

which is supposed to be the best restaurant in the world. And it was good. I had good green noodles with excellent sauce. In the afternoon, went to see Steve McQueen in Italian. I had a beer in a square. Then some guy tried to pick me up. I think I will have a bad dream about it tonight.' And that's it. I also find a postcard addressed to someone named Olivier R (no address). In it the occupant of Room 25 describes in detail the menu of his latest meal.

Thursday 19th, noon. He is gone. He has left his orange peel in the wastebasket, three fresh eggs on the windowsill and the remains of a croissant which I polish off. I shall miss him.

Sophie Calle, extract from *L'Hôtel* (1981); reprinted in Sophie Calle, *L'Hôtel* (Paris: Éditions de l'Étoile, 1984); second edition (Arles: Actes Sud, 1998); trans. in Calle, *M'as-tu vue* (Munich, Berlin, London, New York: Prestel, 2003) n.p.

Paul Auster and Sophie Calle

Double Game//1999

The Rules of the Game (from *Double Game* by Sophie Calle)

In his novel *Leviathan*, Paul Auster thanks me for having authorized him to mingle fact with fiction. And indeed, on pages 60 to 67 of his book, he uses a number of episodes from my life to create a fictive character named Maria. Intrigued by this double, I decided to turn Paul Auster's novel into a game and to make my own particular mixture of reality and fiction.

I. *The life of Maria and how it influenced the life of Sophie.*

In *Leviathan*, Maria puts herself through the same rituals as I did. But Paul Auster has slipped some rules of his own inventing into his portrait of Maria. In order to bring Maria and myself closer together, I decided to go by the book.

II. *The life of Sophie and how it influenced the life of Maria.*

The rituals that Auster 'borrowed' from me to shape Maria are: *The Wardrobe*, *The Striptease*, *To Follow ...*, *Suite venitienne*, *The Detective*, *The Hotel*, *The Address Book*, and *The Birthday Ceremony*. *Leviathan* gives me the opportunity to present these artistic projects that inspired the author and which Maria and I now share.

III. *One of the many ways of mingling fact with fiction, or how to try to become a character out of a novel.*

Since, in *Leviathan*, Auster has taken me as a subject, I imagined swapping roles and taking him as the author of my actions. I asked him to invent a fictive character which I would attempt to resemble. Instead, Auster preferred to send me 'Personal Instructions for SC on How to Improve Life in New York City (Because she asked ...)'. I followed his directives. This project is entitled *Gotham Handbook*.

Gotham Handbook (Paul Auster)

Smiling

Smile when the situation doesn't call for it.

Smile when you're feeling angry, when you're feeling miserable, when you're feeling most crushed by the world – and see if it makes any difference.

Smile at strangers in the street. New York can be dangerous, so you must be careful. If you prefer, smile only at female strangers. (Men are beasts, and they must not be given the wrong idea.)

Nevertheless, smile as often as possible at people you don't know. Smile at the bank teller who gives you your money, at the waitress who gives you your food, at the person sitting across from you on the IRT.

See if anyone smiles back at you.

Keep track of the number of smiles you are given each day.

Don't be disappointed when people don't smile back at you.

Consider each smile you receive a precious gift. [...]

Beggars and Homeless People

I'm not asking you to reinvent the world.

I just want you to pay attention to it, to think about the things around you more than you think about yourself. At least while you're outside, walking down the street on your way from here to there.

Don't ignore the miserable ones. They are everywhere, and a person can grow so accustomed to seeing them that he begins to forget they are there. Don't forget.

I'm not asking you to give all your money to the poor. Even if you did, poverty would still exist (and have one more member among its ranks). At the same time, it's our responsibility as human beings not to harden our hearts. Action is necessary, no matter how small or hopeless our gestures might seem to be.

Stock up on bread and cheese. Every time you leave the house, make three or four sandwiches and put them in your pocket. Every time you see a hungry person, give him a sandwich.

