

## MICHEL HOUELLEBECQ

Michel Houellebecq (Michel Thomas) je od deväťdesiatych rokov 20. storočia jedným z najprekladanejších a najčítanejších francúzskych autorov. Narodil sa do rodiny lekárky a horského vodcu, na francúzskom ostrove Réunion v roku 1958. Potom, čo sa jeho rodičia rozviedli, sa jeho život čiastočne stabilizoval. Ako šesťročný odišiel žiť k starej mame (ktorej dievčenské meno – Houellebecq, si zvolil za umalecký pseudonym).

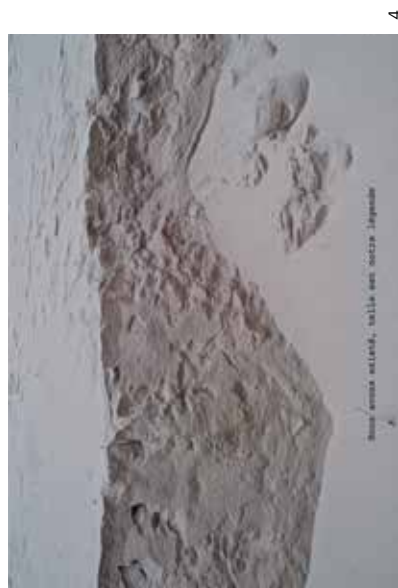
Michel Houellebecq na seba upozornil románmi *Rozšírenie bojového poľa* a *Elementárne častice*, vďaka ktorému ho spoznal široký okruh čitateľov. Tento román a jeho ďalšia kniha *Platforma*, sú považované vo francúzskej literatúre za prekopnícke, najmä pre ich popis citového a sexuálneho trápenia príslušníka západnej civilizácie na prelome tisícročí. Za román *Mápa a územie* získal Michel Houellebecq v roku 2010 *Goncourtovu cenu*.

Ako priaznivec fotografie, ktorú študoval na *École Nationale Louis Lumière* v Paríži – ešte skôr ako zahájil svoju literárnu kariéru – svoje snímky predstavil po prvýkrát v *Pavillon Carré de Baudouin* v Paríži (*Before Landing*, 2014), neskôr v *Palais de Tokyo* v Paríži (*Rester Vivant*, 2016), na *Manifeste 11* v Zürichu (2016) a v galérii *Venus over Manhattan* v New Yorku (*French Bashing*, 2017).

Michel Houellebecq (Michel Thomas) is, since the 1990s, one of the contemporary authors of French language the most translated and read in the world. He was born on the French island Réunion in 1958, his mother was a doctor and his father a mountain guide. His life gained a certain stability after his parents' divorce, when, at the age of six, he went to live with his paternal grandmother (whose maiden name, Houellebecq, he adopted as his pen name).

Michel Houellebecq attracted attention with his novels *Whatever* and especially *Atomised*, which gained him a wide readership. The latter and its successor *Platform* are regarded as pioneering works of French literature, particularly for their description of the emotional and sexual suffering of someone belonging to western civilisation at the turn of the millennium. In 2010 Michel Houellebecq won the Prix Goncourt for his novel *The Map and the Territory*.

As a lover of photography who studied at the *École Nationale Louis Lumière* in Paris before embarking on his literary career, Houellebecq for the first time presented his photographs at *Pavillon Carré de Baudouin*, Paris (*Before Landing*, 2014), later at *Palais de Tokyo*, Paris (*Rester Vivant*, 2016), *Manifeste 11*, Zürich (2016), and *Venus over Manhattan Gallery*, New York (*French Bashing*, 2017).



