

As one small example, let me return to my passing remark that the Maestro does not encourage us to use paper. We are often instructed to do our best to eschew it. Paper is derived, after all, from trees and they happen to be God's most loyal, faithful, and trusted servants.

I have chosen, therefore, to write on paper—my assumption is that there is less likelihood my words will be picked up as quickly by the Maestro. (Even processed paper still contains an ineluctable hint of the tenderness God put into His trees.) Since the Lord and the Devil remain as jealous of each other as beautiful women attracted to the same man, it takes no more than a blank piece of paper to remind the Maestro of the power of his adversary rather than the intoxications of his own strength. So I dare to use paper as my mode of communication. While the Maestro has no desire to use up any part of his resources by monitoring all of our acts—there are too many demons and small devils for that!—he is also not inclined to let us go on ventures he has not selected. While he does not keep a constant watch, he does not have to. We dwell in fear of his displeasure.

Now, this profound if most mysterious urge to share my insights to men and women I do not know directly (unseen readers!) has to be part of the same strange force that is behind what seems to be my incontestable readiness to betray the E.O., but then, I believe I understand why I am engaging such risk. Profound experience when it is not communicated to anyone else can scourge the soul. I, who have lived so long in the belief that I am no more and no less than a spirit—a presence void of soul—may have to face a serious disruption of this sense of my personal condition. Somewhere within, there seem to be remnants of something much like a soul, comparable, perhaps, to nerves still attached to an amputated limb. How they insist that this limb will yet grow again! Such is the force of that thought in me.

it is well to keep in mind that angels and devils are spirits, not souls, and so do not have the sharp outlines of character that are so agreeable to encounter in a novel. Our physical presence is tenuous and if we serve as familiars to men and women, it is by way of our voice. Especially when we dare to place it on the page. Since we also have exceptional power when necessary to exist within a human body, it is with our mind and the client's hand that the writing is sometimes done. To write this book, therefore, I have chosen to hide in a body of no particular interest for the Maestro. Should a devil pass my present American abode, I would seem one more good American Couch Potato. Put it that I have chosen my own Witness Protection Program. Neither angels nor demons will hover for long near the glow of a television set. Only humans can put up with that baleful light.

I recognize I am offering a great deal to the reader for so early a moment in this biographical endeavor. Yet if I, at this instant, inhabiting an America I can barely comprehend, seem to consist of no more to myself than the withdrawn spirit of a devil without an assignment, I also sense that I must keep to the last confidence that I possess. It is that an account of the life of my most important client will re-establish my footing on some long-lost terrain, and I will then be able to begin to search for the remaining oddments of what may once have been my soul.