

My Love of the Year 2000

A Novel of Love and Philosophy



Georges Réveillac

« The masters of this planet
are semi-conscious animals,
many of whom think they are gods.
And among those who escape this trap,
most believe that they are
the only men in the universe... »

**-HOW EXISTENCE BECAME
LIVING,**

**-HOW LIVING EXISTENCE
BECAME AWARE OF THE
UNIVERSE,**

**-HOW CONCIOUS EXISTENCE
BECAME AWARE OF ITSELF.**

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About “Mômmanh”

Mômmanh is the personification of what you can call, if you like, “**Mother Nature.**”

If you want to be more specific, you must read or reread Chapter 2.

Like everyone else, you feel the need to exist. Well, according to my theory, this need for existence is present in all matter, living or not. It acts on the evolution of this matter, promoting what it considers good and vice versa. I believe that it does not follow a plan leading to a goal. When you are given a new dish to try you taste it and, if it pleases your taste buds, you make sure that you remember it so that you can find this pleasure again if the opportunity arises. Well, the need for existence is the same: “existence precedes essence.”

I call this need for existence “Mômmanh,” which was what I called my mother in our native language, Gallo. If it is really the origin of life, I may well consider it to be our mother.

Table of Contents

Introduction

1-The Initiatory Journey of the Lonely Male

2-MÔMMANH and the STRUCTURE of HUMAN EXISTENCE

What is existence?

Laws of history

The STRUCTURE of HUMAN EXISTENCE

3-Up-there in the Mountains

Liberated consciousness

What lessons does Nature give us?

4-Alleluia

Spoiling a child causes his misfortune. Why?

What is stress?

What is an ideology?

Why does an ideology need to be open?

What are the conditions of a great love?

5-The Great Manoeuvres

To demand: NO. To want: YES

Spoiled child, frustrated child: the same fight

The orgasm of lovers: a powerful part of existence

The origin of alienating passions

How far is the Buddhists' control of desire healthy?

6-Marriage

What is the field of active existence?

Negative stress, positive stress, anxiety

How can selfishness kill love?

What is the purpose of dreams? Do we have a guardian angel?

What is humour? What is the purpose of humour?

What does a game serve for?

7-The Cost of the War

How can existence transcend death?

The role of truth in art

How does the field of existence cover all the past and all the future

How to defeat death

8-The First Signs of the War

Specificities of feminine sexuality

Modern sexuality has to be invented

Women hold the key to paradise

The five gifts of a woman

Which cultural assets of a child foster education?

The real danger of masturbation

9-The truce of the Discoverers

The basis of human existence in Burkina Faso

Pleasures revealed by experience and pleasures yet to be discovered

How can different cultures understand and enrich each other?

Is it necessary to renounce the hope of finding paradise on earth?

In a global economy, do we need a world-state?

10-The Hundred Years War

Why lovers must have the same values, but not necessarily the same tastes

The recipe for a great love

The tendency of those that have been oppressed to become oppressors

Are the existential experiences of our life written in the memory of our gametes?

Catharsis helps to fight our unconscious evil desires

How love makes us better and stronger

How the transition from selfishness to altruism works

The main cause of scholastic failure

The main cause of misery in Africa

How Africans can make the jump into our era whilst preserving the best of their culture

Theory of the Struggle for Existence: its good personal use

How does other people's gaze affect my existence?