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1 Michel Houellebecq: *France #013*, farebná tlač na barytovom papieri laminovaná na Dibond, 2016, majetok autora a Air de Paris, Paríž  
Michel Houellebecq: *France #013*, color print on bar paper laminated to Dibond, 2016, courtesy of the artist and Air de Paris, Paris

2 Michel Houellebecq: *France #014*, farebná tlač na barytovom papieri laminovaná na Dibond, 2016, majetok autora a Air de Paris, Paríž  
Michel Houellebecq: *France #014*, color print on bar paper laminated to Dibond, 2016, courtesy of the artist and Air de Paris, Paris

3 Michel Houellebecq: *France #036*, farebná tlač na barytovom papieri laminovaná na Dibond, 2016, majetok autora a Air de Paris, Paríž  
Michel Houellebecq: *France #036*, color print on bar paper laminated to Dibond, 2016, courtesy of the artist and Air de Paris, Paris

4 Michel Houellebecq: *Nipsey #028*, farebná tlač, 2018, majetok autora a Air de Paris, Paríž  
Michel Houellebecq: *Inscriptions #028*, color print, 2018, courtesy of the artist and Air de Paris, Paris

5 Michel Houellebecq: *Nipsey #032*, farebná tlač, 2018, majetok autora a Air de Paris, Paríž  
Michel Houellebecq: *Inscriptions #032*, color print, 2018, courtesy of the artist and Air de Paris, Paris



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TRVANIE VÝSTAVY / DURATION:  
18. máj – 24. jún 2018  
May 18<sup>th</sup> – June 24<sup>th</sup> 2018

Michel Houellebecq: *France #004*, farebná tlač na barytovom papieri laminovaná na Dibond, 2017, majetok autora a Air de Paris, Paríž  
Michel Houellebecq: *France #004*, color print on bar paper laminated to Dibond, 2017, courtesy of the artist and Air de Paris, Paris

Michel Houellebecq: *France #004*, farebná tlač na barytovom papieri laminovaná na Dibond, 2017, majetok autora a Air de Paris, Paríž  
Michel Houellebecq: *France #004*, color print on bar paper laminated to Dibond, 2017, courtesy of the artist and Air de Paris, Paris

# Svet ako supermarket a ako výsmech

Artúr Schopenhauer

Arthur Schopenhauer neveril v Dejiny. Zomrel teda v presvedčení, že jeho zistenia o svete, ktorý na jednej strane existuje ako vôľa (ako túžba, životná energia) a na druhej strane ako predstava (sama osebe neutrálna, nevinná, čisto objektivna, pripravená pre umeleckú tvorbu), prežijú ďalšie generácie.

Dnes môžeme jeho teóriu čiastočne vyvrátiť. Koncepty, ktoré zaviedol, sa ešte môžu v našich životoch objaviť; zmenili sa však natoľko, že sa môžeme pýtať, čo z nich vlastne ešte zostalo. Slovo „vôľa“, zdá sa, označuje dlhodobé pnutie, cielené úsilie, ktoré, či už je uvedoméle alebo nie, vyžaduje koherentnosť a vedie k cieľu. Samozrejme, vtáky si stále stavajú hniezda, jelene bojujú o samičky a podľa Schopenhauera môžeme povedať, že je to ten istý jeleň, ktorý bojuje, tá istá larva, čo si prehrýza cestu popod zem, ako prvý jeleň a prvá larva na tejto hroznej Zemi. U ľudí je to úplne inak. Logika supermarketu vedie nevyhnutne k roztriesteniu túžby; človek supermarketu nemôže byť organicky človekom jednej vôle, jedinej túžby. U súčasného človeka došlo k potlačeniu vôle – niežby jednotlivci túžili menej, nao-pak túžia čoraz viac; ich túžby však nadobudli akúsi krikľavosť farby i zvuku: už nie sú náhradou niečoho, túžby sú z veľkej časti určované vonkajšími faktormi, ktorým vo všeobecnosti hovoríme *reklama*. Žiadna z nich neevokuje túto organickú a absolútnu silu, zameranú na svoje naplnenie, ktorú by sme mohli označiť slovom „vôľa“. Z tohto dôvodu každému do istej miery chýba osobnosť.

