

## I. The Nightshift

In these months I find myself carrying out a task by chance embellished with poetry, a task which figures on the list of jobs that, more than others, release images tucked away in the mind of who thinks them up. It must have been Liliana Cavani's 1974 film that has irremediably connected an aura of romanticism to the profession. The night porter has a lot to do with cinema, with fiction and with the fantastic. To work nights means, at least in the first place, to endure the night. That is, to sustain the reduction of the light, and the physical distress. It is necessary to keep up the game of "pretending that it is day" and this is why the nightshift has to do with fiction, a sort of self-generated filmic illusion in which you believe without believing, halting in the middle between the various opposing alternations of time. It most certainly has to do with the fantastic, because you live like a vampire, exchanging the night for the day, only to end up like a zombie during daily hours.

To endure the night is an intuitive attempt to impose yourself on sleep, to escape the dreamlike, clinging with all might to rationality. Dawn is always slow to commence, creating a spellbinding and pleasant state of confusion in the mind of who's been waiting for it. This pleasure arises from an impalpable alteration in the perception of things, a state of wakefulness which fertilizes the imagination, preferring this over the face of reality.

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all night workers: an admonition given by doctors and psychologists. So in fact, after having accompanied the night to its end, after not having fallen asleep and not having let tiredness conquer you, it is strongly advised to wear sun glasses on the way home. This small lie, imposed on the own gaze, helps to deceive the brain and to feign that the day has never arrived. Darkened glasses should therefore favor a voluntary suspension of our disbelief; the day turns into night, just like before, in the hotel, the night posed as the day. An awkward attempt to take the dark with us, all the way into bed.

The deceit of the day-that-becomes-night transforms itself in the end into an optical illusion. Illusion, indeed, and not an involuntary hallucination but nor the awareness of not wanting to forget this last mise-en-scene, meaning the sunglasses. To take the night home is a transient condition, exactly between the abandonment and awareness of yourself, the last part of the game "let's pretend that..."

I did a training for someone new for the night. This will be a new colleague. On the duty-roster his name is written down only as "New2". New2 pulled a couple of night shifts and then he requested to not do them anymore. He said he couldn't manage to stay awake and when he did he completely lost his mental clarity. The game of "pretending that it is day" didn't work for him and after the wake his mind became too confused. New2 doesn't work nights anymore, he couldn't endure it and wasn't capable of keeping up the pretense necessary to get through it.