



Appendix 2:

Willem Frederik Hermans: ‘Unsympathetic Fictional Characters’

1

The only writers who are true writers are those who intend to see more than the reader sees, who mean to recognise more than was recognised prior to them writing about it. Every reader forms an enormous obstacle to the writer in this, all thoughts of an actually existing readership inhibit and, in so doing, pervert the writer’s pronouncements.

It is therefore only worth having written when the writer is certain he has expressed what his reader knew but remained silent about; what his reader dreamed of but repressed upon awakening.

I will admit that this implies a belief that the reader has the same mental constitution as the writer deep down.

Sometimes this belief is incarnated in clearly demonstrable ways, but mostly it is not.

Yet, however often it is denied, it will never be rocked to the core, otherwise the writer would hold his tongue for good, and be willingly consigned to a mental asylum. The writer only earns his freedom of movement by continually convincing his enemies that they have no right to accuse him of anything, that it is them, their mendacious society (every society is mendacious, whenever, wherever it is), their absurd knowledge, their stupid ignorance, their hypocritical forgetfulness, their unfounded laws, their corrupt beliefs, their futile striving for self-preservation or even success, their temporary nature, their irrelevancy, as despised as his own. Hammering it into their heads that they have no right to judge him, that they do not even have that spurious right they call right. (Anyway, is there any other kind of right? Anyone believing that a ‘true’ right exists or is even thinkable becomes a journalist before he knows it. A journalist formulates what the masses think and the writer disputes what the masses think and reveals what they do not dare to think.)

2

A novel is a book about people. There are also novels which are not about people; novels primarily featuring landscapes, beautiful scenery, conditions or cities. There are countless examples of this latter type, particularly in Dutch literature. These novels are boring. Why are there so many of them in Dutch literature and why are they boring?

I cannot address these questions here.

I will limit myself to the people written about in novels about people.

What kind of people?

Are they really people?

How do novels differ from other books about people, such as sociological and psychological studies or historical treatises?

3

Readers divide the people dealt with in novels into sympathetic and unsympathetic characters. The sympathy or the antipathy that a fictional character arouses is rarely or never limited to just these characters but will extend to the writer of the novel, even though the latter does not feature in the book at all.

Many readers have the impression and many writers give that impression that writers consider themselves better than the non-writing masses.

The writer gives the impression that he is superior to other people precisely because he describes them, because he uses them as material in his novels, because he judges them, or at least, is capable of placing them in all kinds of light and darkness he considers desirable.

Yet, this is not a reason for placing himself above the masses. In fact, the writer despises himself for the same reasons he despises the masses. There is a deeply buried solidarity between the writer and the masses. It is a solidarity not only based on mutual hatred, but also on a corresponding self-hatred. The reader hates the writer in himself, the writer hates himself in his fictional characters.

Readers who do not accept this, fail to understand the essential function of the novel. Only journalism satisfies them.

Writers who do not understand this are not writers but journalists. Only these kinds of writers, who are in fact journalists, can bring sympathetic characters into existence.

What is a sympathetic fictional character?

It is a character the writer does not reveal more about than the masses, in their interactions based on spurious values, publicly want to know about themselves.

Anyway, as strange as this may seem, the sympathy or antipathy roused by a character has nothing to do with the virtue or vice, as measured by the generally-recognised criteria, which he displays, or the degree to which he appears to share the widespread conditioned responses. He can commit a murder every day and rape a different sister every night, he can turn out to be a racist or an anti-Semite, and yet the audience can still find him sympathetic – as long as at the end of the book the sister turns out to be a changeling so that the universal innate taboo is not broken, as long as the murders are presented as heroic deeds, as long as he allows himself an otherwise contemptuous act of friendliness towards a Jew, and he gives his faithful black driver a generous tip at the end of the year and sends him to church at Christmas.

How sympathetic he is, as long as nothing is examined too deeply, as long as nothing is delved into!

Sympathy or antipathy is not a question of virtuousness, but purely of dimensions.

For years I have been planning to write a book with a protagonist whose character is as pure as snow: someone with an unbelievable amount of love for his fellow men, someone who never gets rich at the cost of others, a Jain monk who wears a cloth in front of his mouth so as not to inhale a single innocent fly, and sweeps the ground in front of his feet so as never step to on a worm. A monster of saintliness! I have only consigned this project to the backburner because of the risk that his monstrous saintliness won't turn out to be big or overwhelming

enough and that the average reader will believe himself or his grandmother portrayed and flattered.