Predstava prišla o svoju nevinnosť, pretože ju skrz naskrz prestúpil zmysel. Predstavu môžeme označiť za nevinnú len vtedy, ak je sama sebou, len ak jednoducho predstiera, že je obrazom vonkajšieho sveta (skutočného či neskutočného v každom prípade však vonkajšieho); inými slovami, ide o predstavu, ktorá v sebe neobsahuje kritický komentár. Neustále vkladanie *odkazov*, posmechu, ďalších významov a vysvetlení či humoru do predstáv veľmi rýchlo podkopalo umelecké a filozofické aktivity, ktoré zmenilo na zovšeobecňujúcu rétoriku. Akékoľvek umenie, rovnako ako veda, je prostriedkom komunikácie medzi ľuďmi. Je zrejme, že jej účinnosť a intenzita sa znižuje a zaniká od chvíle, keď sa do vypovedaného vnáša pochybnosť o jeho pravdivosti, o úprimnosti toho, čo sa vyjadruje (predstavujeme si napríklad vedu *druhého* významu?) Tendencné drobenie kreativity v umení tak nie je ničím iným len druhou stranou nemožnosti všetkého súčasného *konverzovať*. V súčasnej konverzácii všetko prebieha tak, akoby bolo nemožné priamo vyjadriť akýkoľvek pocit, emóciu, myšlienku, pretože je to príliš všedné. Všetko musí prechádzať deformačným filtrom *humoru*, humoru, ktorý samozrejme končí v prázdnote a umiera v tragickej nemote. Takto vyzerá história slávnej „nekomunikovateľnosti“ (treba poznamenať, že neustále riešenie tejto otázky nijakým spôsobom nezabránilo nekomunikovateľnosti rozšíriť sa do praxe a neubrlo jej na aktuálnosti, napriek tomu, že nás už vyčerpáva o nej hovoriť) a tragická história malby 20. storočia. Dejiny malby nám poslúžia skôr ako druhostupňová analógia než priame porovnanie k vývoju medziľudskej komunikácie v súčasnosti. V oboidvoch prípadoch sa dostávame do nezdravého, falošného a nesmierne posmešného prostredia, ktoré je v hĺbke svojej smiešnosti tragické. A tak by sa priemerný návštevník galérie, prechádzajúci popri obrazoch, nemal zastavovať pri dieľach, aby si dokázal uchovať postoj ironického odstupu. Po niekoľkých minútach ho však napriek svojej vlastnej vóli pohltnú akýsi nepokoj; pocíti aspoň malátnosť, nevoľnosť; znepokojujúce spomalenie svojej humoristickej funkcie.

(Tragika vstupuje do hry presne vo chvíli, keď už tento nepokoj nemožno vnímať ako *fun*; ide o druh brutálnej psychologickej inverzie, ktorá sa u jednotlivca prejavuje nezmernou túžbou po večnosti. Reklama sa tomuto fenoménu, ktorý protirečí jej cieľu, nevyhýba len prostredníctvom neustáleho obnovovania svojich preludov; avšak poslaním malby je vytvárať trvalé objekty s istým samostatným charakterom; práve táto nostalgia bytia jej dáva bolestnú príchut’ a vďaka a napriek nej malba poskytuje verný obraz duchovného stavu západného človeka.) V rovnakom časovom období však môžeme konštatovať relatívne dobrý zdravotný stav literatúry. Je to veľmi ľahko vysvetliteľné. Literatúra je vo svojej hlbokej podstate konceptuálnym umením; dokonca je v skutočnosti jediným konceptuálnym umením. Slová sú konceptom; klišé je konceptom. Nič nemožno po-tvrdiť, vyvrátiť, zrelativizovať, zosmiešniť bez konceptu a bez slov. Z toho vyplýva prekvapivá šírka literárnej činnosti, ktorá sa môže odmietaať, lynčovať, vyhlasovať sa za nemožnú bez toho, aby prestala byť sama sebou. Čo odporuje všetkým spochybneniam, všetkým dekonštrukciám, všetkým vrstveniam rovín významu, nech by boli akokoľvek mierne; čo sa postaví, otrásie a vyskočí na všetky štyri ako pes, ktorý vyšiel z močiara?

