

## *Nostalgic Clone*

To Anne and Patrick Poirier for the idea.

(*Le pouvoir des bibliothèques*, Albin Michel, Paris 1996, p. 299).

### 1

I am writing from a land that is distant and happy. I am writing in the words of a person who grew up in the Selves' Library. If I don't write the required *information*, I'll automatically die. So I write. Though I reserve the right to draw a little information too from the Others' Library. Just a little. So it's quite likely that you'll locate it. If you search you may detect foreign loans. But I proceed as I've learned and as I know how. As I learned from the very moment I was born and as I've known how for some time now. Let me speak and you'll understand. Don't jump to conclusions. Just keep your apparatus open.

Our Library, that of the Selves, is a star and at its centre is the Jukebox. It's from here that the Rooms with the laser books are determined. Laser books, each consisting of millions of gigas, are automatically read by means of the Information Jukebox. From here, the Information is channelled into any network providers: either into those in the main Reading Room, or into the personal ones at home or into the Biosphere's offices. Information from one laser book to the rest is passed at the speed of ten billion operations per second, providing the user, virtual or actual, with the possibility of multiple combinations for finding, linking and verifying the information in only a few seconds. There can be no Biosphere without the Jukebox.

*All the above* ('Our Library, that of the Selves, is a star,' etc. etc.) is always written automatically. The moment you begin writing to a non-authenticated recipient. It wasn't me who wrote this. I ought to add, too, that not a soul sets foot in these Rooms. (It was me who added this.) Apart from the slaves-technicians, no one else visits the Rooms. This is why there are many who believe that the Rooms are completely virtual and that the Information comes from elsewhere, from some vague Unknown. I don't believe this. Whoever believes such nonsense hasn't *read* enough. (*Belief*: useless information; more useful: *Knowledge*). Don't worry if you don't possess such systems. Provision for such systems had been made on Earth from as

long ago as the end of the twentieth century. But if you don't possess them, it's not the end of the world. And that it's not the end of the world, I know only too well. There are some others here who live without a Jukebox. Whether they live better than us... I still don't know – bear in mind that everything I'm writing now is mine, totally mine – but what is absolutely certain is that there are others who live without a Jukebox.

The library classification system for laser books is of interest. Besides, it's the one thing that was preserved unchanged from the existing pan-American civilisation – at least until the moment of its disappearance in 2040. Our politicians, intellectuals and slaves, without exception, all agreed that this classification was the most important legacy from the former existing civilisation. It was also considered to be in keeping with our own vital Ideas concerning the preservation of our Selves' civilisation and this is why, with some minor corrections, we kept it unadulterated and didn't tamper with it.

The Others appear to have a much simpler classification system. But the Others don't live off the Information Library as we do. *The truth is that they maintain it so that they can say that they too have a library.* (I wasn't the one who wrote this. I might have written it some time ago).

Now, I'll give an example; I'll call up the word *propaganda*: you can find relevant entries by means of the Jukebox in almost all the library's laser books... such an entry doesn't exist among the Others. Not even a trace. And I'm in a position to know. They live in their own little world. At times, they seem no different to slaves. They read very little. *I was the one* who wrote this, even though it's like what the Library writes. I have my reasons.

Now I'll very quickly describe for you the famous pan-American classification (of the Jukebox type) that takes pride of place in our Library's Rooms.

01. Room for extinct peoples and civilisations
02. Room for extinct languages and dialects
03. Room for historic persons and events
04. Room for mythical persons and events
05. Room for mythologies and religions
06. Room for biographies and autobiographies

07. Room for mass desires and narcissism
08. Room for holocausts, national censuses and cenotaphs
09. Room for ethnic cleansing and genocide
10. Room for religious and political doctrines
11. Room for the instruments of doctrinal worship
12. Room for heresies and deviations of all kinds
13. Room for philosophical doctrines and non-implemented Law
14. Room for fanaticisms and political agreements
15. Room for the instruments of wielding power
16. Room for genealogies and apartheids
17. Room for futilities
18. Room for aesthetic rules in every age
19. Room for progresses
20. Room for regresses
21. Room for national literature and art
22. Room for erotic literature and art
23. Room for literature and art passa tempo
24. Room for classical literature and art
25. Room for useful literature and art
26. Room for widespread languages and idiolects
27. Room for metaphysical symbols and allegories
28. Room for travel and epic descriptions
29. Room for E.M. (= Essential Memory)
30. Room for developing theses in general
31. Room for developing antitheses in general
32. Room for burial rites and related customs
33. Room for erotic rites and related customs
34. Room for strategies of success
35. Room for terrorism and strategies of fear
36. Room for punishments
37. Room for objective illusions
38. Room for audio-visual illusions
39. Room for geographical maps and the drawing of boundaries
40. Room for idyllic spots

41. Room for deserted spots
42. Room for built-up spots
43. Room for scientific utopias
44. Room for political and social utopias

Information on everything. We've left nothing out. Try to find something that doesn't exist in these rooms. It doesn't exist. Everything is here. Everything that led the Earth of Information to its pan-American heyday. Everything that permitted and permits us to live in this viable Biosphere.