But it remains one of my greatest worries. The masses want goodness in a novel's hero, but it has to be the kind of goodness with which mediocrity can strike a compromise. A goodness which compared to the goodness of the average tax payer or what he considers this to be, is not made to look criminal. 'Setting too good an example is a kind of slander seldom forgiven,' Benjamin Franklin said.

The average reader demands protagonists who are good without setting too good an example. 'Heroes of human proportions' the journalists call that, and also 'people of flesh and blood.' They mean weak flesh and the blood of bloodsuckers. But no one will notice this, as long as the protagonist (just like the average citizen in daily life) does not express any subversive thoughts. Criminal or ignominious deeds are much less noticeable than an acerbic tongue or a so-called 'negative' outlook on life. The judging of actions and deeds, requires the reader to possess power of judgement, but a judgement is often already worked into the protagonist's verbal utterances. This makes nothing so difficult as having the character of a novel say something which the writer intends ironically, nothing leads to so many misunderstandings.

The hero of what I will call for convenience the serious novel, has different dimensions from the 'human', he is made from something other than 'flesh and blood'. All true fictional heroes are gods or demi-gods, demons, heroes, chosen ones, the anointed, the enchanted or prophets.

It is possible that when Flaubert wrote *Un Coeur simple*, he thought that his simple heroine represented nothing more than a portrait of the average uneducated servant. And yet she is much more. She stands up to the idea that the Holy Ghost is a dove, since a dove cannot speak, and in so doing becomes the prophet of a new religion in which a stuffed parrot is worshiped as a fetish.

4

The realistic novel is also essentially a mythical novel, and its creator a magician. Not a psychologist, not a sociologist, not a biologist, but a magician who keeps his own personal natural science alive.

Realism is intrinsically a mythical discipline. It supposes that the everyday reality of life, birth, love, aggression, fear and death is knowable to the same degree of perfection that physics knows physical reality, if physics can be perfect.

Anyone considering everyday reality scientifically: sociologists, psychologists, even economists, know that this is not the case.

To write a realistic novel, to recreate reality, presupposes that the writer knows and has a command of the mechanisms of reality in the same way a technician has mastered the mechanisms of a calculator.

However, the realist writer has not mastered the mechanisms of his reality, he knows only, like every novelist, every fantasist, the mechanics he has invented himself. The realist novelist is a magician too, his story is not an objective account either, but a legend. His objectivity is a method, nothing more. The way he goes about describing reality is not objective; at the very most, it is conventional.

Now the proposition that the natural laws of inanimate matter are nothing but conventions is easy to defend. But these are a different kind of conventions from the unwritten conventions of reality which the historian, the journalist and the realistic novelist must adhere to.

If, as sometimes happens, novels give many readers the impression of rendering 'reality', of being nothing other than 'reality', this is only because the writer has succeeded in conveying his mythical reality to the reader by suggestion; exactly as the writer of fairytales conveys his fairytale world to readers who *know* objectively that the things he is recounting cannot have happened. The only difference is that, in the first example, the difference between the writer's mythical reality and 'real' reality is difficult to demonstrate. Usually it only becomes apparent with the passing of the years on account of the fact that 'real' reality is only barely known and can only be barely known. (Descriptions of reality are subject to trends.)

Another, second reason, is that, apart from the fact that he does not reproduce the everyday, barely-known reality with pretensions of realism, the writer of fairytales (fantasist, science fiction writer etc.) subjects the physical, accurately-known reality to his own fantasy: he turns a mouse into a lion, he allows hands to break iron, he places a tropical jungle in Antarctica and palaces on the planet Saturn. Space, time and identity impose no limits on him. To offset this, fairytales and fantastical stories do not deviate from the generally accepted morals: evil is punished, virtue is rewarded, the characters remain schematic.)

But the only primary difference between realist and fairytale writers can be found in these different attitudes towards the natural laws, in as much as it is a difference in practice. Most readers are not physicists and cannot pinpoint the places where the writer's propositions match those of physics and where they do not. (For example, Jules Verne's reputation as a prophesier of scientific discoveries is based on this, even though his cannonball could never have found its way to the moon, and it will be a long time before a nuclear submarine is as good as Captain Nemo's.)

If then a story wants to be a fairytale or a fantastical tale, its 'untruthfulness' must have an unusually bold shape.