Na rozdiel od hudby, na rozdiel od malby, dokonca aj na rozdiel od filmu, literatúra dokáže absorbovať a stráviť nekonečné množstvo posmeškov a humo-ru. Nebezpečenstvo, ktoré jej dnes hrozí, nemá nič spoločné s tým, čo ohrozo-valo a často zničilo iné druhy umenia; toto nebezpečenstvo oveľa viac súvisí so zrýchlením vnímania a pocitov, ktoré sú charakteristické pre logiku hypermar-ketu. Knihu možno oceniť len *pomalý*; čítanie implicitne vyjadruje myslenie (nie

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sire, as vital impulse), and on the other hand perceived as representation (in itself neutral, innocent, purely objective, and open as such to aesthetic reconstruction), would survive the succession of generations. Today we can say he is partially wrong. The concepts he put in place can still be recognised in the fabric of our lives; but they have undergone such metamorphoses that one can question what validity remains in them. The word “will” seems to indicate a tension of long duration, a continual effort, conscious or not but coherent, towards an aim. Granted, birds still build nests, stags still fight for the possession of females, and in Schopenhauer’s sense one can very well say that it is the same stag that fights, and the same larva that roots about, ever since the difficult day of their first appearance on Earth. It is completely otherwise for men. The logic of the supermarket leads necessarily to a scattering of desires; supermarket man cannot organically be the man of a single will, of a single desire. Hence a certain depression of willpower in con-temporary man: not that individuals desire less, on the contrary they desire more and more; but their desires have acquired something slightly shrill and squealing: without being pure simulacra, they are largely the product of external determina-tions—we will say *advertising* determinations in the broad sense. Nothing in them resembles that organic and total force, obstinately turned towards its accomplish-ment, suggested by the word “will.” Hence a certain lack of personality, perceptible in every one of us. Deeply infected by meaning, representation has lost all innocence. One can call *innocent* a representation which simply presents itself as such, which simply claims to be the image of an external world (real or imaginary, but external); in other terms, which does not include in itself its own critical commentary. The massive introduction of *references*, derision, *irony* and humour into representa-tions has rapidly undermined artistic and philosophical activity by transforming it into generalised rhetoric. All art, like all science, is a means of communication between men. It is obvious that the effectiveness and intensity of communica-tions diminish and tend to cancel each other out the moment when doubt arises on the veracity of what is said, on the sincerity of what is expressed (can one imagine, for example an *ironic* science?). The ongoing disintegration of creativity in the arts is thus only another aspect of the most contemporary impossibility of *conversation*. In fact, everything happens in current conversation as if the direct expression of a feeling, of an emotion, of an idea had become impossi-ble, because deemed too vulgar. Everything must pass through the distorting filter of *humour*, humour which of course ends up empty, and turns into tragic muteness. Such is both the history of the famous “incommunicability” (it should be noted that the endless exploitation of this theme has in no way prevented incommunicability from extending in practice, and it remains relevant more than ever, even if one has become a bit weary of talking about it) and the tragic histo-ry of painting in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The development of painting thus manages to represent, more it is true by analogy of atmosphere than by a direct approach, the development of human communication in the contemporary period. In both cases, we slip into an atmosphere that is unhealthy, rigged, deeply derisory, and tragic precisely due to its derisory nature. Thus the average person passing through a picture gallery must not stop for too long, if he wishes to preserve his attitude of ironic detachment. After a few minutes, he will, despite himself, be seized by a certain disarray; he will feel at least a numbness, a malaise, a worry-ing deceleration of his humour function. (The tragic intervenes exactly at this moment when derision can no longer be perceived as *fun*; it is a sort of brutal psychological inversion, which translates into the appearance in the individual of an indomitable desire for eternity. Advertising can only avoid this phenomenon so contrary to its objectives through an endless renewal of its simulacra; but painting keeps as its vocation the creation of perma-nent objects with their own character; it is this nostalgia for being which gives it its sorrowful halo, and makes of it, despite everything, a faithful reflection of the spiritual situation of western man.) In contrast, one will note the relatively good health of literature during the same period. This is very easy to explain. Literature is, profoundly, a conceptual art; it is even, strictly speaking, the only one. Words are concepts; clichés are con-cepts. Nothing can be asserted, denied, put into perspective, and mocked without the help of concepts, and of words. Hence the astonishing robustness of literary activity, which can refuse itself, destroy itself, and decree itself impossible without ceasing to be itself. Which resists all the *mises en abyme*, all the deconstructions, and all the accumulations of degrees, however subtle they may be; which simply lifts itself back up, shakes itself and gets back on its paws, like a dog emerging from a pond.

