

The Art of Commuting

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A journey. But not just a journey. A journey over eight wheels with at least one person and multiple destinations. A different story is told in every trip, it can last ten minutes or two hours. However, characters do not change. They might be standing, sitting, leaning over one another or struggling not to fall after a sudden lurch. Some people could say that acting is not for everyone without realizing that they are actually playing a part or making one up every day. Today, I have been lucky enough to pick my seat: the third one from back to front.

Three performers are already on stage. Two of them are window watchers, commonly known as control freaks. Like a gossipy neighbour whose life is not exciting enough and tries to make up for that by thoroughly examining the outside world day and night, these living beings are glued to the windowpane. Knowing what goes round inside is not enough for them, they feel the need to look outside too. Whether or not they achieve their goal is a mystery. As my mother would say “trying to be everywhere and ending up being nowhere, what a gift!”. These specimens belong to the security system of the theatre, although for me that is just a discrete and polite labeling, an understatement. The third one is a technology efector. They have been society’s latest acquisition. These wired gadgets, as dynamic as statues with a human appearance, have such control over themselves that they are capable of separating mind and body and still manage to breathe. Their source of power seems to be a pandoric device attached and directly connected to their limbs. Their senses are completely shut down so, even if Zeus were not in a good mood and a lightning bolt should slip through his fingers, they would not bat an eyelid. Scientist have not yet discovered how they really function, but they do.

Just when the play is reaching the climax, an advertiser pops up (and I say “pops” because no one ever knows how they manage to get in, until you listen to them). Their presence is ephemeral yet annoying enough to interrupt the silliest activity such as planning dinner. The agony goes from the first minute they stand next to the front door to the glorious moment when they finish their speech and decide to get off. By the time this type finish, even Homer would be lost in the scene. Anyway, it is said that the show must go on. At last, as efficient as they are late, the set designers have arrived. Antmen are hardly seen but definitely felt at the theatre (especially when you start feeling a notorious reduction of space and air). There are usually more than one and they all seem to be moving out. Their luggage includes two or three bags, a box (preferably huge and unplaceable), gifts, lunch boxes, books, folders, “just in case” stuff, an umbrella, clothes... in short, everything that is needed for a successful play. Teamwork as well as juggling courses are essential requirements when getting the job. The box office driver announces the last stop. There is one of them in every theatre and although not all of them talk, they all have that penetrating look which

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slightly softens when you pay the ticket. Time has won this time, the performance is not over but the curtains must go down.

Commuting can be a 24 hour Odyssey. Fortunately, times have changed and it no longer takes ten years to get back home. However, it is not all about time, but about perspective: whether you sit and just wait to reach your destination surrounded by dozens of people swaying up and down with every slam of the brakes or take part in an improvised artistic masterpiece is what determines how tiresome or pleasant a journey can be. Ten minutes are enough to travel, laugh, doze off and even eat popcorn. Now hurry up and stop reading the script, the play is about to start and you still have to give the last touch to your make up!