Ha, ha, ha. It's the first time I've done that. Don't think that *these* are the Rooms. That is, in a way, *these* are: the forty-four Rooms. They're not. Let me explain. Quickly. Before.

All right. I deceived you. I've just described to you the Rooms controlled by the Jukebox – but as they came to me. I myself don't know how they all came to me so amazingly, one after the other. It's at times like this that I astound myself. *That's literature, not information*, I might venture to add. Literature, information... six of one, half a dozen of the other, you'll tell me. And yet, for some, these slight differences mean a great many things; they do count.

Anyway, the Rooms turned out wonderful and, what's more, with amazing speed. Just like then with Ulma when I was young. I once again deceived, I played, I DIDN'T INFORM. You probably don't understand, but it doesn't bother me... These aren't the real names. I altered... I ALTERED MANY OF THE ROOM'S NAMES. Ha, ha, ha. It's the first time I've done that. Don't ever think that these are the Rooms. That is, in a way, they are. They're not. Let me explain. Quickly. Before. Soon the auto-regulation will start. I don't know. Perhaps, that is, I'll disappear before long. But I enjoyed playing with the names of the Rooms. I'm happy. Why. Like then when I was young. Because these aren't EXACTLY the names of the Rooms. They are and they aren't. I changed them somewhat. Not somewhat, *a lot*.

When I was young, I played at this with my sister. I know the game perfectly well. We always joked about the names of the Rooms. We changed them at random. And then we'd play with ourselves. It was a wonderful combination to be able to play with yourself and at the same time to play with the names of the Rooms. Ulma would say, for example, in a serious voice: 'History Room', and straightaway go down to her rosy fragrant labia with devotion and selflessness. I'd reply immediately, 'no, madam,

the Fear Room,' and as I watched her bending over and attentive to herself (as though I hadn't replied to her at all, as though she hadn't even heard me, as though I wasn't there), I too caressed and petted myself with corresponding devotion and selflessness, half-watching her and waiting for her to 'call' another Room, gripped as I was with nervous excitement. The examples I just mentioned (History, Fear) were the first that came to mind and sound very pompous. Then, we used to give other names, more spontaneous, more amusing ones. But I have to hurry, THIS IS NOT THE POINT, I urgently wanted to tell you something. I have to hurry, you have to hurry. We grew up with this favourite game of ours. Together with some other kids. This game made us feel somehow different. But I can't go on with this topic... though I'd certainly like to... Time is against me. I'll tell you only of the important things. Any time now, it's certain, surely, the accursed auto-regulation is going to start.

## 2

I'm writing to you from a land that is distant and organised. My country is the Jukebox and my world is the Biosphere. Who might be out there? Who, in fact, is receiving this message? No one? Someone, surely. Before the auto-regulation gets underway, I must give you a little information about the Others. Ha, ha, ha. A *little* information... That's a laugh. As much as I can, at least.

The Others live like slaves. They do all the work themselves. They don't have slaves. The Others are few in number and know even fewer things; they're still using pre-war books. Whatever they do, they'll never become very many. Because they still use parents. The Others seem different. I mean: different from each other. They're not like we Selves. We Selves are Selves and we don't change; we don't have any such worries. That's good. Not to have to worry about this and that. Whatever you need, whatever you desire, you find it in the Library. You search, find, go on. It's not bad. All the information is suitable for all of us.

