Notes on your “Attempt at Exhausting...”

This was an unusual assignment; I encourage you to look over your own work for a few minutes after class. In many cases, Alexander (in green) wrote extensively in response to your observations; I added notes in some cases.

Many students were able to “zoom in” on the details and perceive the richness of their environments; an enormous amount happens in one hour of social life.

The ability to perceive this richness was what tended to push students from the B grades up to the As. In many cases, B grades showed pattern recognition abilities comparable to the A grades, but not as much ability to gather together detail, the unnoticed, the even more minor events.

In some cases, “observation” and “interpretation” happened interchangeably. Alexander has done an excellent job (where he’s been able) in spotting where you might switch between these modes.

You will likely never be called upon to do this sort of thing again—but this activity, of patient watching, is one of the core skills that can enrich your intellectual life.

Grading Rubric

A: as with A-, but unusually extensive work; particularly detailed observations; interesting use of Perec’s methods; something struck either Alexander or I as particularly interesting.

A-: clear understanding of the assignment; evidence of attention and care; student observes multiple features of the environment in parallel.

B: evidence of attention and care in observation; student follows at least one feature of the environment repeatedly.

C: one or more of the following: continual confusion between “observation” and “interpretation; assignment significantly shorter than expected; student unclear on nature of assignment.

Fail: student returns blank assignment / does not submit assignment on time.

Grade distribution
A grades: 8
B grades: 12
C grades: 2
Fails: 1