v zmysle intelektuálneho úsilia, ale v zmysle *návratu späť*); čítanie bez prestávky, bez pohybu dozadu, bez opätovného čítania neexistuje. Ide o nemožnú, a dokonca i absurdnú činnosť vo svete, kde sa všetko vyvíja, plynie, kde nič nemá stálu platnosť: ani pravidlá, ani veci, ani tvory. Literatúra sa zo všetkých svojich síl (ktoré sú obrovské) snaží oponovať permanentnej prítomnosti, nekončiacemu teraz. Knihy čitateľov volajú; avšak títo čitatelia musia mať vlastnú individuálnu a sta-bilnú existenciu: nemôžu byť obyčajnými spotrebiteľmi, obyčajnými fantómami; musia byť istým spôsobom *subjektmi*.

Súčasní obyvatelia Západu sú vyzbrojení zbabelou posadnutosťou *politickou korektnosťou*, ohúrení záplavou pseudoinformácií, ktoré im poskytujú ilúziu ne-ustálej zmeny kategórií bytia (*už* si nemôžeme myslieť to, čo si ľudia mysleli pred desiatimi, sto, tisíc rokmi), a preto dnešní ľudia nedokážu byť čitateľmi; nedokážu uspokojiť ani nenáročnú požiadavku knihy, ktorá leží pred nimi: byť jednoducho ľudskou bytosťou, myslieť a cítiť za seba.

Navyše, túto rolu nemôžu hrať pred inou bytosťou. Napriek tomu je to nevyhnutné: pretože rozklad bytia je tragickým rozkladom; a každý človek uml-čaný bolestnou nostalgiou neustále požaduje od druhého, aby bol niekým, kým on sám byť nedokáže; hľadá ako slepý príznak (ťažobu bytia, ktorú už nedokáže nájsť v sebe. Ten odpor, tú trvalosť, tú hlbku. Samozrejme, každý zlyhá a samota je zverská.

Titulná strana knihy

Smrť Boha na Západe bola predohrou k úžasnému metafyzickému fejtónu, ktorý trvá dodnes. Akýkoľvek znalec dejín ľudskej mentality dokáže opísať jeho fázy; aby sme to zhrnuli, povedzme, že kresťanstvu sa podaril *majstrovský kus*, keď spojilo nesmelú vieru v jednotlivca – čerpajúc z listov svätého Pavla nám celá sta-roveká kultúra pripadá podivne vyspelá a jednotvárna – s prísľubom večnej účasti na absolútnom Bytí. Potom, čo sa tento sen rozplynul, prišlo viacero pokusov prí-sľubiť jednotlivcovi aspoň minimum bytia; s cieľom spojiť túžbu byť, ktorú v sebe nosí, so všadeprítomnou túžbou stať sa. Všetky tieto pokusy zlyhali a nešťastie sa naďalej rozširuje.

