

Springboards

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Coffee Shop Notes

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PEREC, GEORGES. *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*. A witty collection of thoughts and wandering introspection. Highlight: "Reading: A Socio-Psychological Outline"—'We read a lot when traveling. A Special form of literature—known as station bookstall literature—is even set aside for it. We read above all in railway trains. In aeroplanes, we mainly look at magazines. Shops are becoming more and more rare. From the reading point of view, in any case, a ship is nothing more than a chaise longue[sic].'

For textualterists (think 'Grigely' and his work), here is a passage from Percec, following the one quoted above: 'Throughout these pages, I have not concerned myself with what was being read, whether book or newspaper or leaflet. Simply with the fact that it was being read, in different places and different times. What becomes of the text, what does it leave behind? How do we perceive a novel that is extended between Montgallet and Jacques-Bonsergent? How is this chopping-up of the text effected, when our taking charge of it is interfered with by our own bodies, by other people, by the time, by the din of the crowd? These are questions that I ask, and I think there is some point in a writer asking them.'

Also poignantly thoughtful are the two pieces: "Brief Notes on the Art and Manner of Arranging One's Books," which discusses different ways of cataloguing your own personal library and the difficulties involved (bibliophiles will laugh when they read this!); and the title piece, "Species of Spaces" which discusses not only physical spaces like town squares, or countries, but also measures and personal spaces, such as in meetings, and the uninhabitable. These ruminations are likely to provoke further thought, instead of providing conclusions.

For deaf and signing people, Percec is a good literary source from which we can draw inspiration in the examination of the intricacies of our common community—insofar as he does not adhere to any particular ideology (Marxism, Deconstruction, Utilitarian, et cetera) nor any specific system of classification. Rather, the subjects of his mind's eye are good springboards for future inquiries. For instance, using "Species of Spaces" as a springboard, one can imagine discussing deaf spaces such as: light or the absence thereof, physical proximity, privacy/public eye, informational exchanges as mentally enlightening or invasive, the way a room changes its space being inhabited by hearing or deaf people, the use of mirrors in conversing around walls, how small America can be with ties of kinship and kith spanning the country and beyond, and the distance between signers in bed together.

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