What matters is to make yourself useful

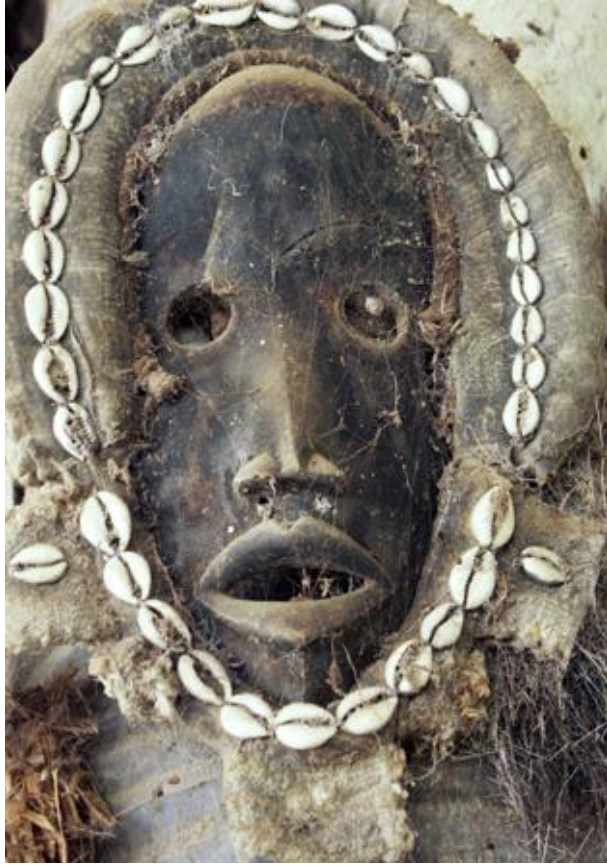
11-Beyond Death

Selfishness leads to death; altruism leads to life

Interstellar conversation

About "Mômmanh"

Table of Issues Addressed



Introduction

Hello.

Here is my introduction to the “Theory of the Struggle for Existence.” And in order to illustrate it, a love story that has proved fairly popular on the website “Alexandrie Online.”

.....“My Love of the Year 2000”

In this version, the love story is there only to illustrate and test the theory, which constitutes the bulk of the work. However, critics have taught me that most readers are not interested in long theoretical developments. To them, I suggest that they just read the novel. It is called:

.....“From Earth to Heaven”

If you go to my website, <http://www.livingexistence.net/> you will find the links to the two PDF versions on the “Download” page. However, despite these criticisms, it is clear to me that the theory, in its various forms, has had more success than the novel. It is also available in English.

The “Theory of the Struggle for Existence” is a science-based philosophical theory that aims to better understand man and life.

I am now a retired teacher. Until 1979, I was also a communist. Between the real history which I had to teach and the supposedly scientific history that the “Party” taught, I too often discovered what seemed to me to be contradictions. That particular year, their mass had surpassed the critical threshold. I asked for a part-time job that would enable me to research a better explanation of history.

After many months of cogitation, I discovered what seemed to be a revelation: the concept of “human existence” that would finally enable me to make history intelligible.

Where did this “need for existence” come from?

I obtained an answer very quickly. It was already present in our ancestors, the animals, as well as in everything alive. Therefore, I had to overhaul the “Theory of Evolution” into a bigger whole that could be called the “Theory of the Struggle for Existence.”

And how could matter give birth to this “need for existence” of the living?

It took me another few months to find the answer to this question. And once I found the answer, I discovered this: “What if this ‘need for existence’ was in matter?”

At this point, I almost caught the illness of big headedness. I felt invested with a great mission: to save mankind. The setbacks that this attitude brought led me to a consultation with the director of a psychiatric hospital. This good man assured me that I was not crazy. As for my alleged discovery, he simply said: “Rest assured that if you have found something, others will also discover it.” My famous mission fell into the water. It had mainly served to hide a large dose of pride.

If this theory proved to be reliable, it would make us better equipped to deal with the problems of our time: globalisation, unemployment, deadly pollution, overpopulation, terrorism, genetic engineering, human rights, education, cultural diversity... the hope to cure humanity from poverty, unemployment, wars and madness, the hope to really go and conquer the stars and, in general, our much-maligned hope would be given new wings, although this would not mean the end of all of our problems.

“Yes, but we must not confuse our wishes with reality.

– That is true. But we should also not dismiss a real possibility just because it matches our hopes too well. In conclusion: we should be prudent.”