The same goes for the novel's confrontation with geographical and historical realities. If I publish a novel in the Netherlands in which I say that the Champlain Hotel on the corner of Dufferin and Main Street in Caraquet (Canada) was burned down in 1867 – how many readers can find out whether my statement is true, who will know whether Dufferin Street and Main Street intersected in Caraquet in 1868 [sic.] and whether there was a hotel that... and so on. Who will know whether I am a realist or a fantasist by claiming this?

And yet, you could still investigate it. (Though nobody will.)

In terms of sociological and psychological realities, it is impossible to check the facts.

If, in 1930, someone had written about a doctor incarcerated in Leeuwarden for committing a murder with cyanide, who went on to commit a second cyanide murder in prison, they would have been considered a fantasist. But now, in 1960, something like that seems to have actually happened, so the incident could be the subject of a realistic story, even though a thorough police, psychiatric etc, investigation has not succeeded in making the incident probable. The judges, who are charged with determining reality and may not choose, will chose.

The realist novel is a mythical story because its reality is largely a mythical reality, made up of the general opinion of a group, who take a few observations from all that is observable and put them together to create a myth. Ninety-nine out of one hundred judgements are preconceptions, however commonly stated and shared.

The realist writer thinks he doesn't choose, but he does choose (in the way of a non-chooser) and his choosing is nothing less than a magical act.

Only the born blind can accuse the writer of lying; he never lies. He cannot lie where there is no truth. Only slavish journalists can reject the mythical character of the novel in the name of the social i.e. commercial myths which they publish in their newspapers as nothing but sanctifying reality: the reality of the indoctrinated fellow marcher who loves the dictator's whip, or in whose welfare state, mediocrity is sacrosanct.

5

No single story, however realistic, can answer all the questions that could be asked of it. The art of the realist writer is to avoid overly crass objections, his powers of observation should not be inferior to those of the average observer. In short, he knows how to give the impression that everything tallies. And yet he doesn't answer simple questions. His art is to create an atmosphere which excludes certain questions.

Every storyteller hypnotises his readers. When a child is told the fairytale *Puss in Boots*, in which a cat uses effrontery, murder and deceit to make his owner stinking rich, he does not protest. The cat and his owner are presented as sympathetic weaklings who have to be cunning; their cunningness is a virtue and virtue must be rewarded. The moral of the story is that no criminal offence is prohibited for the weak. But no one says this out loud. Anyone doing so would be a killjoy.

Morals are harder to sidestep in realistic stories than in fairytales. But even in the most realistic play, the rocks are made of cardboard and the bathroom door actually opens onto the dark rear of the stage.

The realistic play or story is just a game that no one wants to break up – none of the realists in any case.

What does a child do when she no longer believes in fairytales? She will ask questions which the fairytales cannot answer. How can Santa's reindeers fly? As soon as the questions are asked, the game is over.

The illusion of realist and naturalist writers has been to create a game which can never end, answering all the questions.

It has not been possible to create a never-ending game by sticking to 'reality', but the search for a game that cannot be ended, being able to answer all questions, even by expressly not answering them, is what every serious writer strives for, of every place, or every time.

6

The art of novel writing would have ceased needing to exist if writers had succeeding in producing nothing but reality. Descriptions of reality are best left to sociologists and psychologists, after all.

Literature has a different function. The novelist I am talking about does not describe reality but creates a personal mythology and he does this deliberately, unlike the realist. His heroes are not 'people of flesh and blood' but personifications.

He can disguise them as he likes: as long dead rulers and generals, or as labourers and soldiers, or as farmers and the petty bourgeois, the kind we are all surrounded with all the time.

In the first case, the mythological hero is barely disguised as a being of flesh and blood: rulers and generals, as long as they have been dead for a while, are supreme mythical figures. This is why the general public has a clear preference for historical novels. They think they like historical novels because what is in them really happened, but that is not the real reason. The real reason is that the reader's subconscious experiences these novels as the language of the subconscious, as mythology, while his conscious mind suspects nothing.

