paper. You get up too late. *Back there in the hall, studious or bored heads are bowed pensively over their desks. The perhaps anxious glances of your friends all converge on your still-vacant seat.* You will not set down on four, eight or twelve sheets of paper what you know, what you think, what you know you are supposed to think, about alienation, the workers, modernity and leisure. about white-collar workers or about automation, about our knowledge of others, about Marx as rival to de Tocqueville, about Weber as an opponent of Lukacs. In any case, you wouldn't have said anything, because you don't know a great deal and you think nothing at all. Your seat remains vacant. You will not finish your degree, you will never start your diploma. You will study no more. You make, as you do everyday, a bowl of Nescafe; you add, as you do everyday, a few drops of sweetened condensed milk. You don't wash, you hardly bother to dress. In a pink plastic bowl you place three pairs of socks to soak. You don't go and wait for the candidates to come out of the examination hall to find out what questions were devised to test their perspicacity. You don't go to the cafe as custom would have demanded like everyday to join your friends. One of them, the following morning will climb the six flights of stairs that lead to your room. *You will recognise his footfall on the stairs,* You will let him knock at your door. Wait. Knock again. A little louder. *look on the lintel over the door for the key that you would often leave there if you were going out for a few minutes to fetch bread, coffee, cigarettes, a newspaper or the mail, you'll let him wait a while longer,* Wait again. you'll let him wait a while longer Knock gently. Call your name quietly. Hesitate. Then stamp back down again. *He came back, later, and slipped a note under the door.* Others came, the day after, the after that, knocked, waited, and called to you, slipped you messages. *You read the notes and crumple them into a ball. The notes are to arrange meetings which you miss.* You stay lying on your narrow bench, your hands crossed behind you back, your knees up. *You look at the ceiling and you discover the cracks, the bits flaking off, the stains, the uneven contours.* You don't want to see anyone, or to talk, or to think, nor to go out, or move. It is on a day like this one, a little later, a little earlier, that you discover, without surprise, that something is wrong, that you don't know how to live and that you never will know. The sun beats on the sheet metal of the roof. The heat in your room is unbearable. You are sitting, wedged between the bed and the bookshelf, with a book opened on your lap. You stopped reading it long ago. You are staring at a whitewood shelf, at the pink plastic bowl in which six socks are rotting. The smoke from your cigarette, abandoned in the ashtray, rises, in an almost straight line, and then spreads out in a blanket against the ceiling which is fissured by minute cracks. *Something was going to break* Something has broken. You no longer feel some thing which until then fortified you until then, the feeling of your existence, the impression of belonging to or being in the world is starting to slip away from you. *And yet you are not one of those people who spend their waking hours wondering if they exist, and why, where they came from, what they are, where they are going. You have never seriously agonised over the chicken and the egg. Metaphysical torments have not significantly ravaged your noble countenance. But nothing remains of that arrow-like trajectory, of that forward movement in which, for as long as you can remember, you have been led to recognise your life, that is to say its meaning, its truth, its tension: a past rich in fruitful experiences, lessons well learned, joyous childhood memories, sun-bathed country idylls, bracing sea breezes, a dense present, compact and taut, like a coiled spring, a productive, verdant, airy future.* Your past, your present, and your future merge into one: they are now just the heaviness of your limbs, your nagging migraine, *your lassitude, the heat, the bitterness in your Nescafe.* *And, if your life needed a setting, it would not be the majestic esplanade (by and large a spectacular trick of perspective) where the chubbycheeked children of triumphant humanity fly past and frolic, but rather, irrespective of any effort you may make or any illusions you may still harbour,* This converted cubbyhole that passes for your bedroom, this hovel two metres ninety-two long by one metre sixty-three wide, that is to say, a little over five square metres, this attic from which you have not stirred for several hours, for several days. You are sitting on a bed which is too short for you to be able to lie on it, too narrow for you to be able to turn over on it without precaution. You are staring, almost fascinated now, at a pink plastic bowl which, contains no fewer than six socks. You stay in your room, without eating. without reading, almost without moving. You stare at the bowl, the shelf, your knees, you gaze in the cracked mirror, the coffee bowl, the light-switch. You listen to the sounds of the street, the dripping tap on the landing, the noises that your neighbour makes, clearing his throat, *opening and closing drawers,* coughing fits. the whistle of his kettle. You follow across the

ceiling the sinuous lines of a thin crack the futile meandering of a fly, the progress - which it is almost impossible to plot - of the shadows. *This is your life. This is yours. You can establish an exact inventory of your meagre fortune, the precise balance sheet of your first quarter-century.* You are 25 years old, you have 29 teeth, three shirts and eight socks, 55 francs a month to live on (not in the text) a few books you no longer read, a few records you no longer play. You don't want to remember anything else. *be it your family or your studies, your friends and lovers, or your holidays and plans. You travelled and you brought nothing back from your travels* Here you sit, and you want only to wait, just to wait until there is nothing left to wait for. *for night to fall and the passing hours to chime, for the days to slip away and the memories to fade.* You do not see your friends again. You do not open your door. You do not go down to get your mail. You do not return the books you borrowed from the library. You do not write your parents. You only go out after nightfall like the rats, the cats, and the monsters. You drift around the streets, you slip into the grubby little cinemas on the Grand Boulevards. Sometimes you walk all night, sometimes you sleep all day. You are an idler, a sleepwalker, a mollusc. *The definitions vary according to the hour of the day, or the day of the week, but the meaning remains clear enough* you do not really feel cut out for living, for doing, for making; you only want to go on, to go on waiting and forget. *Such an outlook on life is generally not much appreciated in modern times: all around you, all your life, you have seen the esteem in which action is held, and grand designs, and enthusiasm: man straining forward, man with his gaze fixed on the horizon, man looking straight ahead. A clear gaze, a purposeful chin, a confident swagger, stomach held in. Staying power, initiative, strokes of brilliance, success: all of these things map out the too transparent path of a too exemplary existence, constitute the sacrosanct images of the struggle for life. The white lies, the comforting illusions of all those who are running on the spot, sinking deeper into the mire, the lost illusions of the thousands left on society's scrap heap, those who arrived too late, those who put their suitcase down on the pavement and sat on it to wipe their brow. But you no longer need excuses, regrets, nostalgia.* You reject nothing, you refuse nothing. You have ceased going forward, but that is because you weren't going forward anyway, you're not setting off again, you have arrived, you can see no reason to go on any further: all it took, practically, on a day in May when it was too hot, was the untimely conjunction of a text of which you'd lost the thread, a bowl of Nescafe that suddenly tasted too bitter, a pink plastic bowl filled with blackish water in which six socks were floating, this was all it took for something to snap, to turn bad, to come undone, and for the truth to appear in the bright light of day, *but the light of day is never bright in the garret on Rue Saint-Honoré - this disappointing truth, as sad and ridiculous as a dunce's cap. As heavy as a Latin dictionary* You have no desire to carry on. no desire to defend yourself, no desire to attack. *Your friends got tired of knocking on your door. Now, you rarely ever frequent the streets where you might run into them. You avoid the questions and the eyes of strangers whom chance occasionally places in your path, you refuse the beer or the coffee they offer you.* Only the night and your room protect you: the narrow bed where you lie and stretched out, the ceiling that you discover anew at every moment; the night in which, alone amidst the crowds on the Grands Boulevards, you occasionally feel almost happy with the noise and the lights, the bustle and the forgetting. You are the wave that ebbs and flows, from the Place de la Republique to Place de la Madeleine, from the Madeleine to Place de la Republique. *You have no need to speak, to desire. You follow the tide as it ebbs and flows, from Place de la République to Place de la Madeleine, from Place de la Madeleine to Place de la République. You are not in the habit of making diagnoses, and you don't want to start now. What is worrying you, what is disturbing you, what is frightening you, but which now and then gives you a thrill, is not the suddenness of your metamorphosis, but precisely the opposite: the vague and heavy feeling that it isn't a metamorphosis at all, that nothing has changed, that you've always been like this, even though you only now realize it fully: that thing, in the cracked mirror, is not your new face, it is just that the masks have slipped, the heat in your room has melted them, your torpor has soaked them off. The masks of unswerving conviction, of the straight and narrow. Did you never have an inkling, not once in twenty-five years, of that which, today, has already become inexorable? Did you never see any cracks in what, for you, takes the place of a history? Times when nothing was happening, times when you were simply ticking over in neutral* The dead hours, empty passages, the fleeting and poignant desire to hear no more, to see no more, to remain silent and motionless. Crazy dreams of solitude. An amnesiac wandering through the Land of the Blind: wide, empty streets, cold lights, faces without mouths that you would look at without seeing. *They would never get to you.* It's as if, beneath the surface of your calm and reassuring history, the good little boy, as if, running beneath the obvious, too obvious, signs of growth and maturity - scribbled graffiti on bathroom doors, certificates, long trousers, the first cigarette, sting of the first shave, alcohol, the key left under the mat for your Saturday night outings, losing your virginity, the baptism of air, the baptism of fire - as if another thread had always been running, ever present but always held at bay, and which is now weaving the familiar fabric of your rediscovered existence, the bare backdrop of your abandoned life, *memories which suddenly resurface*, veiled images of this revealed truth, of this resignation so long deferred, of this appeal for calm - hazy lifeless images, over-exposed snap shots, almost white, almost dead, almost already fossilized: a street in a sleepy provincial town, closed shutters, dull shadows, the buzzing of flies in an army post, a lounge blanketed in grey dustsheets, dust particles suspended in a ray of sunlight, bare countryside, cemeteries on a Sunday, outings in a car. Man sitting on a narrow bed, one Thursday afternoon, a book open on his knees, eyes vacant. You are just a murky shadow, a hard kernel of indifference, a neutral gaze avoiding the gaze of others. Speechless lips, dead eyes. Henceforth you will be able

