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# Living in Minnesota

Excerpts from  
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Introduction  
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In one of my children's bedrooms, a poster bearing the photograph of the space ship *Enterprise* claims, «All I need to know about life I learned from *Star Trek*». The meaning of this poster lays witness to an American attitude towards to culture. In American, it is not forbidden to claim one's debt towards popular fiction, and, at the same time, to watch it from a distance. It is not forbidden to mix tenderness with irony.

One day, after having seen *Sneakers*, a wonderful feature by Phil Alden Robinson, I began to list the titles of all the movies I had seen which had made their mark on me since childhood. I was playing with the vague idea of writing something I'd name, «A Movie each Day » that would pay homage to Francois Truffaut's *Les Films de ma Vie* (« Movies of my Life »). Mine wasn't to be a critical text, but a series of reminiscences in which movies would build up emotional landmarks. I wanted to define what they had aroused in me, at a given moment, and, in doing so, what they had underlined or accompanied.

When I had written down fifty-one titles, I thought it'd be impossible to recall one movie for *each* day of the year. Had I seen enough of them? Surely so, but did they all have for me an intimate worth? Should I let them surface spontaneously or should I plunge myself into film books? And furthermore, *why only films*? I like movies, but also books and lots of other mediums of the imaginary. I owe some pleasant emotions to comic books, to television series, to theatrical plays, to radio fictions and grooves on old records. . .

I grew up in fiction.

It protected me from sufferings that oozed from my family and provided consolation for my troubles. Just as the young mutant hero in Theodore Sturgeon's *The Dreaming Jewels* devours ants in order to find the substance which he lacks, I devoured stories under all forms. They have always been and always will be my drug and my indispensable form of energy.

But in digging a little bit deeper, we would say that a fiction isn't only a story invented by someone else. Everything around us feeds itself with the imaginary. The events, verified by established and indisputable reality, that I find myself sometimes citing in an almost generic manner («my

birth», «my place of birth», «my years at college / in military service / in hell», «my first marriage», «the death of my father») are just fables. Dreams and memories are always a window dressing : born in a dark room, they are projected outside of themselves, they both show and hide – psychoanalysis uses the phrase *screen memories*. All the pictures of ourselves in the midst of others are only small stories pieced together. In order not to dissolve in the passing of time, each man, each woman, elaborates his or her personal fictions – lies, fantasies, false impressions, insane hopes, irresistible conquests, ruthless vengeance, and perfect crimes. For a writer, writings planned or in progress are fictions well before they become books, and after they reach the shelves, his books become fictions that belong to others than himself . . .

Memory is an underwater world: as lively as coral life, imagination slowly recovers the wreck of each event, real or not; monsters born in the unconscious abyss dwell or devour the shimmering forms which we met. Soon, the memory of fictions intertwine with the fiction of memories . . .

In my head and on the paper, I abandoned the conjuring up of movies and decided to write a memoir. I wanted to explore in every which way the stories which fed my emotions and those which I elaborated in order to ease the pain of all my loss and ease my horror of blank spots. The text (the book) which I wanted henceforth to write would be a new invention of my life, real and dreamed, in a suspended world.

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The fictions which make up an individual all coexist in a given moment, but they are constantly displaced by the unending (e)motions of life. The simple fact of writing them (of reading them) cannot illustrate their Brownian Movement. In this book, writing and reading should fluctuate and be unforeseeable, as are the fictions of everyday life. In my search through the sediments of my interior worlds, I aim to move your own.