The reader recognises in the heroes and princes beings of a different order from himself, he puts them into categories and renders them harmless, he accepts them as phenomena which cannot hurt him. After all, he was not born 1900 years ago as a Roman Emperor, he does not have anything to do with Nero's or Caligula's atrocities. This is why he can secretly dream: if I'd been born 1900 years ago in Rome and crowned Holy Emperor, I could have taught Nero and Caligula a lesson or two about lascivious behaviour! Or he thinks: in Nero's place, I would have sent the lions back to their cages with a powerful wave of the hand and been generous enough to release the poor Christian prisoners from the arena. After reading this kind of novel, he feels like a better person. When he closes the book, he is forgiven all the failures and setbacks in his own life for a few moments, because he was born in the twentieth century. Until he feels the need to read another such novel, he is granted absolution to sleep in his own inferiority like in a soft bed of warm bodies and it does not cost him a thing.

Even most terrible crimes are splendid, as long as they are committed by a historical figure and written with the inaccuracy common to every writer of history (let alone the writer of historical novels), just like the heroic deeds of *Puss in Boots* for a child.

Sympathetic protagonists are, for example, the Three Musketeers who stab people to death all over the place for a trifle, and so on, and so on.

Serious novelists do not write for this kind of hedonist. They hate themselves too much for this, they hold themselves responsible for the fact that their deeds are so inferior to the mythological greatness in their imagination. This is why the serious writer will not deal in murder and bagatelles, he will publish no deception as praiseworthy guile. Even though he is always the weakling, he will not always be clever.

Wanting the impossible, a sure sign of lunacy in the eyes of the non-writer, is at the centre of the writer's art and the only thing which makes his life worthwhile.

He does not have anything to do with 'realities' or with 'possibilities', in the way that politicians and journalists do. He does not have to tackle the question of whether his ideas are good for public spiritual health, like clergymen or healers do. The writer who concerns himself with what is possible and desirable is at most a pedagogue. Multatuli, Dostoyevsky and Zola were pedagogues, Henry Miller, Sartre and Kerouac were pedagogues. But luckily not all of the time, and not in all earnestness, even though they may have been ignorant of this themselves.

The writer who concerns himself with what is possible will limit his readership to those unimaginative creatures who know exactly what is possible and what is not.

A novelist's art, or any other kind of art, which limits itself to a certain audience has as little to do with art as science, which limits itself to a certain audience, is science. (e.g. Astrology).

Scientific truths are applicable to every audience. They are universal and fundamental (as long as further developments have not proven the opposite, of course). Science which limits

itself to a certain audience, for example, school children, is not science, but a teaching method, pedagogy. No one would contest this.

In literature too, the difference between pedagogues and pioneers should be clear enough, but the newspaper reviewers, preachers, quacks, bellyachers and media magnates gloss over this as much as possible. They refuse to see the difference between Koestler and Kafka, between Harry Mulisch and Gerard Reve.

7

What is the nature of the impossible thing the writer wants?

It is of a mythological nature, because it is immortality.

The longing for immortality is more complicated than believers realise. Man's attitude to the idea of immortality is ambivalent, to say the least.

On the one hand, man can only live as though he will still be alive tomorrow, i.e. tomorrow as well, and thereafter, eternally. On the other hand, which man of forty does not think with some regularity: another forty or fifty years at the most and thank god, it will all be over?

If he really wanted to be immortal, he would not think this. Real immortality would give him the opportunity to put right everything that had gone wrong, to make up for all damage done.

The writer is not this patient. He does not have enough time. He wants to make up for all the damage right now, prove his innocence, once and for all.

Whose life is free of deceit? Who has never been deceived? Are peace, friendship and love conceivable without deceit?

Who really does not get attached to anything? Not to the opinion others form of him and not to the opinion he has of himself? While the non-writer only exists in the consciousnesses of the few people he knows personally and can only be judged by them, the writer steps right into the minds of thousands of strangers.

It is possible that there is no other psychiatric explanation for this remarkable behaviour than this: the writer is a person who cannot accept the image that he thinks the people around him have formed of him. This is why he tries to create a new existence in new surroundings. He is a spiritual emigrant.

8

There are two kinds of writers.

The first kind want to justify *themselves* as people.

The second kind want to justify themselves as *writers*.

The first kind are memoirists, in a more or less disguised form. They publish diaries, autobiographies, pseudo-autobiographies or novels in the first person.

Since they want to justify themselves as people, they will claim to stick to reality as much as possible, because otherwise, if they are caught out lying or fantasizing, they run the risk that the rest will not be believed. They want to justify themselves, if necessary as monsters, their confession implies the statement: right, I'm a monster, but you, dear reader, are a monster too in your way.

