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In experiments with rats

de
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traducción de
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(fragmento en inglés)

CHARACTERS

POL POT, male white rat

STALIN, male white rat

IDI AMIN, male white rat

SADDAM HUSSEIN, male white rat

G., scientist, 53 years old

PENA, his wife, 45 years old

LEO, daughter of Pena and G., 6 years old

MILA, mistress of G., 33 years old

SCENE 1

Rectangular glass chamber.

In one corner, a small container with water and food.

IDI AMIN, SADDAM HUSSEIN, STALIN and POL POT, with various electrodes attached to their heads and bodies, stand motionless together in the center of the chamber. Suddenly, POL POT breaks away from the others and walks slowly to one side. He stops. He moves, almost imperceptibly. He stops. He moves again, this time in circles. After repeating the motion several times, he receives an electric shock that paralyzes him and leaves him sprawled on the ground with his arms and legs tensed.

POL POT

The world is becoming a fucking international airport.

The streets are like terminals.

People, people, people, acting as if they're waiting for a flight that hasn't arrived, that will never arrive.

They don't breathe anymore, they hold their breath. Reflected in their eyes are walls of windows.

They walk around each day completely cut off from everyone else who's walking alongside them.

The streets are like terminals.

Nobody touches each other, nobody looks at each other, nobody listens to each other.

The conversations are like going through check-in.

Everyone carries some type of electronic device that protects them.

Headphones, telephones, computers.

If a man finds himself with a beautiful woman in a park and asks her, "What's your name?" she'll respond, "Passport, please. Do you have any bags?"

If he tells her, "Do you mind if I call you so we can go to the movies? Maybe grab a drink?" she'll hardly look at him and respond, "Are you carrying any sharp objects, sir? Any liquids? Are you a terrorist? If you'd be so kind, could you tell me if you're carrying a bomb inside your Samsonite? Please take out your computer. Now."

And if he insists on asking her how old she is, where she lives, what her hobbies are, she might start shouting, threatening him with her fist, "Hands up! Take off your belt and shoes! Get undressed right now, sir, if you don't want to be arrested!"

The cafes are like boarding gates.

The conversations are like going through check-in.

Banality doesn't exist. A joke can change your life. A sidelong glance, a little impertinence and you could be interrogated mercilessly for weeks in a secret prison two thousand feet up. It happens. It really does.

There are security checkpoints every five minutes, every five feet. The world has become one unchecked security checkpoint.

People, however, they can do many things.

People can go wild, people can take a piss in the middle of the street and get naked and have a fucking good time, but not knowing who they are, what their name is, who their grandparents and their parents are and where their mothers gave birth to them, that's strictly prohibited.

The consensus on identity is the foundation of coexistence. Period.
 You have to be completely sure of who you are or else.
 Or else. Or else. Or else.
 You have to know how to respond to the same questions in the same way.
 Inertia will save your life. Automation will give you soul. If not.
 If you can't respond to the same questions in the same way, there's no way to save yourself. You
 could lose your most prized possession. That's to say.
 You should reproduce what's produced. Faithfully. Passionately.
 Everything is recorded and reproduced. Consent doesn't exist.
 Everything is staged. Subjugation exists.
 We don't exist. We are a priority for no one.
 If we were a priority for someone, they wouldn't scorch us like they do, so, so, so, so, so, so, so, so, so,
 so, so, so, so, so, so, so, so easily.
 Shit. God damn it-motherfucker.
 If we existed, we would be a priority for someone-motherfucking-shit.
 The world has become one gigantic cinematic study.
 Every moment is a scene. The dialogues go round and round, snuffing each other out.
 Anyone can act out their own existence brilliantly, but they're incapable of living it personally.
 There aren't any professions. There aren't any categories. There aren't any distinctions.
 Everything is susceptible to.
 Everything is scrupulously separated and mixed without any sort of scruples.
 Everything is perishable. Everything has turned into money. Money is life itself.
 Money lends meaning given the lack of such characteristic meaning.
 The world has become a powerful anemone that devours itself in perfectly timed cycles that come
 one after the other after the other.

*He is cut off by another electric shock, much more intense than the previous one he
 received.*

Gigantic waves will wipe out civilizations.
 Meteorites will bring good news.
 Oxygen will be black as ink.
 Science will fall definitively into darkness during its long expedition to the other side of matter.

*He crumbles to the ground. IDI AMIN, STALIN and SADDAM HUSSEIN approach
 POL POT and stand above him.*

IDI AMIN
 Is he alive?

STALIN
 It's not humanly possible to know.

SADDAM HUSSEIN
 It seems like this time they really did fry his brain.

IDI AMIN

Did anyone understand a word of what he was saying?

SADDAM HUSSEIN

Nope, not a one.

IDI AMIN

What was he talking about?

STALIN

It's hard to know for sure. I don't think he even knows. It's the electric shock that makes him talk like that. It's as if another rat were speaking instead of him.

IDI AMIN

Another rat? What other rat?

STALIN

It's a manner of speaking.

IDI AMIN

A manner of speaking? Whose? What?

