

One night in the dining room, and another night in the assembly hall, their legs touch. If I attribute that contact to malicious intent, why do I reject the possibility of pure accident?

I repeat: there is no conclusive proof that Faustine feels any love for Morel. Perhaps my own egotism made me suspect that she did. I love Faustine: she is the reason for everything. I am afraid that she loves another man: my mission is to prove that she does not. When I thought that the police were after me, the images on this island seemed to be moving like the pieces in a chess game, following a strategy to capture me.

Morel would be furious, I am sure, if I spread the news of his invention. I do not believe that the fame he might gain would make any difference to him. His friends (including Faustine) would be indignant. But if Faustine had fallen out with Morel—she did not laugh with the others during his speech—then perhaps she would form an alliance with me.

Still it is possible that Morel is dead. If he had died one of his friends would have spread the news of his invention. Or else we should have to postulate a collective death, an epidemic or a shipwreck—which seems quite incredible. But still there is no way to explain the fact that no one knew of the invention when I left Caracas.

One explanation could be that no one believed him, that Morel was out of his mind, or (my original idea) that they were all mad, that the island was a kind of insane asylum.

But those explanations require as much imagination as do the epidemic or the shipwreck.

If I could get to Europe, America, or Asia, I would surely have a difficult time. When I began to be a famous fraud—instead of a famous inventor—Morel's accusations would reach me and then perhaps an order for my arrest would arrive from Caracas. And, worst of all, my perilous situation would have been brought about by the invention of a madman.

But I do not have to run away. It is a stroke of luck to be able to live with the images. If my pursuers should come, they will forget about me when they see these prodigious, inaccessible people. And so I shall stay here.

If I should find Faustine, how she would laugh when I told her about the many times I have talked to her image with tenderness and desperation. But I feel that I should not entertain this thought: and I have written it down merely to set a limit, to see that it holds no charm for me, to abandon it.

A rotating eternity may seem atrocious to an observer, but it is quite acceptable to those who dwell there. Free from bad news and disease, they live forever as if each thing were happening for the first time; they have no memory of anything that happened before. And the interruptions caused by the rhythm of the tides keep the repetition from being implacable.

Now that I have grown accustomed to seeing a life that is repeated, I find my own irreparably haphazard. My plans to alter the situation are useless: I have no next time, each moment is unique, different from every other moment, and many are wasted by my own indolence. Of course, there is no next time for the images either—each moment follows the pattern set when the eternal week was first recorded.

Our life may be thought of as a week of these images—one that may be repeated in adjoining worlds.

Without yielding to my weakness, I can imagine the touching moment when I arrive at Faustine's house, her interest in what I shall tell her, the bond that will be established between us. Perhaps now I am at last on the long and difficult road that leads to Faustine; I know I cannot live without her.

But where does Faustine live? I have been following her for weeks. She speaks of Canada—that is all I know. But

I have another question—and it fills me with horror—is Faustine alive?

Perhaps because the idea of looking for a person whose whereabouts I do not know, a person who may not even be alive, strikes me as being so heartbreaking, so pathetic, Faustine has come to mean more to me than life itself.

How can I go to look for her? The boat is no longer in one piece. The trees are rotten. I am not a good enough carpenter to build a boat out of some other kind of wood, like chairs or doors, in fact, I am not even sure I could have made one from trees. I must wait until I see a ship passing the island. For so long I hoped that one would not come, but now I know I could not return alone. The only ship I have ever seen from this island was Morel's, and that was only the image of a ship.

And if I arrive at my journey's end, if I find Faustine, I shall be in one of the most difficult situations I have ever experienced. Arriving under mysterious circumstances, I shall ask to speak to her alone, and will arouse her suspicions since I shall be a stranger to her. When she discovers that I saw a part of her life, she will think I am trying to gain some dishonest advantage. And when she finds out that I have been sentenced to life imprisonment she will see her worst fears confirmed.

It never occurred to me before that a certain action could bring me good or bad luck. Now, at night, I repeat Faustine's name. Naturally, I like to say it anyway, and even though I am overcome by fatigue I still keep on repeating it (at times I feel nauseated and uneasy, queasy, when I sleep).

When I am less agitated I shall find a way to get away from here. But, in the meantime, writing down what has happened helps me to organize my thoughts. And if I am to die this diary will leave a record of the agony I suffered.