to glimpse in the puddles, in the shop windows, in the gleaming bodywork of cars, the fleeting reflections of your decelerating life. Water drips from the tap on the landing. *Absent-mindedly, you let your hand slip along the white-wood shelf. Water drips from the tap on the landing.* Your neighbour is sleeping The faint chugging of a stationary diesel taxi emphasizes rather than breaks the silence of the street. Your memory is slowly penetrated by oblivion. The cracks in the ceiling trace an implausible labyrinth. *Nothing has happened. Nothing will ever happen. Those were the empty days.* The heat in your room, like a cauldron, like a furnace, the six socks, indolent sharks, sleeping whales. in the pink plastic bowl. That alarm clock that did not ring, that does not ring, that will not ring to wake you up. *You put down the open book beside you on the bed, You stretch out. The sluggish, dull, throb of torpor.* You let yourself slip. You drop into sleep. Your room is the center of the world This lair, this cupboard like garret which never loses your smell, with its bed into which you slip alone, its shelf its linoleum, its ceiling whose cracks you have counted a thousand times, the flakes, the stains, the contours, the washbasin that is so tiny it resembles a piece of doll's-house furniture, the bowl, the window, the wallpaper of which you know every flower, *every stem, every interlacement detail which-as you alone are able to state with absolute certainty- are never quite identical to each other, despite the virtual infallibility of printing methods;* these newspapers that you read and re-read, that you will read and re-read again; this cracked mirror has only ever reflected your face *fragmented into three unequal portions; slightly overlapping, surface portions that habit almost allows you to ignore, forgetting the ghostly image of an eye in the middle of your forehead, or the split nose, or the perpetually twisted mouth, and retaining only a Y-shaped stripe, like the almost forgotten, partially erased mark of some old wound, a slash from a sabre or the lash of a whip;* the shelved books: *the ribbed radiator, the portable record-player sheathed in dark red pegamoid* thus begins and ends your kingdom, perfectly encircled, by ever present noises, (some friendly, some hostile) which are now all that keeps you attached to the world: the dripping tap on the landing, the noises from your neighbor room, his throat-clearing *the drawers which he opens and closes, his coughing fits, whistling of his kettle, the noises of Rue Saint-Honore* the incessant murmur of the city. *From far away, the siren of a fire engine seems to be heading straight for you, then moving away, Then drawing closer again. At the junction of Rue Saint-Honoré and Rue des Pyramides* The measured succession of car noises, braking, stopping, *pulling away* accelerating, imparts a rhythm to time almost as surely as the tirelessly dripping tap or the bells of Sainte-Roch. Your alarm clock has been showing 5:15 for a long time now. *It stopped, probably when you were out, and you haven't bothered to wind it up again.* In the silence of your room time no longer penetrates, it is around a permanent medium, obsessive *even more present and obsessive than the hands of a clock that you could choose not to look at, warped, out of truth* a little suspect: time passes, but you never know what time it is. *the chimes of Saint-Roch do not mark the quarter-hours, or the halves, or the three-quarters, the traffic-lights at the junction of Rue Saint-Honoré and Rue des Pyramides do not change every minute, the tap does not drip every second.* It is ten o'clock, or perhaps eleven, it's late, it's early, the sun rises, night falls, the sounds never quite cease altogether, time never stops completely, even if it is now reduced to the merely imperceptible: a hairline crack in the wall of silence, a slow murmur forgotten, drop by drop, almost indistinguishable from the beats of your heart. Your room is the most beautiful of desert islands, and Paris is a desert that no-one has ever traversed. All you really need is your sleep, *silence around you* your own silence, *All you need is for days to begin and end, for time to pass, for your mouth to be shut, for the muscles in your nape, your jaws and your chin to slacken, the rising and falling of your rib-cage, the beating of your heart to be the only evidence of your continuing and patient existence.* To want nothing. Just to wait, until there is nothing left to wait for. To wander, and to sleep. To let yourself be carried along by the crowds, and the streets. To follow the gutters, the fences, the water's edge. To walk the length of the embankments, to hug the walls. To waste your time. *To have no projects, to feel no impatience.* To be without desire, or resentment, or revolt. In the course of time your life will be there in front of you: a life without motion. without crisis, without disorder, day after day, season after season, something is going to start that will be without end: your vegetal existence, your cancelled life. Here, you learn how to last. At times, you are the master of time itself, the master of the world, a watchful little spider at the hub of your web, reigning over Paris: you command the North by Avenue de l'Opera, the South by the Louvre colonnade, the East and west by Rue Saint-Honore. *At times, you attempt to solve the puzzle of a face which emerges, perhaps, from the complex play of shadows and blisters in a portion of the ceiling: eyes and nose, nose and mouth, a forehead uninterrupted by any hairline, or else it is the precise outline of the helix of an ear, the beginnings of a shoulder and a neck. There are a thousand ways to kill time and no two are the same, but each is as good as the next, a thousand ways of waiting for nothing, a thousand games that you can invent and then drop straightaway.* You have everything still to learn everything that cannot be learnt: solitude, indifference, patience, silence. *You must become unused to everything: you must lose the habit of going to meet those with whom you rubbed shoulders for so long, of taking your meals and your cups of coffee every day at the place that others have kept, sometimes defended, for you, of languishing in the insipid complicity of friendships that linger on but just won't die, in the opportunist and cowardly rancour of affairs that are coming apart at the seams.* You are alone, and because you are alone you must never look to see what time it is. *never count the minutes. You must never again eagerly tear open your mail, never again be disappointed when all you find is advertising bumph inviting you to acquire, for the modest sum of seventy-seven francs, a cake set engraved with your monogram, or the treasures of Western art. You must forget hope, enterprise,*

success, perseverance. You are letting yourself go, and it come almost easily to you. You avoid the paths which you followed for too long. You allow passing time to erase the memory of the faces, the addresses, the telephone numbers, the smiles and the voices. You forget that you learnt how to forget, that, one day, you forced yourself to forget. *Now you wander up and down Boulevard Saint-Michel without recognising anything, not seeing the shop windows, not seen by the streams of students who pass you by.* You no longer enter the cafes, checking the tables with a worried expression on your face, going into the back rooms in search of you no longer know whom. You no longer look for anyone in the queues which form every two hours outside the seven cinemas in Rue Champollion. *No longer do you wander like a lost soul in the great courtyard of the Sorbonne, or pace up and down the long corridors waiting for the lecture-rooms to empty, or go off to solicit greetings, smiles or signs of recognition in the library.* You are alone. You learn how to walk like a man alone, to stroll, to dawdle, to see without looking, to look without seeing. You learn the art of transparency, immobility, inexistence. *You learn how to be a shadow and how to look at men as if they were stones.* You learn how to remain seated, or supine, or erect. *You learn how to chew every mouthful of food, how to rediscover the same inert taste in every piece of food you raise to your mouth.* You learn how to look at paintings as if they were bits of wall or ceiling, the walls, as if they were paintings whose tens of thousands of paths you follow untiringly, merciless labyrinths, texts that no-one will ever decipher, decaying faces. You plunge into Ile Saint-Louis, you take Rue Vaugirard and head towards Pereire, towards Chateau-Landon. You walk slowly, and return the way you came, sticking close to the shop fronts. You go and sit on the parapet of Pont Louis-Phillipe, and you watch an eddy forming and disintegrating under the arches. the funnel-shaped depression perpetually deepening and then filling up, in front of the cutwaters. Further out, horse-drawn and motorised Barges pass by, eventually shattering the play of water against the piers Motionless anglers sit, their eyes following the inexorable drift of their floats. *Sitting outside a café with a glass of beer or a coffee in front of you, you watch the street. Cars, taxis, vans, buses, motorbikes and mopeds pass by in compact clusters, separated by occasional brief lulls: distant echoes of the traffic lights that regulate the flow of vehicles. On the pavements, continuous but much more fluid, the double bands of pedestrians stream past. Two men carrying identical imitation leather document cases pass by each other, with the same weary gait; a mother and daughter, children, old ladies carrying heavy shopping bags, a soldier, a man weighed down by two heavy suitcases, and still others, with packages, newspapers, pipes, umbrellas, dogs, paunches, hats, prams, uniforms, some of them almost running, others dragging their feet, stopping in front of the shop windows, greeting each other, bidding farewell, overtaking or simply passing each other by, old and young, men and women, happy and unhappy. Groups, continually disbanding and reforming, pile up at the bus-stops. A sandwich-man hands out advertising leaflets. A woman tries in vain to flag down a passing taxi. The siren of a fire-engine or a police car comes towards you, growing louder. A breakdown lorry roars past on its way to some unknown emergency. You know nothing of the laws which preside over the meeting of all these people, these people who do not know each other and whom you do not know, in this street that you are visiting for the first time in your life and where you have no business to attend to, except to watch the crowds coming and going, surging forward, stopping. All these feet on the pavements, all these wheels on the road, what are they all doing here? Where are they all going? What calls them together? Why do they return? What kind of force, or mystery, makes them place first the right foot, then the left, on the pavement, with a coordination that could scarcely be more efficient? Thousands of futile actions come together in the same instant in the too-narrow field of your almost neutral vision. They extend their right hands simultaneously and give a crushing hand-shake, their mouths emit apparently meaningful messages, their speech is punctuated by expressive mimes: their hands flutter, they contort their cheeks, noses, eyebrows, lips; they get out their diaries, pass each other by, greet, berate, congratulate, jostle each other; they head towards you without seeing you, and yet you are just a few inches away, sitting on the terrace of a café, and you do not take your eyes off them.*

You drift around. You imagine a classification of streets, quartiers, apartment blocks: the crazy quartiers, the dead quartiers, the market streets, the dormitory streets, the cemetery streets, the peeling façades, the worn façades, the rusty façades, the concealed façades. You walk round the fenced gardens, overtaken by children clattering an iron ruler against the palings as they run past. You sit down on the benches with green slats and cast-iron lion-paw ferrules. Disabled, ageing park-keepers pass the time of day with nannies of a different generation. *With the tip of your shoes you trace circles on the sparsely sandy ground, or squares, or an eye, or your initials.* You discover streets where cars never pass, in which it appears that practically nobody lives, streets with a single ghost shop, a ladies' fashion shop, its window hung with net curtains and containing a display that seems to have been there for ever: the same pale mannequin faded by the sun, the same trays of dress-buttons, the same fashion plates which, nevertheless, bear this year's date; or a mattress maker displaying his springs, his olive-wood bed-legs in the shape of a ball or a spindle, his various grades of horse-hair and ticking, or perhaps a cobbler in his little recess which serves as a workshop, and whose door consists simply of curtains made from multicoloured plastic beads threaded on lengths of nylon line. You discover the arcades: Choiseul, Panoramas, Jouffroy, Verdeau. You discover their stores selling scale models, pipes, paste jewellery, stamps, the shoe-shine boys and hot-dog stands. You read, one after the other, the faded cards displayed in a typesetter's window: Doctor Raphaël Crubellier, Stomatologist, Graduate of the Faculty of Medicine of Paris, by appointment only, 'Marcel-Emile Burnachs Ltd. Tout pour le Tapis; Monsieur and Madame Serge Valène, 11, Rue Lagarde, 214 07 35;