'Pour moi, je le déclare hautement en sans crainte, quiconque, même sans avoir lu mes écrits, examinera par ses propres yeux mon naturel, mon caractère, mes mœurs, mes penchants, mes plaisirs, mes habitudes, et pourra me croire un malhonnête homme, est lui-même un homme à étouffer.' (Rousseau)

There is an unvoiced assumption that sincerity and having the courage to confess are virtues, eclipsing any sins confessed.

Readers value confessional writers when they think: 'I'm a monster, but luckily I'm not the only monster; the writer was a monster too and dared to openly admit it.'

The second kind of writer is much less afraid of being taken for a fantasist. He does not insist that his fantasies be believed, but claims that they contain a deeper form of reality and longs for this deeper reality to be justified. Freud wrote that the conscious content of a novel acts as bait for the unconscious content.

As every fisherman knows, the bait is no less important than the hook. Psychologically-minded newspaper critics, most of them shouting out that they won't be fooled, invariably claim that they can find the unconscious content, the 'hook', immediately. This leads to a lot of pointless writing, mainly of a defamatory nature. What the 'hook' is, the unconscious magnet in the consciously written whole, does not only depend on the writer's unconscious, but also on that of the reader not trained in psychoanalysis.

The deeper reality of the second kind of writer is immediately conceived as a mythological reality. He is no realist and does not believe in 'reality'.

His novel characters are not self-portraits or portraits of people the writer has met. They are incarnations of the wild jungle animals which live under the double bottom of the human soul.

The way they are presented, their location in time and space, in actually existing or previously having existed situations, are only secondary when it comes to arguing that the characters in a realist novel or historical account are as mythical as those in a fairytale. Presentation, identity, location in time and space etc. are not secondary when the writer has come to realise that the difference or rather, the boundary, between the 'real world' and the mythical world is not clear, and that, in daily life, everybody creates in his mind his wife, his friends and his enemies – when he recognises just one world: precisely that of the mythical.

– When he has understood the consequences of reputations being made in the 'real world' and broken on the grounds of myth, when he has experienced the fact that millions have died in wars and concentration camps in the name of myth.

–When he has appreciated that the decisions taken even in the most simple of human lives are based partly on chance and partly on mistakes, and that the small number we consider reasonable only have a lack of knowledge of the facts to thank for this.

X. married the wrong woman. His family had all predicted this. Of course, thousands of women would have been better for X. than the one he chose. But one forgets that X. never had the opportunity to meet thousands of women. He could have chosen between perhaps two or three and even these two or three were spread over a ten year period. *Not one* of these two or three happened (and no wonder!) to be suitable. What were his options? Would X. have been better off remaining unmarried? In retrospect, yes, but if he had taken this course, he probably

would have spent the rest of his unhappy, lonely life blaming himself for not marrying the woman who was now making him unhappy.

Y1 has the same name as Y2, who was a communist in his youth. Y1's name ends up in a secret dossier. Y1 never gets promoted at work. Y1 spends his whole life wondering where he went wrong. He goes to evening classes to retrain for a new career! He looks for the problem everywhere it isn't and, here is the humorous climax, perhaps he dies thinking he finally discovered the cause. A knowing, acquiescent end, the family calls it. Who can count the truths that never come to light? In any case, Y1's life took an irreversibly and radically different course than it would have if an anonymous secret official had not confused him with Y2.

Z. is tried for an offence against the press code. Z. is acquitted but becomes known as 'the man from that trial'. In any situation where committees are charged with compiling lists of candidates, granting subsidies and more, somebody always remarks casually that Z is 'the man from that trial.' It is astonishing that the committees never put Z forward out of all the candidates they consider, and yet, nobody can say, let alone prove, that Z is being discriminated against.

In one country, three hundred years ago, an admiral almost captured the capital of an enemy island with his fleet. Three hundred years later, the country's forces are so reduced that it has no chance of capturing a single enemy capital.

Nevertheless, it pays millions of guilders to keep an old, patched-up aircraft carrier in the fleet. But naturally no one talks about the admiral anymore.

9

Freud's discovery of an unconscious beyond the reach of the rational will has become an integral aspect in judging human behaviour.

The influence of a person's physical condition or his diet on his humour, his decisions, his life's course has become a banal science.

Yet, the opinion that he is a rational being has not been hampered by these facts, nor by what has been learned about the deliberate or otherwise suggestions which he is exposed to on a daily basis.