Yesterday there were no images. Desperate in the face of the secret, quiescent machines, I had a presentiment that I would never see Faustine again. But this morning the tide began to rise. I hurried down to the basement, before the images appeared, to try to understand the working of the machines, so I would not be at the mercy of the tides and would be able to make repairs when necessary. I thought that perhaps I might understand the machines if I could see them start, or at least I would get some hint about their structure. But that hope proved to be groundless.

I gained access to the power plant through the opening I had made in the wall, and—but I must not let myself be carried away by emotion, I must write all this down carefully! I experienced the same surprise and the same exhilaration I felt when I first entered that room. I had the impression of walking through the azure stillness of a river's depths. I sat down to wait, turning my back on the opening I had made (it pained me to see the interruption in the deep-blue continuity of the tile).

How long I stayed there, basking in that beauty, I do not know, but suddenly the green machines lurched into motion. I compared them with the water pump and the motors that produced the light. I looked at them, I listened to them, I fingered them gingerly, but it was no use. My scrutiny was unnecessary, because I knew at once that I was unable to understand the machines. It was as if someone were looking, as if I were trying to cover up my embarrassment or my shame at having hurried to the basement, at having awaited this moment so eagerly.

In my fatigue I have again felt the rush of excitement. Unless I control it, I shall never find a way to leave this place.

This is exactly how it happened: I turned and walked away, with downcast eyes. But when I looked at the wall I was bewildered. I looked for the opening I had made. It was not there.

Thinking that this was just an interesting optical illusion, I stepped to one side to see if it persisted. As if I were blind, I held out my arms and felt all the walls. I bent down to pick up some of the pieces of tile I had knocked off the wall when I made the opening. After touching and retouching that part of the wall repeatedly, I had to accept the fact that it had been repaired.

Could I have been so fascinated by the blue splendor of the room, so interested in the working of the motors, that I did not hear a mason rebuilding the wall?

I moved closer. I felt the coolness of the tile against my ear, and heard an interminable silence, as if the other side had disappeared.

The iron bar that I had used to break the wall was on the floor where I had dropped it the first time I entered the room. "Lucky no one saw it!" I said, pathetically unaware of the situation. "If they had, they probably would have taken it away!"

Again I pressed my ear to this wall that seemed to be intact. Reassured by the silence, I looked for the spot where I had made the opening, and then I began to tap on the wall, thinking that it would be easier to break the fresh plaster. I tapped for a long time, with increasing desperation. The tile was invulnerable. The strongest, most violent blows echoed against the hardness and did not open even a superficial crack or loosen a tiny fragment of the blue glaze.

I rested for a moment and tried to control my nerves.

Then I resumed my efforts, moving to other parts of the wall. Chips fell, and, when large pieces of the wall began to come down, I kept on pounding, bleary-eyed, with an urgency that was far greater than the size of the iron bar, until the resistance of the wall (which seemed unaffected by the force of my repeated pounding) pushed me to the floor, frantic and exhausted. First I saw, then I touched, the pieces of masonry—they were smooth on one side, harsh, earthy on the other;

then, in a vision so lucid it seemed ephemeral and supernatural, my eyes saw the blue continuity of the tile, the undamaged and whole wall, the closed room.

I pounded some more. In some places pieces of the wall broke off, but they did not reveal any sort of cavity. In fact, in the twinkling of an eye the wall was perfect again, achieving that invulnerable hardness I had already observed in the place where I had made the original opening.

I shouted, "Help!" I lunged at the wall several times, and it knocked me down. I had an imbecilic attack of tears. I was overcome by the horror of being in an enchanted place and by the confused realization that its vengeful magic was effective in spite of my disbelief.

Harassed by the terrible blue walls, I looked up at the sky-light. I saw, first without understanding and then with fear, a cedar branch split apart and become two branches; then the two branches were fused, as docile as ghosts, to become one branch again. I said out loud or thought very clearly: "I shall never be able to get out. I am in an enchanted place." But then I felt ashamed, like a person who has carried a joke too far, and I understood:

These walls—like Faustine, Morel, the fish in the aquarium, one of the suns and one of the moons, the book by Bédior—are projections of the machines. They coincide with the walls made by the masons (they are the same walls taken by the machines and then projected on themselves). Where I have broken or removed the first wall, the projected one remains. Since it is a projection nothing can pierce or eliminate it as long as the motors are running.