I recall, as an adolescent, going through the Rooms like a wild pony. How often I got lost in Rooms 22, 27 and 37. How often Ulma and I played hide and seek in Rooms 35 and 44. In Rooms 07 and 33, a woman gave me my first lessons concerning my body. Using my apparatus, I went back and forth for a whole age through the combination 01, 15, 17 and 44. It was a whole age it was; that's where it all began, in Rooms 01, 15, 17 and 44. Yes, now I know, that's where it all began; a

small step before the Biosphere's Information was able to enfold me in its sweet elation, misfortune came unexpectedly. What I just wrote sounds like a silly little poem:

*Before the Biosphere's information  
was able to enfold me  
in its sweet elation  
misfortune came unexpectedly.*

I'm going completely crazy. A little poem, indeed! Ha, ha, ha! But I'll go on with my story as hurriedly as I can because the matter is now pressing. I was the most perfect Self. I looked through so many Rooms in the Library during those years; I consumed more Information than anyone before me had ever read. Who knows from what intercrossing such a Self as I was fashioned? Now it's too late for me to correct myself. I read, read, read. I filled to bursting. No other Self ever went through so many Rooms. None of us ever made such crazy combinations from Room to Room and from book to book. I've no idea how I became such a fanatic bookworm. What was I looking for? I don't know and I probably never will. It was as if not I but another self of mine was searching, some stranger, miles away from our viable civilisation. It was this stranger who directed me, calmly, silently but steadily... and I went along. This and only this has determined my life's direction ever since...

And so I eventually arrived very close to complete Information; and if I didn't embrace it, if I didn't acquire it, this was because (I've since learned that) its name is: Boredom. It's impossible to find peace if you pass into this. *It's impossible to cram any other information into boredom.* At this point, you eventually feel the interminable void enfolding you in its terrifying coldness. Death is not far away. It awaits you. There's no salvation. But, to my great good fortune, I managed to bury myself in the Library of the Others. Judith. It was then that I understood how the soul's astral void is filled. I wanted to go on living.

Now I can reveal this too: the 'game' with the Rooms that I'd previously been playing was not so spontaneous. I simply wanted to delay the Information's course towards auto-regulation. *Was it perhaps a game, though, because the Self that I am knows how to play from being young? Did I simply play in the Rooms in order to*

*focus your attention on our Jukebox?* These two questions were not mine. Notice how the second one is particularly suspicious. From the moment that the auto-regulation begins, the Information from the Library automatically enters the apparatus. Before long, when the auto-regulation has gone even further, my apparatus will flood with data, words, concepts, entries and information from the Library. Don't leave, however. If you're receiving this message, receive that one too. You never know. Perhaps. Never know. When my regulation begins, you'll understand. Because I won't resist. Because there's no *possibility* of my resisting. (*Resistance*: for information on this see Room 35...). And, naturally, I'll die.

So I want to have time, before the situation becomes desperate, to describe to you the rooms in the Others' Library. Because you, my probable messengers out there, because you out there may, I don't know, but you may be able to judge. You can judge who lives the better life. Where am I sending this message? No one can say. Perhaps they live better in other Biospheres. Perhaps somewhere far from here, somewhere else, they haven't yet reached Biosphere 5. It's to all of them, to you, that is, that I'm talking.

I'll say it again; the Others are few in number. There are a hundred times fewer of them than us. But I'm wasting time. Quickly, I have to quickly record their Rooms now. How do I know them? Judith, she's an Other. We met at a Meeting and since then we've communicated through cybertime just as I'm communicating (?) with you now. In addition, we meet about ten times a year, at certain Meetings, when Selves and Others gather to arrange the common adjustments in the Biosphere. It's theirs too. A small part is entirely theirs. Yet, for some strange reason – that I haven't time to learn – without Others, life in the Biosphere is not possible.

We're linked together in this protected piece of earth. The Others also live in their Library, what else can they do, but more so they look at each other or do servile jobs rather than read. Yes. I have it from Judith. They try to read as little as possible! It sounds very strange. When it was in their texts (both laser ones and many pre-war ones) that I discovered my life. I discovered a better world. I found something useful to do. I found a goal that made me what I am today.

*Suicide*. I don't regard what I'm doing now as suicide. The apparatus lost no time in writing that it was plain suicide. If this word is repeated too often, you can be sure that it's not mine. I'm not committing suicide. I'm very happy to 'sacrifice

myself' for an idea. In the past, this happened for a load of crazy ideas and millions of people gave some meaning to their lives. Why not now? I sense that the Others live a more interesting life in their Library. *Sense*: useless information? But how might I *know*? Quickly, the Rooms; I must hurry to record the Others' Rooms, I've committed them to memory. For a year now that I've known her, I recite them every night like a love song; they recall something of the pre-war Earth, when the Earth was not simply that dirty ark that looks like a vegetable greenhouse.

