

# Evanescence

Gilles Lazare

I begin by missing buses and trains, timetables I believe are indelibly engraved in my memory are suddenly no longer accessible, and I find myself floundering in vain attempts to recall when and where to be. Gradually my realisation of the reach of this process embraces the people whom I know not intimately, but through acquaintanceship, those who no longer hold any power of remembrance for me..... and so I forget them.

At the same time I find that I am increasingly able to divest myself of the burden of knowledge. I feel my heart swell at the every instance of loss which I experience – a sudden rip of joy surging through my body and transporting me beyond the locus of physical existence. Each fragment discarded is like a sublime interruption in my daily rituals of an utterly ordinary existence. There is no doubt in my mind – I am experiencing my own dissolution.

No-one could be said to be aware of this train of events – and almost certainly it would not concern anyone to pass a moment's thought at this gay abandon with which I shake myself slowly loose of memory, that mental glue which binds me to material life. It is hardly a visible change, at least not at this early stage, and indeed as the process develops I have come to understand that as the material trappings of recollection fade, so too does my presence as an individual within the social fabric of the city I inhabit. I am not invisible but unnoticeable, a nagging uncertainty of a presence, featureless, transparent, a mere outline.

Days pass, weeks even, before I am alerted to the faintest notion of loss or to the crushing experience of lack which grips and twists the modern psyche..... and then it comes..... as a wave of calm and reassurance that yet another face has slipped into the void, another name or another number that will never pop back into mind like a proverbial bad penny, or the nightmare of the eternal return.

With time the process has begun to alter and to change its shape, and thus it is the turn of my own interior, private life, which succumbs to this inexorable drift of unbecoming. It is no longer confined to the external influences and coincidences forced upon me by circumstance, but dissolves the very emotions that colour my fundamental memories of childhood, of lovers and the moments of rapture, of sorrow and regret; all the experiences that define who I am, that give body and weight to my fragile interaction with the world. These too abandon me.

I can no longer reflect upon my life – it no longer exists. Instead I have an ever widening repertoire of interruptions to a reverie that sees in every gesture a moment of poetry, every missed encounter a comedy, and in each face the mask of history – an architecture of misery perpetuated by fear of losing what is only ever an illusion. That edifice is the carapace of humanity – and we are its hunchback servant doomed to love from afar, suffer relentlessly in the hubbub of language and to sacrifice ourselves in the final reckoning, bargaining our lives for a community of speculative futures we will never see, and for a miserable accountancy of the lack we have accumulated in ourselves.

In this dream which is called reality, life unbecomes itself, the sky rests on the earth and I feel the stars fall upon my face like so much water or dust. Without the hindrance of a readymade identity to guide me and focus my interpretation of existing in the world, I find reality decidedly unreal, and locate in the inverse something more substantial, as though reality in fact exists only in between the cracks and fissures of daily life. It is this space of unknowing which now binds me to my neighbours, although I cannot tell how far they are apprised of this new intimacy which has developed, unseen and unwarranted, between us. I sense their unease in my company, although they are barely aware that I am there; they possess a knowledge of something unnameable, something which makes them profoundly uncomfortable, because what is not manifest challenges the security of their lives. It alters the horizon of their perception, inducing a kind of vertigo, a nausea.

I see them sway with a giddiness of unknowing, I alone am witness to their fall. This is not a tragedy, it is a fall back into a profound relation with the world, if only fleeting. But it is an instant which contains the infinite solitude of the soul unfolding from its endless spiral, spinning at a point where speed is overtaken by stillness – the coils of matter enfolding each person begin to unravel, to peel away like an outer skin, and we are left naked, virgin and infinite.

I've tasted life, known pleasures and adapted to their fulfilment, and in this new state found others sharper, more poignant – but they escape me now.

The shapes of emotion and experience bleed from me – a haemorrhage I have neither need nor desire to stem; in fact, it seems to me as definite a confirmation of vitality and existence as my own cycles. It is a redefinition of memory away from the prison of consciousness towards one which knows no duality, only a play of opposites, blending and separating just as light through a prism. Every sensation is a joy of becoming and undoing what has been learned through the years of growing to a limited concept of being. It is not an indulgence..... it is being, in truth, what I feel.

I no longer see myself as an outsider, vicariously sharing an experience through the false medium of memory, but as one in continual flow, a mirror reflecting whatever passes before it yet retaining nothing of what it sees. I am become a shadow of the world, a representation of everything that was and is, but without the stain of memory, the endless repetition of form and function – the fallacy of a vacuous heritage. After all, I have discovered I am.

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published in Inventory volume 3 issue 2 (1999)