Reklama je posledným z týchto pokusov. Napriek tomu, že sa snaží podne-covať, provokovať, byť túžbou, sú jej metódy v zásade príbuzné tým, ktoré cha-rakterizovali starovekú morálku. Vytvára desivé a nefútostné Superego, ktoré je nefútostnejšie než akýkoľvek imperatív, aký kedy existoval, ktoré sa lepí na pokožku jednotlivca a neustále mu opakuje: „Musíš túžiť. Musíš byť príťažlivý. Musíš bojovať v súťaži, v bitke, v živote sveta. Ak prestaneš, neexistuješ. Ak zaostaneš, si mŕtvy.“ Reklama popiera pojem večnosti, definuje samu seba ako neustálu obnovu a jej cieľom je teda rozpustiť subjekt, transformovať ho na príznak, ktorý sa tomuto procesu nebráni. A táto epidemická účasť, príživujúca sa na povrchu života sveta, má nahradiť túžbu byť.

Reklama zlyháva, prípadov depresii pribúda, rozklad sa zrýchľuje; reklama však napriek tomu neprestáva búšiť na infraštruktúry prijímania svojich odkazov. Naďalej zdokonaľuje prostriedky cestovania pre bytosti, ktoré nemajú kam ísť, pretože nikde nie sú doma; rozvíja komunikačné nástroje pre bytosti, ktoré už nemajú čo povedať; uľahčuje možnosti interakcie medzi bytosťami, ktoré nemajú záujem nadviazať vzťah s kýmkoľvek.

Z francúzskeho originálu

„V súčasnej konverzácii všetko prebieha tak, akoby bolo nemožné priamo vyjadriť akýkoľvek pocit, emóciu, myšlienku, pretože je to príliš všedné.“

Z francúzskeho originálu

Z francúzskeho originálu preložila Aňa Ostrihoňová. Text vyšiel v knihe *Zostať nažive a iné texty*, INAQUE: 2014.

V originále – úryvok zo zboru esejí Michela Houellebecq – *Prístupy k rozvratu* publikovaný v *Genius Loci* (La Différence, 1992), opätovne vydaný v knihe *Interventions* (Flammarion, 1998), a v katalógu k výstave *Rester vivant* (Flammarion a Palais de Tokyo, 2016).

# The world as supermarket and as derision

Artúr Schopenhauer

Arthur Schopenhauer did not believe in History. He therefore died convinced that the revelation he brought on the world, on the one hand existing as will (as de-

sire, as vital impulse), and on the other hand perceived as representation (in itself neutral, innocent, purely objective, and open as such to aesthetic reconstruction), would survive the succession of generations. Today we can say he is partially wrong. The concepts he put in place can still be recognised in the fabric of our lives; but they have undergone such metamorphoses that one can question what validity remains in them. The word “will” seems to indicate a tension of long duration, a continual effort, conscious or not but coherent, towards an aim. Granted, birds still build nests, stags still fight for the possession of females, and in Schopenhauer’s sense one can very well say that it is the same stag that fights, and the same larva that roots about, ever since the difficult day of their first appearance on Earth. It is completely otherwise for men. 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Thus the average person passing through a picture gallery must not stop for too long, if he wishes to preserve his attitude of ironic detachment. After a few minutes, he will, despite himself, be seized by a certain disarray; he will feel at least a numbness, a malaise, a worry-ing deceleration of his humour function. (The tragic intervenes exactly at this moment when derision can no longer be perceived as *fun*; it is a sort of brutal psychological inversion, which translates into the appearance in the individual of an indomitable desire for eternity. Advertising can only avoid this phenomenon so contrary to its objectives through an endless renewal of its simulacra; but painting keeps as its vocation the creation of perma-nent objects with their own character; it is this nostalgia for being which gives it its sorrowful halo, and makes of it, despite everything, a faithful reflection of the spiritual situation of western man.) In contrast, one will note the relatively good health of literature during the same period. This is very easy to explain. Literature is, profoundly, a conceptual art; it is even, strictly speaking, the only one. Words are concepts; clichés are con-cepts. Nothing can be asserted, denied, put into perspective, and mocked without the help of concepts, and of words. Hence the astonishing robustness of literary activity, which can refuse itself, destroy itself, and decree itself impossible without ceasing to be itself. Which resists all the *mises en abyme*, all the deconstructions, and all the accumulations of degrees, however subtle they may be; which simply lifts itself back up, shakes itself and gets back on its paws, like a dog emerging from a pond.