Collège Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire Old Boys' Association Annual Dinner, Menu: Les Délices de la mer sur le lit des glaciers, le Bloc du Périgord aux perles noires, la Belle argentée du lac. In the Luxembourg Gardens you watch the pensioners playing bridge, belote or tarot. On a bench close by an old man stares into space for hours on end; he is mummified, perfectly still, with his heels together and his chin leaning on the knob of the walking-stick that he grips tightly with both hands. You marvel at him. You try to discover his secret, his weakness. But he appears to have no weak point. He must be as deaf as a post, half-blind and verging on the paralytic. But he doesn't even dribble, or move his lips, he hardly even blinks. The sun describes an arc about him: perhaps his vigilance consists solely in following its shadow; he must have markers placed long in advance; his madness, if he is mad, consists in believing that he is a sundial. He resembles a statue, but he has an advantage over statues in that he is capable of getting up and walking, if he so desires. He also resembles a human being, despite his head which is more birdlike than human, and his trousers hitched right up to his sternum, and his primary school teacher's butterfly-bow, but he has this ability, denied to other men, of being able to remain as motionless as a statue, for hours on end, with no apparent effort. You would like to be able to do this yourself, but - and this is probably one of the effects of your being so young and inexperienced in the art of being old - you get restless too quickly: you let your eyes wander in spite of yourself, your foot starts scuffing the sand, you are continually crossing and uncrossing your fingers. Still you keep walking, wherever your feet take you. You get lost, you go round in circles. Sometimes you set yourself derisory goals: Daumesnil, Clignancourt, Boulevard Gouvion Saint-Cyr or the Postal Museum. You wander into bookshops and leaf through a few books without reading them. You go to art galleries, doing a complete round, stopping conscientiously in front of every painting, leaning your head to the right, squinting, moving up close so as to be able to read the title, or the date, or the artist's name, stepping back to get a better view. On your way out, you sign the book with large illegible initials accompanied by a false address. You sit at a table at the back of a café and read *Le Monde*, line by line, systematically. It is an excellent exercise. You read the headlines on the front page, the foreign reports, the short items on the back page, the classified advertisements: situations vacant, employment wanted, sales representation, business opportunities, properties and estates, land, flats (for sale), flats (new developments), flats (wanted), offices to let, commercial property, businesses for sale, investments, partnerships, tuition, annuities, cars, lock-up garages, pets, second-hand, receptions, births, engagements, marriages, obituaries, acknowledgements, auctions at the Drouot Sales Room, lectures and meetings, university vivas; the crossword which you practically solve in your head (cry, we hear, in one's cups: wine; a demonstrative in the sentence: these; you won't find this chopper in your knife-drawer!: egg-beater; a number boil wildly in your tank: Mobil; distraught armadillo loses fifty-love to the commander: admiral); the weather forecast; radio and television, theatre and cinema programmes, the stock market; the pages covering: travel, society, food, the economy, books, sport, science, the universities, theatre, medicine, women, the regions, education, religion, aeronautics, legal affairs, the unions, world affairs, foreign news, French politics, home affairs, news in brief, the in-depth specials stretching over three or four issues, supplements devoted to a country or a region or a particular product, the display advertisements. Five hundred, a thousand pieces of information have passed in front of those eyes of yours, eyes so scrupulous and attentive that they even noticed the number of copies printed, and checked, once again, that this edition was produced by workers who are members of, and regulated by, the BVP and the OJD. But your memory has carefully avoided retaining any of this. You read with an equal lack of interest that Pont-à-Mousson was weak and that steel was losing ground whilst the New York market remained steady, that one may have complete confidence in the experience of the oldest credit bank in France and its network of specialists, that the damage caused in Florida by typhoon Barbara would cost three billion dollars to repair, that Jean-Paul and Lucas are proud to announce the arrival of their little sister Lucie: reading *Le Monde* is simply a way of wasting, or gaining, an hour or two, of measuring once again the extent of your indifference. All hierarchies and preferences must crumble and collapse. You are still capable of being amazed by the way in which the combination, according to a few ultimately very simple rules, of thirty or so typographic signs is able to generate, every day, these thousands of messages. But why should you eagerly devour them, why should you bother deciphering them? All that matters to you is that time should pass and that nothing should get through to you: your eyes follow the lines, deliberately, one after the other. Indifference to the world is neither ignorance nor hostility. You do not propose to rediscover the robust joys of illiteracy, but rather, in reading, not to grant a privileged status to any one thing you read. You do not propose to go naked, but to be clad, without this implying either elegance or neglect; you do not propose to let yourself starve to death, but simply to feed yourself. It is not exactly that you seek to accomplish these actions in total innocence, for innocence is such a loaded term: but merely, simply (if this 'simply' can still mean anything) to relegate these actions to some neutral, self-contained territory, a space cleansed of all value judgements, but not, especially not, a functional space: the functional is the worst, the most insidious, the most compromising of all values. No, let this space be self-evident, factual, irreducible. Let there be nothing else to say except: you read, you are clothed, you eat, you sleep, you walk, let these be actions or gestures, but not proofs, not some kind of symbolic currency: your dress, your food, your reading matter will not speak in your stead, you have had enough of trying to outsmart them. Never again will you entrust to them the exhausting, impossible, mortal burden of representing you. From now on, when you eat standing up at the counter of La Petite Source or La Bière or Roger La Frite, it is rather like what psychophysicists call "nutritional intake": you ingest, once or twice a day, rarely more, a fairly

precisely calculable compound of proteins and glucosides, in the form of a piece of grilled beef, strips of potato quick-fried in boiling oil, and a glass of red wine. In other words it's a steak, sometimes called a minute steak, or even a rump steak, but it is definitely not a tournedos, and chips that no-one would dignify with the name French fries, and a glass of red wine of uncertain, not to say dubious, origin, and entirely unguaranteed quality. But your stomach can no longer tell the difference, if it ever could, and neither can your palate. Language has proved more resistant: it took a while for your meat to stop being thin, tough, stringy, for your chips to stop being greasy and soft, and the wine sticky or vinegary. It took a while for these eminently pejorative adjectives, which at first evoke the sad fare of the poorhouse, food for tramps, soup-kitchens, suburban fun-fairs, gradually to lose their substance, and for the sadness, the misery, the poverty, the need, the shame that had become inexorably attached to them - this fat-become-chip, this hardnessbecome- meat, this bitterness-become-wine-to stop hitting you, to stop leaving their mark on you. Similarly, it took a while for you to stop being convinced by the signs which are their exact opposite, the noble signs of abundance, feasting and merry-making: the bloody, succulent thickness of the 'sides' of Charolais or the 'slabs' of beef, of the finest fillet or porterhouse steaks, the golden crispness of straw potatoes, or match-stick potatoes, or soufflé potatoes, or gratin dauphinois, the bouquet of the fine wine in its wicker basket. Never again will your plate play host to any hallowed energy, and no divine nectar will sparkle in your glass. No exclamation marks punctuate your meals. You eat meat and chips and you drink wine. The immeasurable distance between a lavish Côte de boeuf de La Villette and the fullcourse menu that you order every day, as soon as you enter, from the counter at La Petite Source, no longer has any power over you. COME RAIN OR SHINE, come fair weather or foul, whether the wind gusts or nary a leaf stirs on the trees, still you keep walking; whether dawn switches out the streetlamps or dusk turns them on again, whether you are swamped by the crowds or alone in a deserted square, still you keep walking, drifting. You devise complicated itineraries, bristling with rules which oblige you to make long detours. You go and see the monuments. You count the churches, the equestrian statues, the public urinals, the Russian restaurants. You go and look at the major building works on the banks of the river, at the gates of the city, and the gutted streets that resemble ploughed fields, the pipe-laying, the blocks of flats being razed to the ground. You go back to your room and collapse onto your too-narrow bed. You sleep, like a simpleton, with your eyes wide open. You count and you organise the cracks in the ceiling. The conjunction of shadows and stains, and the variations of adjustment and orientation of your gaze, produce effortlessly, slowly, dozens of nascent shapes, fragile coalitions that you are able to grasp only for a fleeting second, fixing them on a name: vine, virus, town, village, face, before they disintegrate and everything starts all over again: the sudden appearance of a gesture or movement, of an outline or the merest suggestion of an empty sign which you allow to develop, a chance meeting which grows into a firm acquaintance: an eye staring back at you, a man asleep, an eddy-pool, the gentle rocking of sail-boats, the tip of a tree, a branch shattered, preserved, recovered, and from which emerges with growing precision the beginnings of another face, hardly different from the last one, perhaps a little more grim or more attentive, a face in abeyance, in which you search in vain for the eyes, the neck, the forehead. But all that you are able to retain, or find, only to let slip again immediately, is the impression of an ambiguous smile, the shadow of a nostril, prolonged, perhaps, by the trace - ignominious or glorious, who can say? — of a scar. You often play cards all by yourself. You deal out bridge hands, you try to solve the weekly problems in Le Monde, but you are no better than mediocre and your plays lack elegance: no subtlety in the squeeze, in the discards, in getting in and out of the dummy. One day you dreamt up a freak deal in which one pairing, having only two honours between them, an ace and a jack, could make a grand slam against any defence thanks to an unlikely distribution of chicanes and long suits. But then, once you'd perfected the problem and noticed that the slam in question was all the less interesting for being unbidable, and that its execution did not involve a single finesse, you no longer had very high expectations of bridge. You have fallen headlong into the spellbinding pleasures of patience. You deal out four columns of thirteen cards on the bed, you remove the four aces. The game consists in arranging the forty-eight remaining cards by using the four spaces left by the removal of the aces; if one of the spaces happens to be the first in a column, you are allowed to put a two there; if it follows, say, a six, you can insert the seven of the same suit, a seven can be followed by an eight, an eight by a nine, a jack by the queen; if the space follows a king, you may not lay anything and the space is dead. Chance has virtually no role to play in this patience. You can foresee a long time in advance the moment when the four cleared spaces would bring you up against kings, and therefore failure, if you were to play them in order; but, precisely, you do not have to: you are allowed to use one space, then a different one, come back to the first, jump to the third, the fourth, back to the second again. Nevertheless, you rarely succeed; there always comes a point when the game is blocked, when, with half or a third of the cards already in order, you can no longer fill a space without turning up a king every time. In theory, you have the right to two more attempts: you just have to leave the ordered cards where they are and deal out again the other cards into four new columns, after having shuffled them. But you rarely avail yourself of these two supplementary chances; no sooner does the game appear lost than you scoop up all the cards, shuffle them once or twice, and deal them out again for another attempt. You shuffle the cards, deal them out, remove the aces, and take stock of the situation. You begin more or less at random, taking care only to avoid laying bare a king too soon. Gradually, the game starts to take shape, constraints appear, possibilities come to light: there is one card already in its proper place, over here a single move will allow you to arrange five or six in one go, over there a king that is in

your way cannot be moved. You hardly ever get the patience out. You cheat sometimes, a little, rarely, increasingly rarely. Winning doesn't matter to you, for what would winning mean to you anyway, and if it's just a question of having the gods on your side, there are easier ways of inducing them to look kindly on you. But you play more and more often, for longer and longer, sometimes all afternoon, or as soon as you get up, or right through the night, and not even, not even any longer, just to kill time. There is something about this game that fascinates you, perhaps even more than the game with the water under the bridges, or the labyrinths in the ceilings, or the imperfectly opaque twigs which drift slowly across the surface of your cornea. Depending on where it is, or when it crops up, each card acquires an almost poignant density. You protect, you destroy, you construct, you plot, you concoct one plan after another: a futile exercise, a danger that entails no risk of punishment, a derisory restoration of order: forty-eight cards keep you chained to your room and you feel almost happy when a ten happens to fall into place or when a king is unable to thwart you, and you feel almost unhappy when all your patient calculations lead to the same impossible outcome. It is as if this solitary silent strategy were your only way forward, as if it had become your reason for being. IT'S DARK.