If I destroy the first wall, the machine room will be open when the motors stop running—it will no longer be a room, but the corner of a room. But when the motors begin again the wall will reappear, and it will be impenetrable.

Morel must have planned the double-wall protection to keep anyone from reaching the machines that control his

immortality. But his study of the tides was deficient (it was probably made during a different solar period), and he thought that the power plant would function without any interruptions. Surely he is the one who invented the famous disease that, up to now, has protected the island very well.

My problem is to discover a way to stop the green motors. Perhaps I can find the switch that disconnects them. It took me only one day to learn to operate the light plant and the water pump. I think I shall be able to leave this place.

The skylight is, or will be, my salvation because I shall not resign myself to die of hunger in a state of utter desperation, paying my respects to those I leave behind, as did the Japanese sailor who, with virtuous and bureaucratic agony, faced asphyxiation in a submarine at the bottom of the ocean. The letter he wrote was found in the submarine and printed in the paper. As he awaited death he saluted the Emperor, the ministers, and, in hierarchical order, all the admirals he had time to enumerate. He added comments like: "Now I am bleeding from the nose," or "I feel as if my eardrums have broken."

While writing these details, I had the sensation of living through that experience. I hope I shall not end as he did.

The horrors of the day are written down in my diary. I have filled many pages: now it seems futile to try to find inevitable analogies with dying men who make plans for long futures or who see, at the instant of drowning, a detailed picture of their whole life before them. The final moment must be rapid, confused; we are always so far removed from death that we cannot imagine the shadows that must becloud it. Now I shall stop writing in order to concentrate, serenely, on finding the way to stop these motors. Then the breach will open again, as if by magic, and I shall be outside.

I have not yet been successful in my attempt to stop the motors. My head is aching. Ridiculous attacks of nerves, which I quickly control, rouse me from a progressive drowsiness.

I have the impression, undoubtedly illusory, that if I could receive a little fresh air from the outside I would soon be able to solve these problems. I have tried to break the skylight; like everything else, it is invulnerable.

I keep telling myself that the trouble does not issue from my lethargy or from the lack of air. These motors must be very different from all the others. It seems logical to suppose that Morel designed them so that no one who came to this island would be able to understand them. But the difficulty in running the green motors must stem from their basic difference from the other motors. As I do not understand any of them, this greater difficulty disappears.

Morel's eternity depends on the continued functioning of the motors. I can suppose that they are very solid. Therefore I must control my impulse to break them into pieces. That would only tire me out and use up the air. Writing helps me to control myself.

And what if Morel had thought to photograph the motors—

Finally my fear of death freed me from the irrational belief that I was incompetent. I might have seen the motors through a magnifying glass: they ceased to be a meaningless conglomeration of iron and steel; they had forms and arrangements that permitted me to understand their purpose.

I disconnected them. I went outside.

In the machine room, in addition to the water pump and the light plant (which I already mentioned), I recognized:

a) A network of power cables connected to the mill wheel in the lowlands;

b) An assortment of stationary receivers, recorders, and projectors connected to other strategically placed machines that operate throughout the whole island;

c) Three portable machines: receivers, recorders, and projectors for special showings.

Inside of what I had taken for the most important engine (instead it was only a box of tools) I found some incomplete plans that were hard to understand and gave me dubious assistance.

I did not acquire that insight until I had conquered my previous states of mind:

1. Desperation;

2. The feeling that I was playing a dual role, that of actor and spectator. I was obsessed by the idea that I was in a play, awaiting asphyxiation in a submarine at the bottom of the ocean. That state of mind lasted too long; and when I came out of the room night had fallen and it was too dark to look for edible roots.

First I turned on the portable receivers and projectors, the ones for special showings. I focused on flowers, leaves, flies, frogs. I had the thrill of seeing them reproduced in their exact likeness.

Then I committed the imprudence.

I put my left hand in front of the receiver, I turned on the projector and my hand appeared, just my hand, making the lazy movements it made when I photographed it.

Now it is like any other object in the museum.