01. Room for vital instruments and techniques in general
02. Room for the senses
03. Room for silences
04. Room for fragments of memory
05. Room for inexhaustible readings
06. Room for classic desires
07. Room for untold desires
08. Room for poor days
09. Room for old days
10. Room for good days
11. Room for beloved objects
12. Room for ages
13. Room for pleasures
14. Room for coincidences and for déjà vu
15. Room for illusions
16. Room for real and dream places
17. Room for flora and fauna, water and seas, hills and air
18. Room for mental disturbances
19. Room for physical disturbances
20. Room for forgotten utopias
21. Room for death

There, I've recorded them, anyway there weren't so many. Now you understand what I was up to before with the Jukebox Rooms. I 'fashioned' them in the image and likeness of the Others' Library. Can you spot the differences? Can you understand? I know these Rooms here so well. As if I'd visited them. As if I'd known



them from my unknown mother's womb. To tell you the truth, I don't know why they should live better than us in this Library. It's just something I sense.

And then there's the look. Not only Judith's. Their look is 'richer', stronger, I don't know, it has something that makes you feel good, deep inside. And then they're different. The Others are different. They're better looking. Different. And yet they're the *same*, I mean they're not divided into intellectuals, politicians and slaves. We live divided and isolated. They all live the *same*. They all do the *same* things. They read so little. This is something in particular that I can't accept. 'One day you'll understand,' Judith replies meaningfully, whenever I ask her about it. 'You'll understand why we, who are the last and who love books more than anyone in history, read so little...'. But I don't really understand. And their Library is so small, so few gigas, so few Rooms, such indifference... They're certainly different people. Yet that impassioned look of theirs is after all reassuring; it calms your soul.

### 3

I'm writing to you from a land that's distant and wounded. On the one hand there are we Selves and on the other, from as long as I can remember myself, there are those Others. *From as long as I can remember myself, the Others have always been few, always enthusiastic for a few moments before falling into despondency again.* This was not mine. The apparatus wrote it *using my words*. The auto-regulation is proceeding wonderfully. Now it's certain. It's proceeding unexpectedly quickly. They're not despondent. They're nice and different. Their Rooms... The Rooms in their Library recall closed gardens from the pre-war years; they seem so happy, at least when you look at them through the apparatus...

Yet through the apparatus, everything in the Libraries seems different. We, too, probably don't look so revolting when you look at us from afar: so flawlessly identical, so clean, so consistently infallible and organised around our giant Jukebox. From outside, through the apparatus, it's different. *But real life is inside there. In the Library.* No, that wasn't mine. Though it could... While we're on the subject, I've no idea where real life is concealed. How could I?

Is it perhaps in *there*? I've used up my entire life reading in order to find out and I very nearly died in the darkness of the most frightful boredom. And I've no idea

either if there's anything in their Library. And if *I* found something in there, is it simply that there's something wrong with *me* who found it? In other words, is there some intrinsic *flaw* in my construction? In which case, it's not worth the trouble of informing the others in cybertime about this something.

The only assuredness I have at this moment for this action of mine is that silly little poem that I accidentally fashioned a short while ago. Because no such thing has ever happened to me before. And because I thoroughly enjoyed it. Just as I really enjoyed the game with the names, of the Rooms, the real names of which you'll never learn from me. It's this unexpected pleasure that is guiding me now. I care nothing about auto-regulation and such like. Nothing.

It's me telling you that I succeeded in detaching myself from my like; that I succeeded in sacrificing myself for a vague idea. Maybe if I were more careful, I'd pass over safe and sound to the Others, without anyone noticing. Only God knows what I might have done to cross over to the Others. Since we've touched on the topic; another useful example, *God*: from what I know, the Selves, my few friends, my informants, and the women I mixed with in my classified life, all those without exception who accompanied me till now that I'm about to die, insist that they know everything about God (see, for example, Jukebox Rooms: 05, 07, 10, 11, 12, 15, 27, 32, 34, 35). I claimed the same, of course, until recently. On the contrary, the Others refuse to discuss the subject. *In general, they discuss very little and (here, in my view, lies their greatest flaw) think even less.* No, not even this was mine. The auto-regulation wrote it. No, the Others discuss everything *and* think. Imagine. What stupid nonsense that was.

