**Modifications to the footnotes**

 The novel also addresses recurring themes in Houellebecq’s work: the crisis besetting Western civilization, particularly in light of the dissolution of communal ties; the effects of individualism, consumerism, and liberalism on intimate relationships; and how economic competition and market logic influence individuals’ relationships to society and to one another (Novak-Lechevalier; van der Goot).

2 Conversely, others have identified multiple, contradictory targets (see the section dedicated to the novel’s critical reception in Jurga and van Wesemael, 153–284). Very often these polemical readings are influenced by the public, high-profile personality of the author (Sturli).

3 This and subsequent quotes are taken from the novel’s English translation by Lorin Stein (2016).

4 The author contends that the precarity of the protagonist stands out as a particularity in the novel, as he formulated in an interview with Valérie Toranian: “Quand on enlève tout à quelqu’un, est-ce qu’il existe encore ? ]…] Je réduis donc mon personnage, je l’anéantis” (Houellebecq, “Entretien avec Marine”~~”~~ 324) ‘When you take everything away from someone, does he still exist? Therefore, I crush my character, I destroy him’ (author’s translation).

5 Chantal Michel notes that this is reflected at a basic level in the representation of a literature professor who, in his scholarly readings of Huysmans, confuses the basic distinctions between the discrete conceptual entities of author, narrator, and implied author.

6 As Guillaume Rousseau notes, Houellebecq hints that the intellectual elite is good for nothing in the epigraph of the novel, an extended citation from Huysmans’ *En Route*, where the final words are “bon à rien” (Rousseau 121).

7 Also referred to as Professorromane, university fiction, or campus fiction.

8 Author’s translation. See also Edith Perry’s analysis.