However, since I wrote this preface in 2001, alarming events have occurred that highlight the urgency of the situation. Violence is the most obvious sign. They are induced by a regression of thought which is taking us back towards the Middle Ages. In this world that offers nothing better than a mediocre present and, by way of a future, the certainty that we are going crash into a wall, in their desperation some people are turning to the ideologies of the past. Some want science to give way to their sacred texts, or rather their interpretation of them. Creationists and fundamentalists of all persuasions are increasingly numerous, increasingly influential, and they pose a serious threat to knowledge, to the little peace that we have left and to Human Rights.

Preconceptions, as tough as dogmas, blind us to certain emergencies, however obvious they are. For example, the Earth’s resources cannot provide a good life to 9 billion people: the population must be reduced. Furthermore, nationalisms sanctified in their patriotic costumes are generators of wars; they also prevent us from managing globalisation.

An 8-year-old child would see this clearly. Besides, one has only to ask a few people to become sure of it.

Well, to make our blinders fall off, it is enough for the world’s historians to show us the origin and genesis of these misconceptions. Then we would see that there were times when it was good to have lots of children, but what was a blessing in the past has become the curse of our time. We would also see that nationalism was a good thing when it rescued us from feudalism and imperialism, but now each of the nearly 200 passengers in the world bus can not have its own little steering wheel: there needs to be one driver for the global bus and not 200, as most adults now claim is necessary.

So, if my theory has any chance of helping us out of the quagmire, it is urgent to test it.

Indeed, even if it is never able to help resolve the desperate situations that torment us, it will at least give us hope for a more desirable present and future. And fundamentalists of all kinds, reconciled with our world, will join their energies with ours to avoid the wall towards which we are heading more and more quickly, catapulted by the acceleration of history.

Having had this intuition that the need for existence is probably at work in the whole of the universe, I have discovered that I am in the same position as some renowned researchers that the scientific community has more or less marginalized. The English biologist, James Lovelock, who created the Gaia hypothesis: that the earth acts like a living organism, maintaining certain constants that are necessary for life, for example, a level of 21% of oxygen in the air. Dr Jacques Benveniste, a French researcher, thinks that he has discovered “water memory” through experimentation. The German researcher Roland Plocher markets a product that treats polluted water by putting “information” into it: nobody can explain how his process works, but it has had some success. The “discoveries” of these two researchers help to explain those of homoeopathy.

Formulated in 1980, my theory implicitly predicted some of the failures suffered by cloning operations. Here is what, in fact, it means. During the course of life of an individual, their need for existence keeps in mind the events that have marked them and the appropriate responses; part of this memory is passed on their descendants through the intermediary of reproductive cells known as gametes. In other words, part of life becomes hereditary; the acquired part modifies the inborn. “Bang, you might say, here’s the monstrous theory of Lyssenko who claimed that the acquired becomes hereditary.”

Actually, it is not the same thing at all.

I think that gametes keep the most remarkable experiences of life in their memory: yes. But these experiences need to be repeated, although I don't know through how many generations it takes for them to be inscribed in large characters in the genetic inheritance. Therefore, supposing that the black skin of certain types of humans is really a good answer to the constraints of very hot climates, perhaps it took tens of thousands of years for the black ethnic groups of Africa, India, Papua and New Guinea, Australia... to be formed. Even so, there are at least two hypotheses based on my theory that could explain the difficulties of cloning:

- the genes are not the only hereditary factors, they are even the most important ones either in the long term (***see note at end of chapter***);

- gametes don't carry the same information as other cells, for example, those used for cloning.

My theory also has similarities with several philosophies, in particular those of Socrates, of Auguste Comte, of Karl Marx, of the scholar Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, of the existentialists and the phenomenologists...

But it contradicts Camus' idea that history is absurd. He probably believed that the Communists felt authorized to establish their terrible dictatorships in the name of supposedly scientific history. In other words, making history a science inevitably leads us to dictatorship. In fact, precisely the opposite is the case. The Theory of the Struggle for Existence leads us to believe that freedom and democracy are necessary for the development of human existence.