My dearest Judith, I'm losing you. I'll enclose your sweet look inside me and... But what am I writing about... I got carried away. I'll get right back to the previous question; about real life. Let me formulate it in a more practical way: what does it mean when someone 'has a good time' in the Biosphere? A Self, an Other. It's no small matter. The Selves maintain that only those who have passed through all the laser Rooms are in a position to know the answer. But no one has ever been through all the Rooms. Take me, for example. I've been through infinite combinations and what have I understood? It's right what the older ones in here say: 'It's impossible to go through all the Rooms. You don't have enough time, death catches up with you.' It sounds like a little poem again:

*It's impossible to go  
Through all the Rooms, you know  
Before you can say Jack Robinson  
Your time's up son, you're dead.*

Harmless twaddle. Though it does me good. Writing to you from a distant and desperate land, I've decided (now I realise) to *do as I please*; some will say that I behaved like a typical Other. These people, no doubt about it, continually *do as they please*. You can't control them, you can never be sure of their actions as you can with us. Nevertheless I didn't cross over to the Others. For the simple reason that I still have my reservations. Besides, I haven't managed to go through all the Rooms in their Library.

However, from the few that I have gone through, I managed to understand a little. I've no complaints. At first, Judith led me to the combination 03, 04, 07 and 09. You can't get enough there. When I first went in, as if by magic, the boredom fell apart like old paper. It was another world. I recalled something. My self found something ancient and pre-war. Elation, that's the word. For a year now, I've been going back and forth through the combination 03, 04, 07 and 09. I could live with these books alone. What else could anyone wish for in life.

Judith says that there's a lot, a lot more still to be deleted. There are millions of bits of useless information that you can erase in order to give survival a few more chances. I got rid of quite a few laser books in 03, 04, 07 and 09. But I also read quite a few that were genuinely worth the effort. For a whole month we went through the combination 01, 18 and 19 together, just so that I might get an idea what crap the world contains, what unnecessary, monstrous information could be erased without leaving any trace behind... Of course, the combination 01, 18 and 19 will never be mine, just as the combination 03, 04, 07 and 09. But even so, I got something out of it, I understood something.

If I were a more patient type, if I were more cautious, I could go freely through the Rooms of the Others for a long time yet. I could do a load of things together with Judith. But given the kind of Self I am, I don't even know how to behave towards her. I keep feeling that something is escaping me, that I'm missing something. I can see the perplexity depicted in her eyes too.

I couldn't bear it any more. I betrayed myself. Listen well, all you out there: there's no worse thing in the world than boredom. There's no information that can alleviate it. None. And so I revealed myself. A fathomless, unknown *inside me*, came out. I almost became *someone else*. As I write to you now, I'm less of a Self than ever. And so I'm dying in peace. Just as once, through the Jukebox, I verged on complete Information, so now it seems to me that I'm verging on complete Knowledge. That's why I'm writing to you. Visit the Others' Library. As quickly as possible. Help so that the waste piled up by the surviving pre-war civilisation might be converted. Seek civilisations with hills not built on, ages with unpolluted water and air, go through the Rooms that I went through. There are so many useless books that we could destroy. Not a trace must be left. So few books that deserve to remain throughout eternity. A word to the wise. Why shouldn't a few souls be saved? *Resistance*: this old, useless information now acquires a fresh meaning. And as the meaning is being recreated, I'm leaving you.

#### 4

And now it's I, Judith, who am writing to you. And not from any distant land. There's only us, the few who have remained. Together with the clones like poor Ulmo, who was writing in the apparatus just now. It's a known fact that there can be no Biosphere without the Library. Nor clones without the Jukebox. I know, it's inhuman, we fashioned it on the model of the American Library of Congress, as everyone knows. In addition to Ulmo, quite a few others have been self-regulated. Though not out of boredom. Out of nostalgia. But they don't know it. They never learn it. They just suffer. The poor wretch was looking for real mountains and seas like those he'd read about in the pre-war books. He was looking for small inconsequential things that have no connection at all with the Jukebox. He was searching in cookery books for dishes that its impossible to make here, he studied handicraft books for clay, wood, iron, non-existent materials... Those who reach that point go on to develop a huge and insatiable desire for little inanities of the sort.

He went through our Rooms happily erasing; he erased thousands of *other* inanities on which he'd been fed over so many years – the ones we drive ourselves crazy trying to erase because there's no end to them. Those that we didn't erase at the

right time and the result was what happened with the pan-American model and the clones. Those that condemned us to life in this miserable Biosphere.

Did I love him? If that's love. But it isn't. How could it be with a clone? You look into his blank eyes and try to find something in his irises that might distinguish him a little from the next one. There was that accident which obliged us to immediately enter Biosphere V. We were trapped in it. So we couldn't bring out others and we couldn't bring out varieties. Now it's too late. All the clones came out in the image and likeness of the pan-American. That was the one available during those difficult hours and that was the one we brought out. And then again, we couldn't risk being without clones. Very few of us had remained. If you don't know about the Biosphere, you won't understand a word of all this. If you don't know about the Biosphere, you're very lucky.