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Unlike music, unlike painting, and also unlike cinema, literature can thus absorb and digest limitless quantities of derision and humour. The dangers threat-ening it today are nothing like those which have threatened, and sometimes de-stroyed, the other arts; they are due much more to the acceleration of perceptions and sensations which characterises the logic of the hypermarket. A book can only be appreciated *slowly*; it implies reflection (not in the sense of intellectual effort, but in that of *flashback*); there is no reading without stopping, without re-verse movement, without re-reading. This is an impossible or even absurd thing in a world where everything evolves and fluctuates, where nothing has permanent validity; neither rules, nor things, nor beings. With all its strength (which once was great), literature opposes the notion of permanent actuality, of perpetual present. Books call for readers; but these readers must have an individual and stable existe-ence: they cannot be pure consumers, pure ghosts; they must also be, in some way or other, *subjects*.

Undermined by the cowardly haunting of the *politically correct*, dumbfound-ed by a flow of pseudo-information which gives them the illusion of a permanent modification of the categories of existence (one *can no longer* think what was thought ten, a hundred or a thousand years ago), contemporary Westerners can no longer manage to be readers; they can no longer satisfy that humble request from a book placed in front of them: to simply be human beings, thinking and feeling for themselves.

Even more so, they cannot play this role in the face of another being. But they would have to: for this dissolution of being is a tragic one; and each of us contin-ues, moved by a painful nostalgia, to ask of the other what he can no longer be; to seek, like a blinded ghost, that weight of being he no longer finds in himself. That resistance, that permanence; that depth. Of course, all of us fail, and the solitude is atrocious.

Titulná strana knihy

The death of God in the West constituted the prelude to a great metaphysical serial that has continued to this day. Any historian of mentalities would be able to reconstruct the detail of the stages; let’s say, to summarise, that Christianity pulled off the *masterstroke* of combining a fierce belief in the individual – compared to the Epistles of Saint Paul, the whole of ancient culture seems to us today to be curiously policed and dreary – with the promise of eternal participation in Absol-ute Being. Once this dream had vanished, various attempts were made to promise the individual a minimum of being; to reconcile the dream of being he had in him with the haunting omnipresence of becoming. All these attempts, until now, have failed, and the unhappiness has continued to spread.

Advertising constitutes the latest in these attempts. Although it aims to arouse, provoke, and *be* desire, its methods are basically quite close to those that characterised former morality. In effect, it puts in place a terrifying and hard Su-perego, which is much more pitiless than any previously existing imperative, and clings to the individual to whom it endlessly repeats: “You must desire. You must be desirable. You must participate in competition, struggle, the life of the world. If you stop, you stop existing. If you lag behind, you are dead.” Denying all notion of eternity, defining itself as a process of permanent renewal, advertising aims to vaporise the subject and turn him into an obedient ghost of becoming. And this skin-deep, superficial participation in the life of the world is supposed to take the place of the desire to be.

Advertising fails, depressions multiply, the disarray worsens; advertising continues, however, to build the infrastructures for the reception of its messages. It continues to perfect means of movement for beings who have nowhere to go, because they are nowhere at home; to develop means of communication for be-ings who have nothing left to say; to facilitate possibilities of interaction between beings who no longer wish to enter into relations with anyone.

Z francúzskeho originálu

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Extract from «*Approches du désarroi*» by Michel Houellebecq Published in *Genius Loci* (La Différence, 1992). Re-published in *Interventions* (Flammarion, 1998). *Rester Vivant* (Flammarion and Palais de Tokyo, 2016).