I have just discovered a new long lost cousin in a science-fiction novel written by two American physicists: "At the heart of the comet" by Gregory Benford and David Brin. They formulate a hypothesis of a "creation" or "evolution" in three stages: first the existence at the beginning of the universe, then life, and finally consciousness, the human stage of the planet Earth.

Here is one more tree for that forest: "... Then I can see my hopes and strivings, my fears and cares as the same as those of thousands who have lived before me, and I may hope that future centuries may bring fulfilment to my yearnings of centuries ago. No seed of thought can germinate in me except as the continuation of some forebear; not really a new seed but the predetermined unfolding of a bud on the ancient, sacred tree of life..." (Extracts from *My View of the World* by Erwin Schrödinger — Cambridge, University Press, 1964).

And who is this Schrödinger? He was an Austrian that lived in the 20th century. He was one of the fathers of quantum theory and the inventor of the famous Schrödinger's cat, which did not stop him from winning the Nobel Physics Prize.

If I am right, the implications of my theory would lead to relying on the experimental method. Thousands of scientific experiments are conceivable. For example, it should be possible to explain why the efforts of Jacques Benveniste do not succeed every time and lead to other conclusive experiments.

Above all I don't want to start a cult. As long as this "Theory of the Struggle for Existence" seems valid, I shall be with those who treat it in the same way as the "Theory of Evolution": in a scientific manner. There should be no dogmas: each element of the framework can be questioned. And if experimental verifications invalidate the theory, then I shall have to discard it.

At the same time, it could be used to create complex electronic games, some of which may be useful for science: simulations of the biological or historical or even psychological processes.

The "need for existence" which may be present in matter is too much of an abstract concept. So I gave it a name: "Mômmanh." A body and a face? That, however, was impossible. Yet, through the pages, this dark spirit that works tirelessly to take matter where it is good, this universal genius that invented life and consciousness, Mômmanh, gradually emerges from the darkness and we become familiar with it.

Once again: this is just a hypothesis. But you still have the right to love a hypothesis.

I have embedded it into two novels, and “excuse me” if I repeat myself.

The first (494 pages) contains the theory. Reading it will probably appear daunting: this is the price that you have to pay to get to the end of my reflections. It is entitled “My Love of the Year 2000.”

The book therefore includes two parts developed in parallel: the novel and theory. The latter, in bold italic type, is easy to distinguish. So, if you prefer, you can just read the novel.

You can download it from this website: <http://www.livingexistence.net/>

The second only has 320 pages, but it does not contain the theory. Mômmanh is presented there as an imaginary character that is comparable to an ancient god. I have entitled it: “From Earth to Heaven.”

Because it appeals to all dimensions of existence, love is particularly well-suited to illustrating the theory.

Thus analysed and reconstructed, love should appear even more wonderful to you: an essential agent of human existence and a source of unparalleled bliss. Above all, you should realize, if you have not already, that it is at your door.

Both versions can be downloaded. First go to my website <http://www.livingexistence.net/>. Then simply click on one of the icons or tabs labelled “Download the book...”

Note: Today, on 15th April 2015, I updated my work again. I have just read an article in the French magazine "Sciences et Avenir": "Epigenetics to the rescue of autoimmune diseases." (811-September 2014)

Besides genes, there are epigenetic markers that control their activation. And these markers are influenced by their environment.

I quote the article by Hervé Ratel: "The best example that has been documented so far goes back to the terrible winter of 1944-1945, during which a merciless famine struck all of the cities in the west of the Netherlands.

The children of undernourished mothers were not the only ones that suffered from rickets, because the disease was found amongst their grandchildren."

And here is what Yves Renaudineau, a professor at Brest University Hospital, thinks:

"Epigenetic factors may be even more important than genetic factors. And if autoimmune diseases are dependent on these markers... this means that they are reversible."