I am keeping the projector on so that the hand will not disappear. The sight of it is not unpleasant, but rather unusual.

In a story, that hand would be a terrible threat for the protagonist. In reality—what harm can it do?

The vegetable transmitters—leaves, flowers—died after five or six hours; the frogs, after fifteen.

The copies survive; they are incorruptible. I do not know which flies are real and which ones are artificial.

Perhaps the leaves and flowers died because they needed water. I did not give any food to the frogs; and they must have suffered from the unfamiliar surroundings, too.

I suspect that the effects on my hand are the result of my fear of the machine, not of the machine itself. I have a steady, faint burning sensation. Some of my skin has fallen off. Last night I slept fitfully. I imagined horrible changes in my hand. I dreamed that I scratched it, that I broke it into pieces easily. That must have been how I hurt it.

Another day will be intolerable.

First I was curious about a paragraph from Morel's speech. Then I was quite amused, thinking I had made a discovery. I am not sure how that discovery led to this other one, which is judicious, ominous.

I shall not kill myself immediately. When I am most lucid, I tend to postpone my death for one more day, to remain as proof of an amazing combination of ineptitude and enthusiasm (or despair). Perhaps writing down my idea will make it lose its force.

Here is the part of Morel's speech that I found unusual:

"You must forgive me for this rather tedious, unpleasant incident."

Why unpleasant? Because they were going to be told that they had been photographed in a new way, without having been warned beforehand. And naturally the knowledge that a week of one's life, with every detail, had been recorded forever—when that knowledge was imparted after the fact—would be quite a shock!

I also thought: One of these persons must have a dreadful

secret; Morel is either trying to find it out or planning to reveal it.

And then I happened to remember that some people are afraid of having their images reproduced because they believe that their souls will be transferred to the images and they will die.

The thought that Morel had experienced misgivings because he had photographed his friends without their consent amused me; apparently that ancient fear still survived in the mind of my learned contemporary.

I read the sentence again:

"You must forgive me for this rather tedious, unpleasant incident. We shall try to forget it."

What did he mean? That they would soon overlook it, or that they would no longer be able to remember it?

The argument with Stoever was terrible. Stoever's suspicions are the same as mine. I do not know how I could have been so slow to understand.

Another thing: the theory that the images have souls seems to demand, as a basic condition, that the transmitters lose theirs when they are photographed by the machines. As Morel himself says, "The theory that the images have souls seems to be confirmed by the effects of my machine on persons, animals, and vegetables used as transmitters."

A person who would make this statement to his victims must have a very overbearing and audacious conscience, which could be confused with a lack of conscience; but such a monstrosity seems to be in keeping with the man who, following his own idea, organizes a collective death and determines, of his own accord, the common destiny of all his friends.

What was his purpose? To use this rendezvous with his friends to create a kind of private paradise? Or was there some other reason that I have not yet been able to fathom? And if so it very possibly may not interest me.

Now I believe I can identify the dead crew members of the ship that was sunk by the cruiser *Namura*: Morel used his own death and the death of his friends to confirm the rumors about the disease on the island; Morel spread those rumors to protect his machinery, his immortality.

But all this, which I can now view rationally, means that Faustine is dead, that Faustine lives only in this image, for which I do not exist.

Then life is intolerable for me. How can I keep on living in the torment of seeming to be with Faustine when she is really so far away? Where can I find her? Away from this island Faustine is lost with the gestures and the dreams of an alien past.

On one of my first pages I said:

"I have the uncomfortable sensation that this paper is changing into a will. If I must resign myself to that, I shall try to make statements that can be verified so that no one, knowing that I was accused of duplicity, will doubt that I was condemned unjustly. I shall adopt the motto of Leonardo—*Ostinato rigore*—as my own," and endeavor to live up to it."

Although I am doomed to misery, I shall not forget that motto.

I shall complete my diary by correcting mistakes and by explaining things I did not understand before. That will be my way of bridging the gap between the ideal of accuracy [which guided me from the start] and my original narration.