STALIN

To say that he's not the one speaking is a manner of speaking. But of course he's the one speaking. Obviously. I'm not saying he's not. Get it?

Silence.

SADDAM HUSSEIN

No, but it doesn't matter.

IDI AMIN

It lasted a while this time.

SADDAM HUSSEIN

When he talks like that, it scares me.

STALIN

Calm down.

SADDAM HUSSEIN

I can't watch him suffer like that.

IDI AMIN

Why does he say such strange things?

SADDAM HUSSEIN

It won't let up. It's torturing him.

IDI AMIN

He's never said things like that before.

SADDAM HUSSEIN

It must be a side effect.

STALIN

Collateral. I think he's trying to tell us something.

SADDAM HUSSEIN

But if he wanted to tell us something, why doesn't he just tell us and that's that?

STALIN

Because he's not the one talking during the shocks. It's another rat. A rat that needs the shocks to manifest itself, that needs his body to talk.

IDI AMIN

Another rat? Where?

SADDAM HUSSEIN

When I want to tell you guys something, I just tell you guys and that's that.

STALIN

Never mind. He's moving.

POL POT begins to move slowly.

SADDAM HUSSEIN

How do you feel?

POL POT stares at them as if he doesn't recognize them.

POL POT

What . . . what happened?

IDI AMIN

Nothing. You went a little crazy.

SADDAM HUSSEIN

Are you okay?

IDI AMIN

We didn't understand anything.

POL POT

Who are you?

SADDAM HUSSEIN

Who are we? Who else would we be?

STALIN

Do you remember anything of what you said?

SADDAM HUSSEIN

Who are you? Don't get any closer.

STALIN

Do you remember what you said?

IDI AMIN

Don't overwhelm him.

POL POT

I don't know what I said. What did I say?

IDI AMIN

Nothing. You were talking about an international airport.

POL POT

An international airport?

IDI AMIN

The world has become a fucking international airport.

SADDAM HUSSEIN

Gigantic waves will wipe out civilizations. Science will fall definitively into darkness during its long expedition to the other side of matter.

STALIN

Consent doesn't exist. Subjugation exists.

IDI AMIN

You have to know how to respond to the same questions in the same way.

POL POT

Where am I?

STALIN

We don't exist.

IDI AMIN

The world has become one gigantic cinematic study.

SADDAM HUSSEIN

Oxygen will be black as ink.

STALIN

We are a priority for no one.

Silence.

POL POT

I feel . . . I feel a little dizzy . . .

POL POT faints.

IDI AMIN

Are you okay?

SADDAM HUSSEIN

He's exhausted. The shocks are too strong . . . I don't understand why him exactly . . . and at that intensity . . .

STALIN

There's nothing to understand. It is what it is. You just have to accept it. The shock simply comes.

The three repeat in unison, as if praying: "The shock simply comes." Silence.

IDI AMIN

What are you thinking about?

STALIN

Nothing.

IDI AMIN

What's wrong?

STALIN

Nothing. But it's true what he said. Even if I didn't understand it all.

IDI AMIN

Which part? He said a lot of things.

STALIN

We don't exist.

IDI AMIN
We don't?

STALIN
No. Think about it.

Silence.

IDI AMIN
All right. I've thought about it. I don't see it.

STALIN
We should be a priority for someone. That's what he said.

IDI AMIN
And?

STALIN
And? We're not.

IDI AMIN
Yes we are. We're a priority for the electric shock.

STALIN
Think about it. If nothing exists that can stop these shocks, in a way it's like we don't exist. We should be a priority for someone . . . someone superior to the shock. There should be something, whatever that may be, that could stop them from scorching us so . . . so . . .

SADDAM HUSSEIN
Easily.

IDI AMIN
Who is this someone?

SADDAM HUSSEIN
What is this something?

STALIN
I don't know. Maybe he doesn't even know.

IDI AMIN
There is no someone. If they existed, they would've done something for us a long time ago.

SADDAM HUSSEIN
And this something, can you touch it?

STALIN

I don't know. I'm working on it. The only thing I know is that we either lost this something or we never had it to begin with.

SADDAM HUSSEIN

If we lost it, we could get it back. Maybe it's inside here right now.

STALIN

Don't be stupid. There's nothing inside here. Please. Look around you. Where are we? Does anyone know? What is this place? What is it? I'll tell you: it's a place that doesn't exist. We know we should be somewhere, but we don't know exactly where. It's like a non-place. A place on the fringes of all other places. And what is that? We don't know. The fact is that because we're in this non-place that doesn't exist, we don't have existence ourselves. We don't exist. It's not just me saying it. He said it too. This place has robbed us of our existence, do you understand? It's sucked us dry. It's a vampire. We can breathe, we can run, we can talk, we can drool and move our tails, we can do everything that a normal rat could do if he were alive and here, but we don't have existence. That's how it is. If we had existence we wouldn't be here and the shock wouldn't hurt us whenever it wants. I'm sure of it. We would be a priority. And if we were a priority, something, I don't know what, would protect us from the shocks.

POL POT receives a strong electric shock. He stands up. Silence.