1-The Initiatory Journey of the Lonely Male

Did she come from the fairy tales, this magic belief, which still clings on to my being and to my enduring roots and which I shall be careful from now on not to destroy because after all it brought me happiness, a conviction which has however caused me a lot of emotional disappointments and which prevented me from enjoying love when I was young and caused me to pour my excess energy into the wombs of the women of Dakar who introduced their trade as follows: “I’m selling my ass,” which, if I had not been careful enough, might have led me into even more filthy solitary relief, masturbation replacing love coming from fantastical aphrodisiac dreams. Who knows?

Which belief?

As far back as I can remember I have always seen the beautiful creatures of the opposite sex, adolescents, young girls or women, as fairies. Yes, “fairies” is the word which is closest to my vision of feminine beauties. At other times, without hesitation, I would have called them “divine.” Nowadays, I do not dare believe that beauty is the essence of the divine. And yet?

So, since women seemed to me to be the heralds of the marvellous supernatural, how could I, a mere human kneaded with mud and crippled with imperfections, shake off the dross of which I am made and fly towards the infinite to drink the milk of the immortals? To be welcomed by the bosom of a fairy, I could see only one way: to practice the only magic of which I am capable, that of the Word.

Having thereby valiantly created my own immortality by means of beautiful language, I would have gained a place in the harem of the eternal.

However, I wasn't a complete fool, unless I still am. Women are made of flesh, just like you and me: I know this well and I normally feel it. However, from time to time one of them escapes the common lot. When seeing her, any idea of a spot on the face, a wound, an illness, or ageing seems inappropriate. Worse still: such an idea looks like blasphemy.

The one that has just appeared is beautiful and I would follow her everywhere. But her beauty is so precious to my eyes, that I feel unworthy to have her, even for a moment. That's all.

To the beauties I dreamt of, I wrote exalted letters. The divine words should have made them pine for a new bliss which I alone could give them. At least one of these fairies – the least “silly” I thought sometimes because I was not very bright at the time – should have heard my song and felt the irresistible need to drink from its source. Together we should have stretched out on a carpet of moss, amongst the violets, near the fountain, caressed by the gentle rays of the sun, our guest, lulled by birdsong. There, she would reveal to me all the splendours which the common mortal must not see and, together, we would have sailed off towards great mystery, a one-way voyage where everything would be given to us, the definitive instant when we would take flight from the unbarred human prisons and discover that the infinite universe has been given to us, against all the odds and in spite of the mortal imperfections that afflict our life on earth.

Alas! It was not to be. Worse still! If all beauty was of a divine nature, especially when possessed by a woman, my friends would have only a really vague consciousness, an unsteady and pale outline of a consciousness, my friends who, between us, showed such a lack of respect (or ignorance) that they called them “tarts, bitches” or even old bags, still obtained in spite of everything, and sometimes easily, what I desired so much; they got laid! whilst I continued to sigh as I swung between two crisis of epistolary delirium. When they wanted to be kind, they called me “Poet”

and they gave me good advice about how to achieve my goals; and at other times, discouraged in their helpful task by my obstinate dreaming, they gave me a mocking nickname; “Pouette-Pouette!” Either way, I didn’t get very far. Sometimes they told very realistic stories about their amorous feats where the marvellous element was massacred by nauseating insults such as: “That bitch screws well... but oh my god, she smells bad!”

Now, I believe that they also realized the supernatural character of beauty. However, they weren’t prepared to think of carnal love as a sacrament. The old monstrous belief that coitus is dangerously impure was eroded, but there was still the idea that it was a filthy act. Now, you know that men, as opposed to women, do not need to share any feelings of love in order to feel a violent desire; you also know that they are afflicted by the almost continuous urge to squirt their semen into any vagina as long as its owner belongs to the great mass of “screwables.” This is why this old superstition suited my friends well. In fact, the act of coitus, being so disgusting, could never be associated with love, which is so pure. Therefore, there was no need to cultivate this delicate plant in order to start screwing. It is also possible that some had felt that their conquest had felt a love for them which could snap them in two. In this case, they sullied with filth in order to become more detached from it.