The occasional car roars past in the street below. The drop of water forms on the tap on the landing. Your neighbour is silent, out perhaps, or dead already. You are stretched out on the bed, fully clothed, your hands crossed behind your neck and your knees up. You close your eyes, you open them. Viral, microbial forms, inside your eye, or on the surface of your cornea, drift slowly downwards, disappear, suddenly reappear in the centre, hardly changed, discs or bubbles, twigs, twisted filaments, which, when brought together, produce something resembling a barely mythological beast. You lose track of them, then find them again; you rub your eyes and the filaments explode, proliferate. Time passes, you are drowsy. You put down the open book beside you on the bed. Everything is vague, throbbing. Your breathing is astonishingly regular. A tiny, black insect, quite possibly unreal, opens up an undreamt-of breach in the labyrinth of cracks in the ceiling. You drift around the streets, by night, by day. You go into local cinemas where the insistent stink of disinfectant hangs in the air, you eat sandwiches standing at the counter, chips in paper cones, you walk through fun-fairs, you play pinball, you go to museums, markets, stations, public libraries, you stare at the windows of the antique shops in Rue Jacob, the glassware shops in Rue du Paradis, the furniture stores in Faubourg Saint-Antoine. As the hours, the days, the weeks, the seasons slip by, you withdraw your affections, you detach yourself from everything. You discover, with something that sometimes almost resembles exhilaration, that you are free, that nothing is weighing you down, nothing pleases or displeases you. You find, in this life exempt from wear and tear and with no thrill in it other than these suspended moments that you procure through the playing cards, or certain noises, certain sights, an almost perfect, fascinating happiness, occasionally swollen by new

emotions. You experience complete rest, at every moment you are spared, protected. You are living in a blessed parenthesis, in a vacuum full of promise, and from which you expect nothing. You are invisible, limpid, transparent. You no longer exist: across the passing hours, the succession of days, the procession of the seasons, the flow of time, you survive, without joy and without sadness, without a future and without a past, just like that: simply, selfevidently, like a drop of water forming on a drinking tap on a landing, like six socks soaking in a pink plastic bowl, like a fly or a mollusc, like a cow or a snail, like a child or an old man, like a rat.

SOMETIMES THE DARKNESS forms first the indistinct shape of an ace of spades: in front of you is a point from which two lines take off, move apart, and then come back in towards you after describing a long curve.

Later, it's an ocean, a black sea upon which you are sailing, as if your nose were the leading edge, or rather the stem of a gigantic ocean liner. Everything is black. It is not night-time, or heavily overcast, it is the whole world that is black, naturally black, like the negative of a photograph, and only the waves are white, or perhaps grey, the bow-waves thrown up on either side of your advancing nose, running the length of your eyes which are perhaps the sides of the ship, in the place where, previously, the ace of spades was inscribed, as if it had merely been the prelude to this wake, this off-white, undulating track that you cut before you as you slide through the black water. You are completely surrounded by water, a black, motionless sea, as flat as a mill-pond, without the slightest phosphorescence, and yet you have the impression that you could discover every little detail, the slightest wisp of cloud if there were a sky, the tiniest dot of land if there were a horizon. But there is only the sea and you are nothing more than this stem, cutting effortlessly, silently, without vibration, the deep white traces of your passage, like a ploughshare furrowing a field. Soon, however, somewhere above, as if on an inset map, as if a cinema screen had appeared and the negative of a film were projected on to it, there is the same ship, but this time seen from above, in its entirety, and you are alone on deck, leaning on the ship's rail, or on the gunwale rather, striking a somewhat romantic pose. For a long time the impression of duplication remains quite precise, to the point where, if something is irritating you, nagging at you, it is that you are no longer able to distinguish between two alternatives: are you in the first instance the lone stem sliding over the black sea and throwing up white waves, and only subsequently, almost simultaneously, something resembling the consciousness of being this stem, that is to say, the ship, above, in its entirety and upon which you are the motionless passenger leaning on the deck, in a rather romantic pose? Or is it the other way round: is it the ship in its entirety that comes first, sliding over the black sea, with you, the lone passenger, leaning on the upper deck, and only then, enormously enlarged, a single detail of the ship, the stem, parting the seas, throwing up on either side two white waves, thick white waves that are perhaps a little too well delineated

really to be waves, as if they were, rather, creases, the folds of a curtain, with something majestic about them, as if captured in slow motion?

For a long time the two ships, the part and the whole, your nose-stem and your body-liner, sail in convoy without your being able to separate them: you are at one and the same time the stem and the ship, and you on the ship. Then, a first contradiction arises, but it is perhaps just an optical illusion that could be ascribed to the disparity in scales, the difference in perspectives: it seems to you that the ship is slowing down, getting slower and slower, perhaps a little as though you were viewing it from further and further away, from an ever greater height, but you, at the same time, leaning on the ship's rail, you do not shrink in size at all, you remain just as visible; it seems also that the stem itself is accelerating, that it is no longer sliding, but skimming over the black water like a motor launch, like a speed-boat almost, and certainly no longer like a passenger liner. But then - and this is straightaway far more serious, as if you knew by experience, perhaps, that what is taking shape is the beginning of the end, because you would never be able to stand for more than a couple of moments, a couple of seconds, the intensity of what is in the offing, although nothing has taken definite shape yet, apart from, perhaps, at the very most, a premonitory sign, a clue whose meaning was far from clear and whose explanation you now await in the vain hope that everything will remain vague as long as possible, because already, you know, a sudden awakening awaits you, indeed it is your very impatience that has set the process in motion and all your efforts to delay the moment serve only to hasten its arrival — but then, there emerges, like every other time, and not slowly enough, an impression which is at once exciting and tiresome, wondrous and appalling, straightaway too precise, very quickly obsessive and almost painful: the absurd certainty - well, not yet altogether absurd, but surely already destined to become so - that you have lived this image before, that it is a real memory, faithful in every respect: the sea was black, the ship advanced slowly down the narrow channel throwing up showers of white spume on either side, you were leaning against the rail of the walkway on the promenade deck in the rather romantic pose adopted by all passengers when they go up on deck to watch the sea-gulls, you felt precisely the same sensation that you feel now, and yet you no longer feel anything, except the perilous, the increasingly perilous sensation of knowing both the impossibility, and, at the same time, the irreducibility of such a memory.

Later, much later, perhaps you woke up and dozed off again several times, you turned onto your right side, onto your left side, onto your back, onto your front, perhaps you even switched on the light, perhaps you smoked a cigarette, later, much later, sleep becomes a target, or rather the reverse, it is you who become a target for sleep. It is a source of radiant, sporadic light. In front of you, or, to be more precise, before your eyes, sometimes a little to the left, other times more to the right, never in the centre, myriad tiny white dots begin to coalesce, forming at length something vaguely feline, a panther's head seen in profile, coming towards you, growing bigger and baring two sharp fangs, then disappearing and giving way to a luminous point which grows, turns into a lozenge, a star which hurtles towards you at great speed and misses you on the right at the very last moment. The phenomenon is repeated several times, regularly: nothing at first, then some faintly luminous dots, a panther's head which takes shape vaguely, becomes more precise, grows bigger and roars gapingly, baring two sharp fangs, then a shimmering, almost exploding, point of light which expands into the lozenge, the star, then the ball of light bearing down on you, passing by so close that you almost thought you had touched it, felt it, heard it, then nothing again, for a long time, white dots, the panther's head, the star that grows and whistles past your head. Then nothing for a long time, or rather, later, sometimes, somewhere, something resembling a white star, which explodes . . .

IN THE COURSE OF TIME your coldness becomes awesome. Your eyes have lost the last vestige of their sparkle, your silhouette now slumps perfectly. An expression of serenity without lassitude, without bitterness, plays at the corners of your mouth. You slip through the streets, untouchable, protected by the judicious wear and tear of your clothing, by the neutrality of your gait. Now, your movements are simply acquired gestures. You utter only those words which are strictly necessary. You ask for:

- a coffee
- front of stalls
- the usual and a glass of red
- a beer
- a toothbrush
- a notebook

You pay, you pocket the change, you sit down, you eat. You take a copy of *Le Monde* from the top of its pile and place two twenty-centime coins in the vendor's dish. You never say please, hello, thank you, goodbye. You never say sorry. You do not ask your way.

You wander around, and around, and around. You walk. All moments are equivalent, all spaces are alike. You are never in a hurry, never lost. You do not look to see the time on the clocktowers. You are not sleepy. You are not hungry. You never yawn. You never burst into