The tides: I read the little book by Béliidor (Bernard Forest

8. It does not appear at the beginning of the manuscript. Is this omission due to a loss of memory? There is no way to answer that question, and so, as in every doubtful place, we have been faithful to the original. [Editor's Note.]

del). It begins with a general description of the tides. I must confess that the tides on this island seem to follow the explanation given in the book, and not mine. Of course, I never studied tides (only in school, where no one studied), and I described them in the initial chapters of this diary, as they were just beginning to have some importance for me. When I lived on the hill they were no threat. Although I found them interesting, I did not have the time to observe them in detail (there were other dangers to claim my attention then).

According to Beldor, there are two spring tides each month, at the time of the full moon and the new moon, and two neap tides during the first and third quarters of the moon.

Sometimes a meteorological tide occurred a week after a spring tide (caused by strong winds and rainstorms): surely that was what made me think, mistakenly, that the tides of greater magnitude occur once a week.

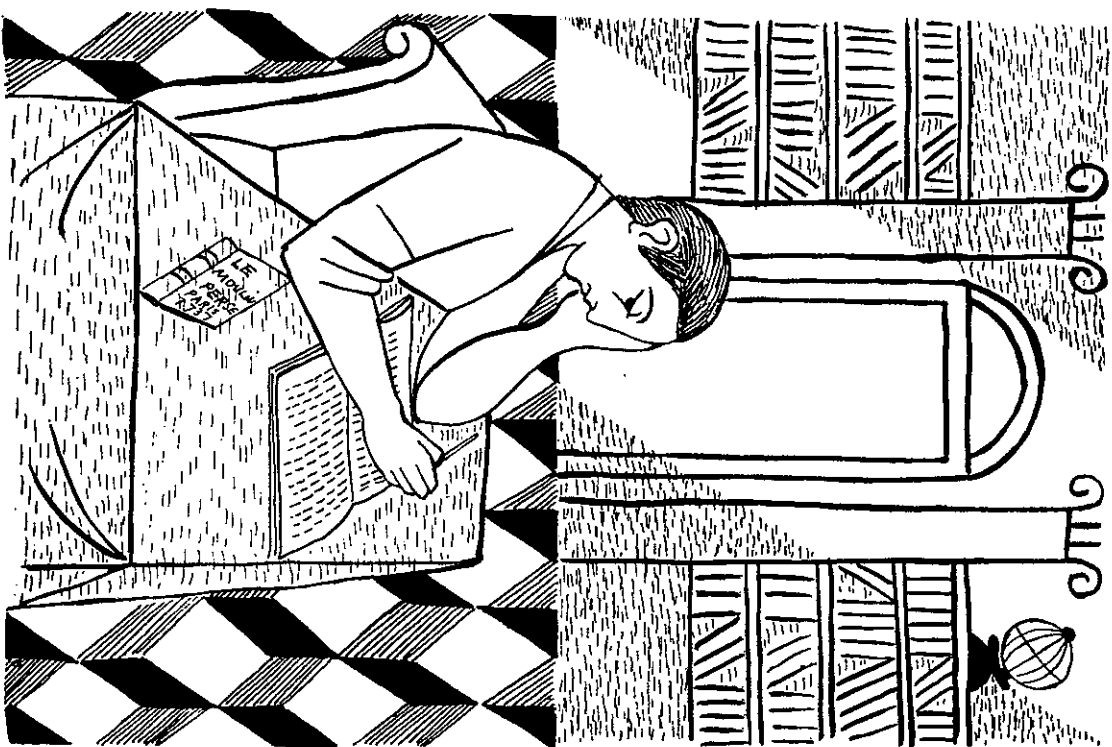
Reason for the irregularity of the daily tides: According to Beldor, the tides rise fifty minutes later each day during the first quarter of the moon, and fifty minutes earlier during the last quarter. But that theory is not completely applicable here: I believe that the rising of the tides must vary from fifteen to twenty minutes each day. Of course, I have no measuring device at my disposal. Perhaps scientists will one day study these tides and make their findings available to the world; then I shall understand them better.

This month there were a number of higher tides; two of them were lunar, and the others, meteorological.

The appearances and disappearances: The machines project the images. The power from the tides causes the machines to operate.

After rather lengthy periods of low tides, there was a series of tides that came up to the mill in the lowlands. The machines began to run, and the eternal record started playing again where it had broken off.

If Morel's speech was on the last night of the week,



the first appearance must have occurred on the night of the third day.

Perhaps the absence of images during the long period before they first appeared was due to the change of the tides with the solar periods.