Stock up on cigarettes as well. Common wisdom says that cigarettes are bad

for your health, but what common wisdom neglects to say is that they also give great comfort to the people who smoke them.

Don't just give one or two. Give away whole packs.

If you find your pockets can't hold enough sandwiches, go to the nearest McDonald's and buy as many meal coupons as you can afford. Give these coupons away when you're out of cheese sandwiches. You might not like the food at McDonald's, but most people do. Considering the alternatives, they give pretty good value for money. These coupons will be especially helpful on cold days. Not only will the hungry person be able to fill his stomach, he'll be able to go inside somewhere and get warm.

If you can't think of anything to say when you give the coupon to the hungry person, talk about the weather.

Cultivating a Spot

People are not the only ones neglected in New York.

Things are neglected as well. I don't just mean big things like bridges and subway tracks, I mean the small, barely noticeable things standing right in front of our eyes: patches of sidewalk, walls, park benches. Look closely at the things around you and you'll see that nearly everything is falling apart.

Pick one spot in the city and begin to think of it as yours. It doesn't matter where, and it doesn't matter what. A street corner, a subway entrance, a tree in the park. Take on this place as your responsibility. Keep it clean. Beautify it. Think of it as an extension of who you are, as a part of your identity. Take as much pride in it as you would in your own home.

Go to your spot every day at the same time. Spend an hour watching everything that happens to it, keeping track of everyone who passes by or stops or does anything there. Take notes, take photographs. Make a record of these daily observations, and see if you learn anything about the people, or the place, or yourself.

Smile at the people who come there. Whenever possible, talk to them. If you can't think of anything to say, begin by talking about the weather.

Paul Auster, 'Gotham Handbook. Personal instructions for S.C. on how to improve life in New York City (because she asked)', in Sophie Calle, *Double Game* (London: Violette Editions, 1999); texts reprinted in Paul Auster, *Collected Prose* (London: Faber and Faber, 2003) 285–7.

Abigail Solomon-Godeau *Inside/Out//1994*

In her withering critique of the work of Diane Arbus – itself part of a larger thesis about the baleful effects of the photographic colonization of the world and its objects – Susan Sontag argued that certain forms of photographic depiction were especially complicit with processes of objectification that precluded either empathy or identification with the subjects in Arbus' photographs. In producing a photographic oeuvre largely featuring subjects who were physically deviant (e.g., freaks) or those deemed socially deviant (e.g., transvestites, nudists) or even those who through Arbus' singular lens merely looked deviant (e.g., crying babies) and by photographing them in ways that defiantly renounced either compassion or sympathetic engagement, Arbus was indicted as a voyeuristic and deeply morbid connoisseur of the horrible:

The camera is a kind of passport that annihilates moral boundaries and social inhibitions, freeing the photographer from any responsibility toward the people photographed. The whole point of photographing people is that you are not intervening in their lives, only visiting them. The photographer is supertourist, an extension of the anthropologist, visiting natives and bringing back news of their exotic doings and strange gear. The photographer is always trying to colonize new experiences or find new ways to look at familiar subjects – to fight against boredom. For boredom is just the reverse side of fascination: both depend on being outside rather than inside a situation, and one leads to the other.¹

Sontag's critique of the touristic and anomic sensibility informing the work of Arbus (a critique that was clearly meant to encompass many other comparable practices) turns, among other things, on the binary couple inside/outside. Sontag in fact closes the paragraph cited above by remarking of Arbus that 'her view is always from the outside'. This binarism, which is but one of a series that underpins much photography theory and criticism, characterizes – in a manner that appears virtually self-evident – two possible positions for the photographer. The insider position – in this particular context, the 'good' position – is thus understood to imply a position of engagement, participation and privileged knowledge, whereas the second, the outsider's position, is taken to produce an alienated and voyeuristic relationship that heightens the distance between subject and object. Along the lines of this binarism hinges much of the debate concerned with either the ethics or the politics of certain forms of photographic