Laughter. You don't even stroll any more, since the only people who can stroll are those who snatch the time to do so, those who contrive to fiddle a few precious moments off their schedules. In the beginning you used to choose where you would go, you set goals for yourself, you devised complex itineraries, which, despite yourself, began to resemble the voyages of Ulysses. Like so many others before, you went on a pilgrimage to Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre. You walked round and round near the entrance to the Catacombs, you went and stood beneath the Eiffel Tower, you went up a few monuments, you crossed all the bridges, walked along the embankments, visited all the museums, the Palais de la Decouverte and the Aquarium du Trocadero, you saw the rose gardens of Bagatelle, Montmartre by night, les Halles at first light, Saint-Lazare station in the rush-hour, Concorde at midday on August 15. In the Luxembourg Gardens you watch the pensioners playing bridge, belote or tarot. On a bench close by an old man stares into space for hours on end; his is mummified, perfectly still, with his heels together, his chin leaning on the knob of the walking-stick that he grips tightly with both hands, gazing into emptiness, for hours. (not in text) You marvel at him. You try to discover his secret, his weakness. But he appears to have no weak point. You try to discover his secret, his weakness. But he appears to have no weak point. He must be as deaf as a post, half-blind and verging on the paralytic. He doesn't even dribble, or move his lips, he hardly even blinks. The sun describes an arc about him: perhaps his vigilance consists solely in following its shadow; he must have markers placed long in advance; his madness, if he is mad, consists in believing that he is a sundial. He resembles a statue, but he has an advantage over statues in that he is capable of getting up and walking, if he so desires. He also resembles a human being, despite his head which is more birdlike than human, and his trousers hitched right up to his sternum, and his primary school teacher's butterfly-bow, but he has this ability, denied to other men, of being able to remain as motionless as a statue, for hours on end, with no apparent effort. You would like to look like him, but - and this is probably one of the effects of your being young and inexperienced in the art of being old - you get restless too quickly: in spite of yourself, your foot starts scuffing the sand, you let your eyes wander, you are continually crossing and uncrossing your fingers. Still you keep walking, wherever your feet take you. You get lost, you go round in circles. Sometimes you set yourself derisory goals: Daumesnil, Clignancourt, Boulevard Gouvion Saint-Cyr or the Postal Museum. You wander into bookshops and leaf through a few books without reading them. stopping conscientiously in front of every painting, leaning your head to the right, squinting, up close so as to be able to read the title, or the date, or the artist's name, stepping back to get a better view. On your way out, you sign the book with large illegible initials accompanied by a false address. You sit at a table at the back of a cafe and read Le Monde, line by line, systematically. It is an excellent exercise. You read the headlines on the front page, the foreign reports, the short items on the back page, the classified advertisements: situations vacant, employment wanted, sales representation, business opportunities, properties and estates, land, flats (for sale), flats (new developments), flats (wanted), offices to let, commercial property, businesses for sale, investments, partnerships, tuition, annuities, cars, lock-up garages, pets, second-hand, receptions, births, engagements, marriages, obituaries, acknowledgements, auctions at the Drouot Sales Room, lectures and meetings, university vivas; the crossword which you practically solve in your head (cry, we hear, in one's cups: wine; a demonstrative in the sentence: these; you won't find this chopper in your knife-drawer!: egg-beater; a number boil wildly in your tank: Mobil; distraught armadillo loses fifty-love to the commander: admiral); the weather forecast; radio and television, theatre and cinema programmes, the stock market; the pages covering: travel, society, food, the economy, books, sport, science, the universities, theatre, medicine, women, the regions, education, religion, aeronautics, legal affairs, the unions, world affairs, foreign news, French politics, home affairs, news in brief, the in-depth specials stretching over three or four issues, supplements devoted to a country or a region or a particular product, the display advertisements. Five hundred, a thousand pieces of information have passed in front of your eyes so scrupulous and attentive. that they even noticed the number of copies printed, and checked, once again, that this edition was produced by workers who are members of, and regulated by, the BVP and the OJD. But your memory has carefully avoided retaining any of this. You read with an equal lack of interest that Pont-a-Mousson was weak whilst New York remained steady, that one may have complete confidence in the experience of the oldest credit bank in France and its network of specialists, that the damage caused in Florida by typhoon Barbara would cost three billion to repair, that Jean-Paul and Lucas are proud to announce the arrival of their little sister Lucie. reading Le Monde is simply a way of wasting, or gaining, an hour or two, of measuring once again the extent of your indifference. All hierarchies and preferences must crumble and collapse. You are still capable of being amazed by the way in which the combination, according to a few ultimately very simple rules, of thirty or so typographic signs is able to generate, everyday, these thousands of messages. But why should you eagerly devour them, why should you bother deciphering them? All that matters to you is that time should pass and nothing should get through to you: your eyes follow the lines, deliberately, one after the other. Indifference to the world is neither ignorance nor hostility. You do not propose to rediscover the robust joys of illiteracy, but rather, in reading, not to grant a privileged status to any one thing you read. You do not propose to go naked, but to be clad, without this implying either elegance or neglect. you do not propose to let yourself starve to death, but simply to feed yourself. It is not exactly that you seek to accomplish these actions in total innocence, for innocence is such a loaded term: but merely, simply (if this 'simply' can still mean anything) to relegate these actions to some neutral, self-contained territory, a space cleansed of all value-judgements, but not, especially not, a functional space: the

functional is the worst, the most insidious, the most compromising of all values. No, let this space be self-evident, factual, irreducible. Let there be nothing else to say except: you read, You eat, you sleep, you walk, you are clothed, let these be actions or gestures, but not proofs, not some kind of symbolic currency. Your dress, your food, your reading matter will not speak in your stead. you have had enough of trying to outsmart them. Never again will you entrust to them the exhausting, impossible, mortal burden of representing you. From now on, when you eat standing up at the counter of La Petite Source or La Bière or Roger La Frite, it is rather like what psychophysicologists call "nutritional intake": you ingest, once or twice a day, rarely more, a fairly precisely calculable compound of proteins and glucosides, in the form of a piece of grilled beef, strips of potato quick-fried in boiling oil, a glass of red wine. In other words it's a steak, sometimes called a minute steak, or even a rump steak, but it is definitely not a tournedos, and chips that no-one would dignify with the name French fries, and a glass of red wine of uncertain, not to say dubious origin. and entirely unguaranteed quality But your stomach can no longer tell the difference. if it ever could, and neither can your palate. Language has proved more resistant: it took a while for your meat to stop being tough, Stringy your chips to stop being greasy, the wine vinegary, It took a while for these pejorative adjectives, which at first evoke the sad fare of the soup-kitchens, to lose little by little their meaning, and for the sadness, the misery, the poverty, the need, the shame that has become inexorably attached to them - this fat become-chip, this hardness-become-meat, this bitterness becomewine - stop hitting you, stop leaving their mark on you. Similarly, it took a while for you to stop being convinced by the signs which are their exact opposite, the noble signs of abundance, feasting and merry-making: the bloody, succulent thickness of the 'sides' of Charolais or the 'slabs' of beef, of the finest fillet or porterhouse steaks, the golden crispness of straw potatoes, or match-stick potatoes, or soufflé potatoes, or gratin dauphinois, the bouquet of the fine wine in its wicker basket. Never again will your plate play host to any hallowed energy, and no divine nectar will sparkle in your glass No explanation marks punctuate your meals. You drink your red wine, you eat your steak and fries. The immeasurable distance between a lavish Côte de boeuf de La Villette and the fullcourse menu that you order every day, as soon as you enter, from the counter at La Petite Source, no longer has any power over you. COME RAIN OR SHINE, come fair weather or foul, whether the wind gusts or nary a leaf stirs on the trees, still you keep walking; whether dawn switches out the streetlamps or dusk turns them on again, whether you are swamped by the crowds or alone in a deserted square, still you keep walking, drifting. You devise complicated itineraries, bristling with rules which oblige you to make long detours. You go and see the monuments. You count the churches, the equestrian statues, the public urinals, the Russian restaurants. You go and look at the major buildings works on the banks of the river, at the gates of the city, and the gutted streets that resemble ploughed fields, the pipe laying, the blocks of flats being razed to the ground. You go back to your room and collapse onto your too-narrow bed. You sleep, like a simpleton, with your eyes wide open. You count and organise the cracks in the ceiling. The conjunction of shadows and stains, and the variations of adjustment and orientation of your gaze, produce effortlessly, slowly, dozens of nascent shapes, fragile coalitions that you are able to grasp only for a fleeting second, fixing them on a name: vine, virus, town, village, face, before they disintegrate and everything starts all over again: the sudden appearance of a gesture or movement, of an outline or the merest suggestion of an empty sign which you allow to develop, a chance meeting which grows into a firm acquaintance: an eye staring back at you, a man asleep, an eddy-pool, the gentle rocking of sail-boats, the tip of a tree, a branch shattered, preserved, recovered, and from which emerges with growing precision the beginnings of another face, hardly different from the last one, perhaps a little more grim or more attentive, a face in abeyance, in which you search in vain for the eyes, the neck, the forehead. But all that you are able to retain, or find, only to let slip again immediately, is the impression of an ambiguous smile, the shadow of a nostril, prolonged, perhaps, by the trace - ignominious or glorious, who can say? — of a scar. You often play cards all by yourself. You deal out four columns of thirteen cards on the bed, you remove the aces. You deal out bridge hands, you try to solve the weekly problems in Le Monde, but you are no better than mediocre and your plays lack elegance: no subtlety in the squeeze, in the discards, in getting in and out of the dummy. One day you dreamt up a freak deal in which one pairing, having only two honours between them, an ace and a jack, could make a grand slam against any defence thanks to an unlikely distribution of chicanes and long suits. But then, once you'd perfected the problem and noticed that the slam in question was all the less interesting for being unbiddable, and that its execution did not involve a single finesse, you no longer had very high expectations of bridge. You have fallen headlong into the spellbinding pleasures of patience. You deal out four columns of thirteen cards on the bed, you remove the four aces The game consists in arranging the forty-eight remaining cards, by using the four spaces left by the removal of the aces, if one of the spaces happens to be the first in a column, you are allowed to put a two there; if it follows, say, a six, you can insert the seven of the same suit, a seven can be followed by an eight, an eight by a nine, a jack by the queen; if the space follows a king, you may not lay anything and the space is dead. Chance has virtually no role to play in this patience. You can foresee a long time in advance the moment when the four cleared spaces would bring you up against kings, and therefore failure, if you were to play them in order; but, precisely, you don't have to: you are allowed to use one space, then a different one, come back to the first, jump to the third, the fourth, back to the second again. Nevertheless, you rarely succeed; there always comes a point when the game is blocked, when, with half or a third of the cards already in order, you can no longer fill a space without turning up a king every time. In theory, you have the right to two more attempts,

you just have to leave the ordered cards where they are and deal out again the other cards into four new columns, after having shuffled them. But you rarely avail yourself of these two supplementary chances; no sooner does the game appear lost than you scoop up all the cards, shuffle them once or twice, and deal them out again for another attempt. You shuffle the cards, deal them out, remove the aces, and take stock of the situation. You begin more or less at random, taking care only to avoid laying bare a king too soon. Gradually, the game starts to take shape, constraints appear, possibilities come to light: there is one card already in its proper place,