In any case, and to finish, there comes a time for certain clones like Ulmo when they start to feel *nostalgia*. Then, automatically, all the information concerning the surviving civilisation, with which they're fed in the Biosphere, crumbles and loses its meaning. In the deepest recesses of their beings, these clones, though programmed with the pan-American model of artificial intelligence, that is with all the pre-war information which allows them to survive in subservience, without resistance and demands, suddenly *lose their life-supporting centre*. They become nostalgic. Which means: they become mad, horrified, ill; they can't endure the fact that they're clones, that they stem from people, that these people fashioned them in the image and likeness of the pan-American nothingness. They want at all costs to return to the pre-war man. It's that simple.

Some begin to suspect something, even when still young. They simply accommodate themselves in the quiet and easy life we've secured for them through the Jukebox. They accommodate themselves with mathematical consistency in a tolerable trance. They have the necessary politicians, the necessary intellectuals, the necessary slaves. Nevertheless, if they come to realise (as in the case of Ulmo) that they have the *possibility of return*, the information concerning the suppression of human needs on which they had been previously fed, crumbles, sheds its leaves like trees in autumn used to – and they themselves immediately rush to bury themselves in our Library. This marks the beginning of the end. It goes without saying that we've taken care to make it virtually repulsive, impenetrable, useless for their measured and

calculated lives. But once these Selves become nostalgic, nothing can stop them. They understand. In our Library, they find the warmth of Knowledge; what at any rate it's impossible, by definition, for the Congress' Jukebox to give them.

The outlet provided by auto-regulation didn't exist when we got trapped with them in the Biosphere. The possibility of nostalgia was unthinkable then. We introduced auto-regulation in the ninth year of the Biosphere a little after the first symptoms of deviance had appeared. So that the clones could at least choose 'freely' their own deaths. It sounds horrid, but as everyone knows that's how clones are. If you allow them to live like people, they go mad from raging nostalgia. For the time being, there's no better solution than auto-regulation.

For our part, we do whatever we can so that the Library gradually becomes limited to what's essential. We allow every clone suffering from nostalgia to 'play' as much as he wants in the Rooms. Their imminent death produces the same symptoms in all the Selves. That dizzy, unexpected knowledge of human folly gives them enormous, frenetic strength. In a very short time they are able to erase huge amounts of information. Every nostalgic clone is invaluable for survival. At the rate of nostalgia that we have at present, in a few years the Library will have been expurgated to a degree that will allow us to work on a new model of survival that will come close to the pre-war one at its best.

When the Library has been completely expurgated from the pan-American model of the past, when we arrive at the absolutely essential texts, when the information and narratives fashioning the suppression of needs have been disposed of and the lost knowledge returns, if nothing else at least we'll know where we're going, what possibilities remain. *This reversely progressing Library and those nostalgic clones are our only hope.* Ulmo was one of the lucky ones. He found me. I showed him something more than real life: a little tenderness. Though I don't know if he left happy.

Now after all this theorising, normally you ought to be suspicious of me. I too have burdened you with information. There was no other way. Many more Ulmos will be needed, many more clones will die, steeped in nostalgia and knowledge, before we... Having come this far, there's no other path open. In the Biosphere, no one has any doubts about that. There's no longer even one supporter of the pan-American

model. Everyone knows. Life here doesn't allow much margin for choice. I'm not going to add anything else. But because there's always the possibility that you may be suspicious of me, I'm now going to join my voice with his final words. Ulmo's, that is. I deliberately kept them till the end. I began writing on the apparatus at the same time that he... Final words. Yes, it's better that you should be left with his image.

He kept our Library's Rooms in his broken memory like a prayer. I'll do the same, letting his final words fly through cybertime like a prayer – even if they're not: 'and yet I still have my doubts. I'll die with these doubts. I don't believe that the Others have found the Path. Otherwise, we'd know about it. Otherwise, we Selves wouldn't be so many and so identical. We wouldn't exist. We wouldn't be living in the Biosphere. We wouldn't... At least both they and we would have the strength to abandon this stupid Jukebox, which perhaps you might be envious of. We'd blow the wretched Biosphere to smithereens and, hand in hand, we would disintegrate into infinite space like astral dust.'

Translated by David Connolly

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