

The ultimate confrontation of an old man with himself

The Man in the Mirror

HERMAN TEIRLINCK

To Henri, a dandy approaching seventy, life is a game that should be played with virtuosity and imagination. Ironically, he refuses to commit himself to any approach to life. For him, the art of life is the art of camouflage. One day while looking in a mirror Henri sees deterioration in a body that is no longer his. He undergoes a beauty treatment before entering into the ultimate confrontation with himself, arising from the ashes as a handsome young man. But this 'purification' is a vain attempt at camouflaging a life built on lies and deceit.

One of the purest realisations of the therapeutic novel

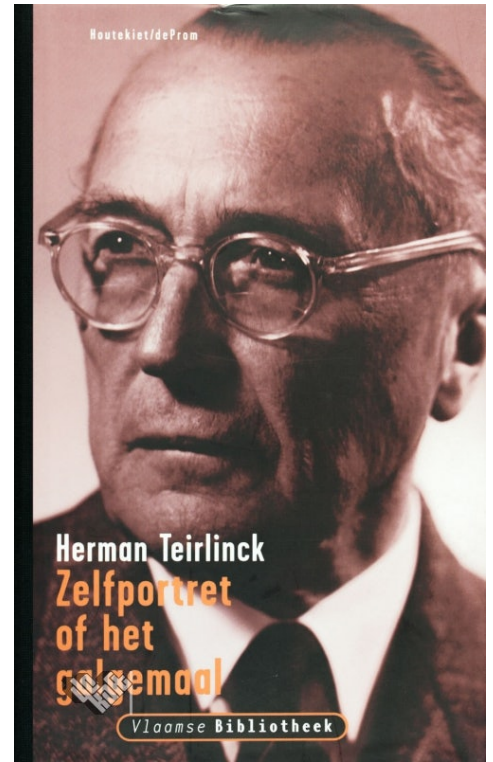
BERNARD KEMP

Henri subjects himself to merciless soul-searching. Anxiously seeking the true identity behind his immaculate caricature, he resorts to drastic measures. He casts off all pretence and reveals his past through flash-backs, in which his crippled wife, his son, his one big love from his extramarital life and his only friend all bear witness to his deceitful existence.

Before his moral execution can be carried out, one more experience awaits him. The ultimate attempt at self-portrayal can only succeed after a last supper, served by the stunningly beautiful Babette, with whom he has a rendezvous in the hotel where he will perform his swansong.

A virtuoso and baroque writing style that is still dynamic fifty years on

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AUTHOR



Herman Teirlinck (1879-1967) was a multi-faceted artist and played a prominent role in Flemish cultural life. He worked as a civil servant and a Dutch teacher, and as a teacher and art and literary advisor to the Belgian court of Albert I, Leopold III and Boudewijn I. He was also a poet, essayist and playwright, founder of literary magazines, drawer, painter, furniture designer, actor and director.

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