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over here a single move will allow you to arrange five or six in one go, over there a king that is in your way cannot be moved. You hardly ever get the patience out. You cheat sometimes, a little, rarely, increasingly rarely. Winning doesn't matter to you, for what would winning mean to you anyway. But you play more and more often, for longer and longer, sometimes all afternoon, as soon as you get up, or right through the night. and not even, not even any longer, just to kill time. There is something about this game that fascinates you, perhaps even more than the game with the water under the bridges, or the labyrinths in the ceilings, or the imperfectly opaque twigs which drift slowly across the surface of your cornea. Depending on where it is, or when it crops up, each card acquires an almost poignant density. You protect, you destroy, you construct, you plot, you concoct one plan after another: a futile exercise, a danger that entails no risk of punishment, a derisory restoration of order: forty-eight cards keep you chained to your room, and you feel almost happy when a ten happens to fall into place or when a king is unable to thwart you, and you feel almost unhappy when all your patient calculation lead to the impossible outcome. It is as if this solitary silent strategy were your only way forward, as if it had become your reason for being. It's dark. The occasional car roars past in the street below. The drop of water forms on the tap on the landing. Your neighbour is silent, out perhaps, or dead already. You are stretched out on the bed, fully clothed, your hands crossed behind your neck and your knees up. You close your eyes, you open them. Viral, microbial forms, inside your eye, or on the surface of your cornea, drift slowly downwards, Disappear, suddenly reappear in the center, hardly changed, discs or bubbles, twigs, twisted filaments, which, when brought together, produce something resembling a mythological beast. You lose track of them, then find them again; you rub your eyes and the filaments explode, Proliferate. Time passes, you are drowsy. You put down the book beside you on the bed. Everything is vague, Throbbing. Your breathing is astonishingly regular. A tiny, black insect, quite possibly unreal, opens up an undreamt-of breach in the labyrinth of cracks in the ceiling. You drift around the streets, by night, by day. You go into local cinemas where the insistent stink of disinfectant hangs in the air, you eat sandwiches standing at the counter, chips in paper cones, you walk through fun-fairs, you play pinball, you go to museums, markets, stations, public libraries, you stare at the windows of the antique shops in Rue Jacob, the glassware shops in Rue du Paradis, the furniture stores in Faubourg Saint-Antoine As the hours, the days, the weeks, the seasons slip by, you detach yourself from everything. You discover, with something that sometimes almost resembles exhilaration, that you are free, that nothing is weighing you down, nothing pleases or displeases you. You find, in this life exempt from wear and tear and with no thrill in it other than these suspended moments, that you procure through the playing cards, or certain noises, certain sights, an almost perfect happiness, Fascinating, occasionally swollen by new emotions. You experience complete rest, at every moment you are spared, protected. You are living in a blessed parenthesis, in a vacuum full of promise, and from which you expect nothing. You are invisible, limpid, transparent. You no longer exist: across the passing hours, the succession of days, the procession of the seasons, the flow of time, you survive, without joy and without sadness, without a future and without a past, just like that: simply, self-evidently, like a drop of water forming on a drinking tap on a landing, like six socks soaking in a pink plastic bowl, like a fly or a mollusc, like a tree, like a rat. In the course of time your coldness becomes awesome. Your eyes have lost the last vestige of their sparkle, your silhouette now slumps perfectly. An expression of serenity with lassitude, without bitterness, plays at the corners of your mouth. You slip through the streets, Untouchable, protected by the judicious wear and tear of your clothing by the neutrality of your gait. Now, your movements are simply acquired gestures. You utter only those words which are strictly necessary. You never say please, hello, thank you, goodbye. You never say sorry. You do not ask your way. You wander around. You walk. All moments are equivalent, all spaces are alike. You are never in a hurry, never lost. You are not sleepy. You are not hungry. You never yawn. You never burst into laughter. You don't even stroll any more, since the only people who can stroll are those who snatch the time to do so, those who contrive to fiddle a few precious moments off their schedules. In the beginning you used to choose where you would go, you set goals for yourself, you devised complex itineraries, which, despite yourself, began to resemble the voyages of Ulysses. Like so many others before, you went on a pilgrimage to Saint-Julien-le-Pauvre, you walked round and round near the entrance to the Catacombs, you went and stood beneath the Eiffel Tower, you went up a few monuments, you crossed all the bridges, walked along all the embankments, visited all the museums, Guimet, Cernuschi, Carnavalet, Bourdelle, Delacroix, Nissim de Camondo, the Palais de la Découverte and the Aquarium du Trocadéro, you saw the rose gardens of Bagatelle, Montmartre by night, les Halles at first light, Saint-Lazare station in the rush-hour, Concorde at midday on August 15. But the fact that a given goal was tripey or cultural, disappointing or badly chosen, or even provocative (Rue de la Pompe, Rue des Saussaies, Place Beauvau, Quai des Orfèvres) did not stop it from being a goal, that is to say, a tension, an act of will, an emotion. Your tourism, even when

it was disenchanted or derisory, and despite the distant memory of the Surrealists, was still a source of vigilance, a tabling of time, a measuring of space. Just as you no longer choose your films, entering indiscriminately the first cinema you come to at around eight, nine or ten in the evening, the merest shadow of a spectator in the darkened auditorium, the shadow of a shadow watching as various combinations of shadow and light, form and dissolve on a rectangular oblong, ceaselessly sketching the same adventure: music, enchantment, suspense; just as you no longer choose your meals, as you no longer bother to vary them, to work your way right through the three hundred or so combinations that your five one-franc coins could procure for you at the counter of the Petite Source, those five one-franc coins which represent one third of your daily allowance, chinking in your pocket; just as you no longer choose when to sleep, or what to read, or what to wear. You let yourself go, you allow yourself to be carried along: all it takes is for the crowd to be going up or down the Champs Elysees. all it takes is for a grey back a few yards in front of you to turn off suddenly down a grey street; or else a light or an absence of light, a noise of an absence of noise, a wall, a group of people, a tree, some water, a porch, a fence, advertising posters, paving stones, a pedestrian crossing, a shop front, a luminous stop sign, the name plate of a street, *the red sign outside a tobacconist's, a haberdasher's stall, a flight of steps, a traffic island...* You walk or you do not walk. You sleep or you do not sleep. *You walk down your six flights of stairs, you climb back up again.* You buy *Le Monde* or you do not buy it. You eat or you do not eat. You sit down, you stretch out, you remain standing. You slip into the darkened auditoriums. You light a cigarette. You cross the street, you cross the Seine, you stop, you start again. You play pinball or you don't. *Sometimes, you stay in your room for three, four, five days at a time, you couldn't say for sure. You sleep almost uninterruptedly, you wash your socks, your two shirts. You reread a detective novel that you've already read, and forgotten, twenty times. You do the crossword in an old copy of Le Monde that you find lying around. You deal out on your bed four columns of thirteen cards, you remove the aces, you place the seven of hearts below the six of hearts, the two of spades in its space, the king of spades below the queen of spades, the jack of hearts below the ten of hearts. You eat jam on bread, for as long as the bread lasts, then you spread it on crackers, if you have any, then you eat it straight from the jar on a spoon. You stretch out on the narrow bed, hands crossed behind your neck, knees up. You close your eyes, you open them. Twisted filaments drift slowly down the surface of your cornea. You count and organise the cracks, the flakes of paint and the flaws in the ceiling. You look at your face in the cracked mirror. You don't talk to yourself, yet. You don't scream, especially not that. Indifference has neither beginning nor end: it is an immutable state, (a dead weight) an unshakeable inertia. Doubtless, messages from the outside world still make it through to your nerve centres, but no organised response involving the totality of the organism appears to be able to develop All that remains are elementary reflexes: when the light is red you do not cross the road, you shelter from the wind in order to light a cigarette, you wrap up warmer on winter mornings, you change your sports shirt, your socks, your underpants and your vest about once a week. Indifference dissolves language and scrambles the signs. You are patient and you are not waiting, you are free and you do not choose, you are available and nothing arouses your enthusiasm. You ask for nothing. You demand nothing, you make no impositions. You hear without ever listening, you see without ever looking: the cracks in the ceilings, in the floorboards, the patterns in the tiling, the lines around your eyes, the trees, the water, the stones, the cars passing in the street, the clouds that form... Cloud shapes in the sky. Now, your existence is boundless. Each day is made up of silence and noise, of light and blackness, layers, expectations, shivers. It is just a question of getting lost once again, for ever, more each time, of ceaseless wandering, of finding sleep, a certain physical calm: abandon, lassitude, drowsiness, drifting-off. You slide, you let yourself slip and go under: searching for emptiness, running from it. Walk, stop, sit down, take a table, lean on it, stretch out. Robotic actions: get up, wash, shave, dress. A cork on the water: drift with the current, follow the crowd, trail about: in the heavy silence of summer, closed shutters, deserted streets, sticky asphalt, deathly-still leaves of a green that verges on black; winter in the cold light of the shop-fronts, the street lights, the little clouds of condensing breath at cafe doors, the black stumps of the dead winter trees. You frequent scruffy down-at-heel cafés, bistros, back-street bars selling only wine by the glass, gloomy Vins et Charbons stinking of vinegar and accumulated filth. Out towards Charles Michels square or Château-Landon you walk down slimy alleyways, past hoardings disfigured by tattered posters. You sit on the benches in public gardens and parks, like a pensioner, an old man, but you are only twenty-five. You go and loiter in hotel lobbies, sitting on an imitation leather settee, you watch the people come and go, you read the brochures, catalogues, notices, you read the tourist leaflets. Paris by night, Cruise to the Indies, the glossy magazines that are lying around, the Echo de l'Hôtellerie française, the Revue du Touring-Club de France; you go and read the newspapers displayed on boards outside printing works or editorial offices: Le Monde, Le Figaro, Le Capital, La Vie française. You while away your time in public libraries, you fill out a form, you read history books, scholarly works, memoirs of statesmen, or mountaineers, or parish priests. You walk the streets, looking in the gutters or in the space of variable width which separates the parked cars from the kerbside. You discover marbles, little springs, rings, coins, gloves, and on one occasion a wallet which contained a little money, identity papers, letters, and some photographs which almost made you cry. You watch the card-players in the Luxembourg Gardens, the great ornamental lakes of the Palais de Chaillot, on Sundays you go to the Louvre, walking straight through all the rooms and finally stationing yourself in front of a single painting or a single object: the unbelievably energetic portrait of a Renaissance man with a tiny scar above his upper lip, on the left, that is to say to his left, your right, or perhaps a stone engraving, or else a small*