The two suns and the two moons: Since the week is repeated all through the year, some suns and moons do not coincide (and people complain of the cold when the weather on the island is warm, and swim in ferid water and dance in a thicket or during a storm). And if the whole island were submerged—except for the machines and projectors—the images, the museum, and the island itself would still be visible.

Perhaps the heat of the past few days has been so intense because the temperature of the day when the scene was photographed is superimposed on the present temperature.⁹

Trees and other plant life: The vegetation that was recorded by the machine is withered now; the plants that were not recorded—annuals (flowers, grasses) and the new trees—are luxuriant.

The light switch that did not work, the latches that were impossible to open, the stiff, immovable curtains: What I said before, about the doors, can be applied to the light switch and the latches: When the scene is projected, everything appears exactly as it was during the recording process. And the curtains are stiff for the same reason.

The person who turns out the light: The person who turns out the light in the room across from Faustine's is Morel. He comes in and stands by the bed for a moment. The reader will recall that I dreamed Faustine did this. It irks me to have confused Morel with Faustine.

9. The theory of a superimposition of temperatures may not necessarily be false (even a small heater is unbearable on a summer day), but I believe that this is not the real reason. The author was on the island in spring; the eternal week was recorded in summer, and so, while functioning, the machines reflect the temperature of summer. [Editor's Note.]

Charlie. Imperfect ghosts: At first I could not find them. Now I believe I have found their records. But I shall not play them. They could easily shatter my equanimity, and might even prove disastrous for my mental outlook.

The Spaniards I saw in the pantry: They are Morel's servants.

The underground room, the screen of mirrors: I heard Morel say that they are for visual and acoustical experiments.

The French poetry that Stoever recited: I jotted it down:

Âme, te souvient-il, au fond du paradis,
De la gare d'Aureuil et des trains de jadis.

Stoever tells the old lady that it is by Verlaine.

And now there is nothing in my diary that has not been explained.¹⁰ Almost everything, in fact, does have an explanation. The remaining chapters will hold no surprises.

I should like to try to account for Morel's behavior.

Faustine tried to avoid him, then he planned the week, the death of all his friends, so that he could achieve immortality with Faustine. That was his compensation for having renounced all of life's possibilities. He realized that death would not be such a disaster for the others, because in exchange for a life of uncertain length, he would give them immortality with their best friends. And Faustine's life too was at his disposal.

But my very indignation is what makes me cautious: Perhaps the hell I ascribe to Morel is really my own. I am the

10. He neglected to explain one thing, the most incredible of all: the coexistence, in one space, of an object and its whole image. This fact suggests the possibility that the world is made up exclusively of sensations. [Editor's Note.]

one who is in love with Faustine, who is capable of murder and suicide; I am the monster. Morel may not have been referring to Faustine in his speech; he may have been in love with Irene, Dora, or the old woman.

But I am raving, I am a fool. Of course Morel had no interest in them. He loved the inaccessible Faustine. That is why he killed her, killed himself and all his friends, and invented immortality!

Faustine's beauty deserves that madness, that tribute, that crime. When I denied that, I was too jealous or too stubborn to admit that I loved her.

And now I see Morel's act as something sublime.

My life is not so atrocious. If I abandon my uneasy hopes of going to find Faustine, I can grow accustomed to the idea of spending my life in seraphic contemplation of her.

That way is open to me: to live, to be the happiest of mortals.

But my happiness, like everything human, is insecure. My contemplation of Faustine could be interrupted, although I cannot tolerate the thought of it:

If the machines should break (I do not know how to repair them);

If some doubt should ruin my paradise (certain conversations between Morel and Faustine, some of their glances, could cause persons of less fortitude than I to lose heart);

If I should die.

The real advantage of my situation is that now death becomes the condition and the pawn for my eternal contemplation of Faustine.

I am saved from the interminable minutes necessary to prepare for my death in a world without Faustine; I am saved from an interminable death without Faustine.

When I was ready, I turned on the receivers of simultaneous action. Seven days have been recorded. I performed well: a casual observer would not suspect that I am not a part of the original scene. That came about naturally as the result of my painstaking preparation: I devoted two weeks to continuous study and experiment. I rehearsed my every action tirelessly. I studied what Faustine says, her questions and answers; I often insert an appropriate sentence, so she appears to be answering me. I do not always follow her; I know her movements so well that I usually walk ahead. I hope that, generally, we give the impression of being inseparable, of understanding each other so well that we have no need of speaking.