If we dismiss all the other causes in which behaviour and ways of being (i.e. the average of all behaviours, rare partly-rational behaviour, and an enormous amount of irrational behaviour) escape the conscious rational control of the individual, we also dismiss the fact that nobody knows where they are headed in the long term, and so it could very well turn out that we are constantly hypnotized: intermittently by targeted advertising, press, television and radio, and permanently by everything that happens to us, everything we have experienced since birth and perhaps even before that.

Even resistance to this 'post-hypnotic influence' is a compulsion, as a rapid survey of alcoholics, vegetarians, teetotallers, idealisms, criminals and artists demonstrates.

There is not a single eccentric who can come up with something entirely new, and, in any case, who would appreciate it?

Resistance is accepted within the context of the subservient whole. Traditional society bears the society of artists like some skyscrapers bear a baroque tower or a Moorish villa on their roofs.

10

Life is just a game or a comedy, even death and dying are not serious.

Repeating this trivial thought would be pointless if there was not always something in this life which was taken seriously all the same.

For past writers, a life after this life was serious, the hereafter.

For modern writers, logic, stringent logical thinking which stringently adheres to rules laid down in advance, is serious.

However, in order to remain stringently logical, this way of thinking is only suitable for concepts which were tailored to fit this kind of logical thought beforehand. Mathematical computations, for example.

Outside of mathematics, in physics, for instance, logic and truth become much more problematic.

Yet it remains impressive that our tape recorders, our telephones, our televisions and our rockets (sometimes) do what is expected of them. It is not only impressive, it is also a harmonic dissonance in our essentially fantastical, mythical disharmony. It proves to wit that unstable, hypnotized, obsessed, crazy human beings in certain instances and in certain very restricted conditions are capable of rational, or at least functional, decision-making.

At least that is how it looks. It does not have to be true at all. It could also be possible that there is a certain ordering principle present in the cosmos and that a few individuals who will become successful mathematicians or physicists later, are partly open to the silent suggestion of this ordering principle. (This idea explains the fact that even though each religion is chaos and myth in a Petri dish, some mathematicians and physicists are religious.)

Even the most intellectually gifted are only *partly* and temporarily capable of rational acts. The idea that scholars and chess masters are more rational outside of their areas of expertise than non-scholars, in their marriages, in their political, religious, ethical convictions, in their contact with other human beings and so is a common error. The best we can speak of in these areas is phony logic.

Partly and temporarily: the number of minutes, even seconds each day that a scholar's brain thinks rationally is negligible. He comes up with solutions in a flash: the rest of his thought is chaotic, even flawed. Chaotic, random, in short: mythical.

Sometimes these brains' thoughts in other areas will be all the more mythical because the brain's carrier does not recognize the mythical character of its thought, fixated as it is by the flashing by of the few seconds in which he actually *thinks*.

The great scholar A. is anti-Semitic, the great scholar B. is a communist sympathizer, the great scholar C. sees communist spies everywhere, the great scholar D. is a misogynist. They carry out the same mathematical calculations with the same results but wear different ties and become excited about radically different outlooks on life.

Beyond their mathematics they are not very different from most imaginative writers, beyond their logic everything is paranoia, like it is with everyone.

In order to cope with this existence, they do not attempt to know reality, but the reality that their environment (i.e. the part of their environment that can help or damage them) holds up as reality, or else can be held up as reality – just like everyone.

11

In a world which no longer believes in immortality, a conduit can only be found in what, in old-fashioned terms, should be called a mythology of Evil.

This Evil is Death.

‘Death, where is your victory?’ the Christians ask. They look for the familiar path. The non-Christians see Death’s victory hour after hour, day after day, year in year out. Death does not only mean dying, the end of an organism, but the broader meaning of the end of every existent situation, the end of every instance.

Death does not only mean perishing, but also being forgotten, disappearing; death is not only killing and destroying, but also cheating and betraying.

The presence of a memory is not limited to humans. Inanimate matter has a memory too. But what is unique to people is that this memory is never completely available at any desired moment. This means that nobody knows the extent of what he remembers and what he does not. In this endless land of darkness, in which it is impossible to be in two places at the same time, which sometimes seems to move around in our bodies like a ribbon or a stream (we can cry with our eyes and then smile with our mouths when influenced by two memories), death constantly finds new prey.

(1960)