Egyptian spoon in front of which you stand for an hour, or two hours, before leaving without looking back. It is one ceaseless and untiring circumambulation. You walk like someone carrying invisible suitcases, like someone following his own shadow. A blind man, a sleepwalker. You proceed with a mechanical tread, never-endingly, to the point where you even forget that you are walking. You are a meticulous stroller, an accomplished nightowl, a blob of ectoplasm, which, with the addition of a billowing sheet, could be mistaken for a ghost incapable of scaring even tiny children. You are a tireless walker: every evening you emerge from the black hole of your room, from your rotting staircase, your silent courtyard, to criss-cross Paris; beyond the great pools of noise and light: Opéra, the Boulevards, the Champs Elysées, Saint-Germain, Montparnasse, you head out towards the dead city, towards Péreire or Saint-Antoine, towards Rue de Longchamp, Boulevard de l'Hôpital, Rue Oberkampf, Rue Vercingétorix. All-night cafés. You remain standing, almost motionless, with one elbow resting on the glass counter - a thick, translucent sheet with rounded edges, fixed to its concrete base by means of copper bolts - half-turned towards a pinball machine into which three sailors shovel endless coins. You drink red wine or percolated coffee. It is a life without surprises. You are safe. You sleep, you walk, you continue to live, like a laboratory rat abandoned in its maze by some absent-minded scientist. and which, morning and night, unerringly, unhesitatingly, follows the path to its food dispenser, turning left, turning right, pressing down twice on a pedal ringed in red in order to receive its portion of homogenised feed. There is no hierarchy, no preference. Your indifference is motionless, becalmed: a grey man for whom grey has no connotation of dullness. Not insensitive, but neutral. You are attracted by water, but also by stone; by darkness, but also by light; by warmth, but also by cold. All that exists is your walking, and your gaze, which lingers and slides, oblivious to beauty, to ugliness, to the familiar, the surprising, only ever retaining combinations of shapes and lights, which form and dissolve continuously, all around you, in your eyes, on the ceilings, at your feet, in the sky, in your cracked mirror, in the water, in the stone, in the crowds. Squares, avenues, parks and boulevards, trees and railings, men and women, children and dogs, crowds, queues, vehicles and shop windows, buildings, facades, columns and capitals, sidewalks, gutters, sandstone paving flags glistening grey in the drizzle. or almost red, or almost white, or almost black, or almost blue. Silences, rackets, crowds at the stations, in the shops, on the boulevards, teeming streets, packed platforms, deserted Sunday streets in August, mornings, evenings, nights, dawns and dusks. Now you are the nameless master of the world, the one on whom history has lost its hold, the one who no longer feels the rain falling, who does not see the approach of night. All you are is all you know: your life that continues, you breathing, your step, You see the people coming and going, crowds and objects taking shape and dissolving. You see a curtain rail in the tiny window of a haberdasher's, which your eye is suddenly caught by you continue on your way, you are inaccessible, like a tree, like a shop window, like a rat. your way: you are inaccessible. A MOUNTAIN is ENGENDERED by the meeting of your eye and the pillow, a fairly gentle slope, a segment, or rather the arc of a circle which stands out in the foreground, darker than the rest of the space. This mountain is not worth bothering with; it is quite unexceptional. For the moment, your mind is preoccupied with a task that you somehow feel you should accomplish but which you are unable to define precisely; a task of little importance in itself but which is, perhaps, merely the pretext, the opportunity, to check whether you know the code; you suppose, for example, and this is immediately confirmed, that the task consists in drawing your thumb, or the whole of your hand, up over the pillow: but is it really your job to do this? Should you not be exempted from this tedious chore by virtue of your position in the hierarchy and your years of service? This problem is clearly a lot more important than the task itself, and you have no means of solving it, since you never dreamt that after so long you would still be called to account in this manner. And what is more, when you come to think about it, the problem is even more complicated: it is not a question of knowing whether or not you should move your thumb in accordance with your function, your grade, your seniority, but rather this: you will have to move your thumb sooner or later in any case, but you will lift it over the pillow if you are senior enough, and slide it under the pillow if you are not, and naturally you have no idea as to how many years of service you have, except that you feel you have a considerable number, though perhaps not considerable enough. Perhaps they even chose this moment to pose the question precisely because it is the very moment when nobody, not even the most honest and upstanding judge, would be able to declare with certainty that you are, or are not, sufficiently senior? The question could apply equally well to your feet or your thighs. In fact, the question is meaningless: the real problem revolves around contact. In theory, there are two kinds of contact: the contact of your body with the sheets, and this applies to your left thigh, your right foot, your right forearm, part of your stomach: this contact is fusion, osmosis, dilution; and the contact of your body with itself, in those places where flesh meets flesh, where your left foot rests on your right foot, where your knees meet, where your elbow comes up against your stomach: these contacts are sharp, hot or cold, or both hot and cold. One could naturally, and almost without risk, invert the whole operation and maintain that it is the other way round, the left foot under the right foot, the right thigh under the left thigh. What emerges most clearly from all of this is obviously that you are not lying down on your right or your left side, with your legs slightly bent and your arms wrapped around the pillow, but hanging upside-down, like a hibernating bat, or, rather, an over-ripe pear on a pear-tree: this means you could fall at any moment, although you are not overly alarmed by the prospect since your head is perfectly protected by the pillow, but it is nevertheless your duty to avoid this danger, no matter how slight it may be. But if you run through in your head all the means that you know of, you soon realise that the situation is more serious than you had initially imagined, if only because the loss of horizontally is rarely conducive to sleep.

So, you will have to resign yourself to falling, even though you foresee that it will not be particularly pleasant (one never knows when one will stop falling), but above all, you do not know how to go about letting yourself fall, it's only when you are not thinking about it that you start falling, and how could you not think about it since, precisely, you are thinking about it? That is something that no-one has ever given serious thought to, but which is not without a certain importance: there should be books written about it, reliable books that would enable one to face up to these situations which occur far more often than is generally thought. Three-quarters of your body has taken refuge in your head; your heart has taken up residence in your eyebrow where it now feels quite at home, where it is beating like a living creature, albeit, perhaps, at the very most, a little too quickly. You will have to conduct a roll-call of your body, to check that your limbs, your organs, your entrails, your mucous membranes are all intact. You would really like to clear your head of all these pieces that are cluttering it up and weighing it down, but at the same time, you congratulate yourself on having saved as much as you could, for everything else is lost, you no longer have any feet, or hands, your calf-muscle has turned to jelly. This is all becoming increasingly complicated: what you should do first is to remove your elbow, and then, in the space that is thus created, you could place at least a portion of your tummy, and so on until you are more or less back together again. But it is terribly difficult: there are bits missing, others are duplicated, others still have grown outrageously large, and yet others are voicing utterly insane territorial claims: your elbow is more an elbow than ever, you had forgotten just how elbow-like an elbow could be, a fingernail has supplanted your whole hand. And this, naturally, is always the moment that the torturers choose to intervene. One of them stuffs a chalk-filled sponge into your mouth, another bungs up your ears with cotton wool; a few pit-sawyers have set to work in your sinus passages, a pyromaniac is on the loose in your stomach, sadistic tailors compress your feet, force your head into a hat which is too small, cram you into an overcoat that is too tight, strangle you with a necktie; a sweep and his sidekick have introduced a knotted rope into your windpipe and, despite their best efforts, are unable to withdraw it. They come almost every time. You know them well. It is almost reassuring. If they have arrived, it means that sleep cannot be too far off. They will make you suffer a little, then they'll get bored and leave you alone. They hurt you, that goes without saying, but you have, with regard to pain, as with all the sensations you perceive, all the thoughts that cross your mind, all the impressions you feel, an attitude of complete detachment. You see yourself without astonishment being astonished, without surprise being surprised, without pain being assaulted by the torturers. You wait for them to calm down. You willingly concede to them whatever organs they want. You watch them from afar arguing over your stomach, your nose, your throat, your feet. But often, so often, this is just the final snare. Then the worst begins. It wells up slowly, imperceptibly. At first everything is calm, too calm, normal, too normal. Everything looks as if it will never have to move again. But then you know, you begin to know, with ever more implacable certainty, that you have lost your body, or no ... it is rather that you can see it, not far away, but you will never again be able to get back to it. You are now nothing more than an eye. A huge staring eye which sees everything, which sees your limp body just as it sees you, looked at and looking, as if it had turned round completely in its socket and was contemplating you in silence, you, the inside of you, the dark, empty, slime-green, frightened, impotent interior of you. It looks at you and it nails you to the spot. You will never stop seeing yourself. You can do nothing, you cannot escape yourself, you cannot escape your own gaze, you never will be able to: even if you were to fall into a sleep so deep that no shock, no shout, no burning pain could rouse you, there would still be this eye, your eye, that will never close, that will never sleep. You see yourself, you see yourself seeing yourself, you watch yourself watching yourself. Even if you were to wake up, your vision would remain the same, immutable. Even if you managed to grow thousands, billions of extra eyelids, there would still be this eye, behind, which would see you. You are not asleep but sleep will never come again. You are not awake and you will never wake up. You are not dead and even death could never set you free. But rats don't spend hours trying to get to sleep. But rats don't wake up with a start, gripped by panic, bathed in sweat. But rats don't dream and what can you do to protect yourself against your dreams? But rats don't bite their nails, especially not methodically, for hours on end until the tips of their claws are little more than a large open sore. You tear off half of the nail, bruising the spots where it is attached to the flesh; you tear away the cuticle nearly all the way back to the top joint until beads of blood start to appear, until your fingers are so painful that, for hours, the slightest contact is so unbearable that you can no longer pick things up and you have to go and immerse your hands in scalding hot water. But rats, as far as you know, do not play pinball. You hug the machines for hours on end, for nights on end, feverishly, angrily. You cling, grunting, to the machine, accompanying the erratic rebounds of the steal ball with exaggerated thrusts of your hips. You wage relentless warfare on the springs, the lights, the figures, the channels. Painted ladies who give an electronic wink, who lower their fans. You can't fight against a tilt. You can play or not play. You can't start up a conversation, you can't make it say what it will never be able to say to you. It is no use snuggling up against it, painting over it, the tilt remains insensitive to the friendship you feel, to the love which you seek, to the desire which torments you. Six thousand points, when four thousand four hundred are enough for a replay, will only add to your bruises, will only beat you down a little further. You drift around the streets, you enter a cinema; you drift around the streets you enter a cafe; you drift around the streets, you look at the trains; you drift around the streets, you enter a cinema where you see a film which resembles the one you've just seen, again, the film that you've just watched starting all over again, with its fragmented title-sequence, the beach at