I am obsessed by the hope of removing Morel's image from the eternal week. I know that it is impossible, and yet as I write these lines I feel the same intense desire, and the same torment. The images' dependence upon each other (especially that of Morel and Faustine) used to annoy me. Now it does not: because I know that, since I have entered that world, Faustine's image cannot be eliminated without mine disappearing too. And—this is the strangest part, the hardest to explain—it makes me happy to know that I depend on Haynes, Dora, Alec, Stoever, Irene, and the others (even on Morel!).

I arranged the records; the machine will project the new week eternally.

An oppressive self-consciousness made me appear unnatural during the first few days of the photographing; now I have overcome that, and, if my image has the same thoughts I had when it was taken, as I believe it does, then I shall spend eternity in the joyous contemplation of Faustine.

I was especially careful to keep my spirit free from worries. I have tried not to question Faustine's actions, to avoid feeling any hatred. I shall have the reward of a peaceful eternity; and I have the feeling that I am really living the week.

The night when Faustine, Dora, and Alec go into the room, I managed to control my curiosity. I did not try to find out what they were doing. Now I am a bit irritated that I left that part unsolved. But in eternity I give it no importance.

I have scarcely felt the progression of my death, it began in the tissues of my left hand; it has advanced greatly and yet it is so gradual, so continuous, that I do not notice it.

I am losing my sight. My sense of touch has gone; my skin is falling off; my sensations are ambiguous, painful; I try not to think about them.

When I stood in front of the screen of mirrors, I discovered that I have no beard, I am bald. I have no nails on my fingers or toes, and my flesh is tinged with rose. My strength is diminishing. I have an absurd impression of the pain: it seems to be increasing, but I feel it less.

My persistent, deplorable preoccupation with Morel's relationship to Faustine keeps me from paying much attention to my own destruction; that is an unexpected and beneficent result.

Unfortunately, not all my thoughts are so useful: in my imagination I am plagued by the hope that my illness is pure autosuggestion; that the machines are harmless; that Faustine is alive and that soon I shall find her; that together we shall laugh at these false signs of impending death, that I shall take her to Venezuela, to another Venezuela. For my own country, with its leaders, its troops with rented uniforms and deadly aim, threatens me with constant persecution on the roads, in the tunnels, in the factories. But I still love you, my Venezuela, and I have saluted you many times since the start of my disintegration: for you are also the days when I worked on the literary magazine—a group of men (and I, a

wide-eyed, respectful boy) inspired by the poetry of Orduño—an ardent literary school that met in restaurants or on battered trolleys. My Venezuela, you are a piece of cassava bread as large as a shield and uninfested by insects. You are the flooded plains, with bulls, mares, and jaguars being carried along by the swift current. And you, Elisa, I see you standing there, you and the Chinese laundrymen who helped me, and in each memory you seem more like Faustine: you told them to take me to Colombia and we crossed the high plateau in the bitter cold, the Chinamen covered me with thick velvety leaves so I would not freeze to death; while I look at Faustine, I shall not forget you—and I thought I did not love you! I remember that when the imperious Valentin Gómez read us the declaration of independence on July 5 in the elliptical room of the Capitol we (Orduño and the others) showed our defiance by turning to stare at Tito Salas's painting of General Bolívar crossing the Colombian border. But when the band played our national anthem, we could not suppress our patriotic emotion, the emotion I cannot suppress now.

But my rigid discipline must never cease to combat those ideas, for they jeopardize my ultimate calm.

I can still see my image moving about with Faustine. I have almost forgotten that it was added later; anyone would surely believe we were in love and completely dependent on each other. Perhaps the weakness of my eyes makes the scenes appear this way. In any case, it is consoling to die while watching such satisfactory results.

My soul has not yet passed to the image; if it had, I would have died, I (perhaps) would no longer see Faustine, and would be with her in a vision that no one can ever destroy.

To the person who reads this diary and then invents a machine that can assemble disjointed presences, I make this request: Find Faustine and me, let me enter the heaven of her consciousness. It will be an act of piety.