Etretat, sea, sea-gulls, children playing in the sand. you walk out; you drift around the over-lit streets. You go back to your room, you undress, you slip between the sheets, you turn out the light, you close your eyes. Now is the time when dream-women, to quickly undressed, crowd in around you, the time when you reread ad nauseam books you've read a hundred times before, when you toss and turn for hours without getting to sleep. This is the hour when, your eyes wide open in the darkness, you hand groping towards the foot of the narrow bed in search of an ashtray, matches, a last cigarette, you calmly measure the sticky extent of your unhappiness. Now you get up in the night. You wander the streets, you go and perch on bar-stools and there you stay, *at the Rosebud, at Harry's Bar, or take a seat at the Franco-Suisse in Rue Saint-Honoré, almost directly across the street from your room, or you install yourself at a café table in Les Halles, and there you stay, for hours, until closing time.* with a beer in front of you or a black coffee or a glass of red wine. *You watch the others come and go, the butcher's boys, the florists, the newspaper vendors, the crowds of merry revellers, the lonely boozers, the tarts.* You are alone and drifting. You walk along the desolate avenues, past the stunted trees, the peeling facades, the dark porches. You penetrate the bottomless ugliness of Les Batignolles, and Pantin. Your only chance encounters are with Wallace fountains which long since ran dry, tacky churches, gutted building sites, pale walls. The parks whose railings imprison you, the festering swamps near the sewer outlets, the monstrous factory gates. Steam locomotives pump out clouds of white smoke under the metallic walkways of the Gare Saint-Lazare. On Boulevard Barbes or Place Clichy, impatient crowds raise their eyes to the heavens. *You will not break the magic circle of solitude. You are alone and you know no-one; you know no-one and you are alone. You see the others bunch together, huddle together, hug and protect one other. But you, lifeless gaze, transparent wraith, leper blending with the walls, you are a silhouette already returned to dust, an occupied space that no-one approaches. You force yourself to hope for unlikely encounters. But it is not for you that leather, brass and wood start suddenly to shine, that lights are lowered and noises gently muffled. You are alone despite the thickening cigarette smoke, despite Lester Young or Coltrane, alone in the snug heat of the bars, in the empty streets which echo to your tread, in the drowsy complicity of the last bars to remain open. There are some enemies that you will face up to only once, just long enough to know, to recognise, the icy hiss of the snake which would turn you to stone, just long enough to beat a timely retreat, chilled with loneliness and impatience, done for, betrayed by your own eyes, by the ever sharper and ever more futile perception of the tiniest details: a curl of hair, the shadow of a glass, the shifting outline of a discarded cigarette, the final tremor of a closing double-door. You miss nothing, but neither do you grasp anything, or if you do it is too late, always too late: shadows, reflections, cracks, side steps, smiles, yawns, tiredness or abandon.* Unhappiness did not swoop down on you, it insinuated itself almost ingratiatingly. It meticulously impregnated your life, your movements, the hours you keep, your room, it took possession of the cracks in the ceiling, of the lines in your face in the cracked mirror, of the pack of cards; it slipped furtively into the dripping tap on the landing, it echoed in sympathy with the chimes of each quarter-hour from the bell of Saint-Roch. The snare was that feeling which, on occasion, came close to exhilaration, that arrogance, that sort of exaltation; you thought that the city was all you needed, its stones and its streets, the crowds that carried you along, you thought you needed only a front stall in some local cinema, you thought you only needed your room, your lair, your cage, your borrow. *to which you return each day, from which you set out again each day, this almost magical place which no longer contains anything to occupy your patience, not even a crack in the ceiling, not even a feature of the grain in the wood of your shelf, not even a flower in the patterned wallpaper.* Once again you deal out the fifty-two cards on your narrow bed. *once again you search for the unlikely exit from a shapeless labyrinth.* Your powers have deserted you. *You no longer know how to follow the lazy drift of the bubbles and twigs over the surface of your cornea. You are no longer able to summon up a face, a triumphal cavalcade or a distant city out of the cracks and the shadows.* The snare: the dangerous illusion of being impenetrable, of offering no purchase to the outside world, of silently sliding, inaccessible, just two open eyes looking forward, perceiving everything, retaining nothing. A being without memory, without alarm. But there is no exit, no miracle, no truth. *Shells, protective armour. Ever since that stifling day when it all started, when everything stopped. You hug the filthy walls of the black streets, your right hand knocking against the porch-steps, the bricks of the façades. Sitting for hours above the Seine. Your legs dangling above the Seine. Flushing dirty black street walls* You withdraw the four aces from you fifty-two cards. How many times have you repeated the same amputated gesture, the same journey's that lead nowhere? All you have left to fall back on are your tuppenny-halfpenny boltholes, your idiotic patience, the thousand and one detours that always lead you back unflinchingly to your starting point. From park to museum, from cafe to cinema, from embankment to garden, the station waiting-rooms, the lobbies of the grand hotels, the supermarkets, the bookshops, the corridors of the metro. Trees, stones, water, clouds, sand, brick, Light, Wind, Rain: all that counts is your solitude: whatever you do, wherever you go, nothing that you see has any importance, everything you do, you do in vain, nothing that you seek is real. Solitude alone exists, every time you are confronted, every time you face yourself. You stopped speaking and only silence replied. But those words, those thousands, those millions of words that dried up in your throat, the inconsequential chit-chat, the cries of joy, the words of live, the silly laughter, just when will you find them again? Now you live in dread of silence. But are you not the most silent of all? The monsters have come into you life, the rats, your fellow creatures, your brothers. The monsters in their tens, their hundreds, their thousands. You can spot them from almost subliminal signs, their furtive departures, their silence, from their shifty, hesitant,

startled eyes that look away when they meet yours. In the middle of the night a light still shows at the attic windows of their sordid little rooms. Their footfalls echo in the night. But these faces without age, these frail or drooping figures, these hunched, grey backs, you can feel their constant proximity, you follow their shadows, you are their shadow, you frequent their hideouts, their pokey little holes, you have the same refuges, the same sanctuaries: the local cinema which stinks of disinfectant, the public gardens, the museums, the cafes, the stations, the metro, the covered markets. Bundles of despair sitting like you on park benches, endlessly drawing and rubbing out the same imperfect circle in the sand, readers of newspapers found in rubbish bins. They follow the same circuits as you, just as futile, just as slow. They hesitate in front of the maps in the metro, they eat their buns sitting on the river banks. The banished, the pariahs, the exiles. When they walk, they hug the walls, eyes cast down and shoulders drooping. clutching at the stones of the facades, with the weary gestures of a defeated army, of those who bite the dust. You follow them, you spy on them, you hate them: monsters in their garrets, monsters in slippers who shuffle at the fringes of the putrid markets, monsters with dead fish-eyes, monsters moving like robots, monster who drive. You rub shoulders with them, you walk with them, you make your way amongst them: the sleepwalkers, the old men, the deaf-mutes with their berets pulled down over their ears, the drunkards, the dotards who clear their throats and try to control the spasms of their cheeks the peasants lost in the big city, the windows, the slyboots, the old boys. They came to you, they grabbed you by the arm. As if, because you are a stranger lost in your own city, you could only meet other strangers; as if, because you are alone, you had to watch as all the other loners swooped down on you. Those who never speak, those who talk to themselves, The old lunatics, the old luses, the exiles. The hand on to your coat tails, the breathe in your face. They slide up to you with their wholesome smiles, their leaflets, their flags, the pathetic champions of great lost causes, the sad chansonniers out collecting for their friends, the abused orphans selling table-mats, the scraggy widows who protect pets. All those who accost you, detain you, paw you, ram their petty-minded truth down your throat, spit their eternal questions in your face, their charitable works and their True Way. The sandwich-men of the true faith which will save the world. The sallow complexions, the frayed collars, the stammerers who tell you their life story, tell you about their time in prison, in the asylum, in the hospital. The old school teachers who have a plan to standardize spelling, the strategists, the water diviners, the faith healers, the enlightened, all those who live with their obsessions, the failures, the deadbeats, the harmless monsters mocked by bartenders who fill their glasses so high that they can't raise them to their lips, the old bags in their furs who try to remain dignified whilst kicking back the Marie Brizard. And all the others who are even worse, the smug, the smart-Alecs, the self-satisfied, who think they know, the fat men and the forever young, the dairymen and the decorated; the revelers on a binge, the Brylcreem-boys, the stinking rich, the dumb bastards. The monster confident of their own rights, who address you without further to do, call you to witness, The monster with their big families, with their monster children and monster dogs, the thousands of monsters caught at the traffic lights, the yapping females of the monsters, the monsters with moustaches, and waistcoats, and braces, the monsters tipped out by the coachload in front of the hideous monuments, the monsters in their Sunday best, the monster crowd. You drift around, but the crowd no longer carries you, the night no longer protects you. Still you walk on, ever onwards, untiring, immortal. You search, you wait. You wander through the fossilised town, the intact white stones of the restored facades, the petrified dustbins, the vacant chairs where concierges once sat; you wander through the ghost town, scaffolding abandoned against gutted apartment blocks, bridges adrift in the fog and the rain. Putrid city, vile, repulsive city. Sad city, sad lights in the sad streets, sad clowns in sad music-halls, sad queues outside the sad cinemas, sad furniture in the sad stores. Dark stations, barracks, Warehouses. The gloomy bars which line the Grand Boulevards. Noisy or deserted city, pallid or hysterical city, gutted, devastated, soiled city, city bristling with prohibitions, steel bars, iron fences. Charnel house city: the covered markets rotting away, the slum belt in the heart of Paris, the unbearable horror of the boulevards when the cops hang out: Haussmann, Magenta - and Charonne. Like a prisoner, like a madman in his cell. Like a rat looking for the way out of his maze. You pace the length of Paris. Like a starving man, like a messenger delivering a letter with no address. Now you have run out of hiding places. You are afraid. You are waiting for everything to stop, the rain, the hours, the stream of traffic, Life, People, the world; waiting for everything to collapse, Walls, Towers, floors and ceilings, men and women, old people and children, Dogs, Horses, Birds, to fall to the ground, paralysed, Plague-ridden, Epileptic; waiting for the marble to crumble away, for the wood to turn to pulp, for the houses to collapse noiselessly, for the diluvian rains to dissolve the paintwork, pull apart the dowel-joints in hundred-year-old wardrobes, tear the fabric to shreds, wash away the newspaper ink, waiting for the fire without flames to consume the stairs, waiting for the streets to subside and split down the middle to reveal the gaping labyrinth of the sewers; waiting for the rust and mist to invade the city. You are not dead and you are no wiser. You have not exposed your eyes to the sun's burning rays. The two tenth-rate old actors have not come to fetch you, hugging you so tightly that you formed a unity which would have brought all three of you down together had one of you knocked out. The merciful volcanoes have paid you no heed. Your mother had not put your new second-hand clothes in order. You are not going to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and forge in the smithy of your soul the uncreated conscience of your race. No old father, no old artificer will stand you now and ever in good stead. You have learnt nothing, except that solitude teaches you nothing, except that indifference teaches you nothing: You were along and you wanted to burn the bridges between you and the world. But you are such a negligible speck, and the world

is such a big word: to walk a few kilometres past facades shopfronts, parks and embankments. Indifference is futile. Your refusal is futile. Your neutrality is meaningless. You believe that you are just passing by, walking down the avenues, drifting through the city, dogging the footsteps of the crowd, penetrating the play of shadows and cracks. But nothing has happened: no miracle, no explosion. With each passing day your patience has worn thinner. Time would have to stand still, but no-one has the strength to fight against time. You may have cheated, snitching a few crumbs, a few seconds: but the bells of Saint-Roch, the changing traffic lights at the intersection between Rue des Pyramids and Rue Saint-Honore, the predictable drop from the tap on the landing, never ceased to signal the hours, Minutes, the days and the seasons. For a long time you constructed sanctuaries, and destroyed them: order or in inaction. drifting or sleep, the night patrols, the neutral moments, the flight of shadows and light. Perhaps for a long time yet you could continue to lie to yourself, deadening your senses. But the game is over. The world has stirred and you have not changed. Indifference has not made you any different. You are not dead. You have not gone mad. There is no curse hanging over you. There is no tribulation in store for you, there is no crow with sinister designs on your eyeballs, no vulture has been assigned the indigestible chore of tucking into your liver morning, noon, and night. No-one is condemning you, and you have committed no offence. Time, which see to everything, has provided the solution, despite yourself. Time, that knows the answer, has continued to flow. It is on a day like this one, a little later, a little earlier, that everything starts again, that everything starts, that everything continues. Stop talking like a man in a dream. Look! Look at them. hey are thousands upon thousands, posted like silent sentinels by the river, along the embankments all over the rain-washed pavements of Place Clichy, mortal men fixed in ocean reveries, waiting for the sea-spray, for the breaking waves, for the raucous cries of the sea-birds. No, you are not the nameless master of the world, the one on whom history had lost its hold, the one who no longer felt the rain falling, who did not see the approach of night. You are no longer inaccessible, the limpid, the transparent one. You are afraid, you are waiting. You are waiting, on Place Clichy, for the rain to stop falling.