Be that as it may, their method still disgusts me. Because yes, sometimes I do look for another love. But, starting with the need not to betray Jeanne, there are so many conditions to fulfil that I have yet not managed to “consume” a relationship. While waiting, I have to make do with the delicious peaches that are in the garden. Well. To hell with greed! In any case, I do not intend to steal some moments of eternal happiness from a beauty pretending to give her what she expects from a lover.

What taste could stolen love have? In any case, I don’t want to try it.

When an immaterial beauty dazzles me – immaterial certainly, but endowed with two warm heaving breasts, the rump of a frisky filly and generous lips – when I would do anything for her, when the full power of the divine keeps her alive even in my dreams and when, like a sewer rat, I cannot see the slightest chance of ever sitting

in her coach, I tell myself: “If the nature of beauty is indeed divine, the poor girl who is endowed by it is only like me, a frail human being vulnerable to dental caries and diarrhoea, whose imperfect soul struggles in the swamp of existence like mine, looking for a branch at which to clutch.” My friend, that divinity over there is not a goddess: she is the daughter of a man, her tastes are human and she has ordinary human needs. I, like anyone else, can fulfil some of them, if I want to.

Gifted with this confidence in myself, I could begin her conquest. Who knows? Perhaps I will have a chance. But I leave it at that, my life is already too busy.

It is also true that the more beautiful a woman is, the more she is wooed. Amongst the crowd of men pressing at her feet, she will probably find the ideal, man, endowed with all the qualities (and faults!) which she is looking for. My chances seemed really slim. And yet, my situation could be worse.

Suppose that... – I forgot to warn you: considering my reader as my equal and my friend, I am on familiar terms with him – therefore, suppose that a superior race did exist, like the Nazis wanted to establish: a lot of beautiful women would prefer them. Could this be how the Neanderthal man disappeared from our planet, replaced by the Modern Man, i.e. by “ourselves”? Until the palaeontologists find the clue to this riddle I could risk this hypothesis, which is no less fanciful than many others.

Having said this, I feel similar to some rather ugly girls: from amongst their rare suitors, they have to either choose the least mediocre or give up. But I hadn’t yet acquired that half-wisdom and that is fortunate.

Besides, even if I had only eyes for the immortal ones, it seems to me that although I was no more successful with them than the others, which were only pretty or rather without beauty or grace, or still, by a cruel quirk of fate, burdened with ugliness: they all waved me aside with the same indifference. Faced with the success of my friends, I was both angry, disappointed and perplexed.

After reflecting over and over again, I made up my mind to act on the advice of the Bible, for once, although in the eyes of my parish priest I had become a non-believer. I remembered the astonishing words, taken from St Luke's Gospel: "Do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear... Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them... Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well..."

In its literal meaning, this parable incites laziness; and also leads one to believe that God can clothe us as he does for the birds. Yet I couldn't believe that its author was a fool. Moreover, I translated it my way. The part I liked was: "these things will be given to you as well," and I understood this to mean that "If you do everything that is necessary to gain immortality, one day or another the immortals will recognize it." Because for me, the kingdom of God was on earth rather than in some ever more hypothetical Heaven. I preferred that formula to "Do what you must, come what may," which is certainly well-balanced but which leaves little space for hope.

And this is how I made up my mind from now on to become "a good man." Dear reader, we both know that this is not easy. However, hope helped me to advance little by little in this endeavour.

I must tell you that it was not my excited poems that drove the beauties away from me but my two serious faults. First of all, a great dose of shyness; because they were fairies and I thought that I didn't stand a chance of seducing them, whenever I found myself in their company, I always lost my self-confidence and started to stammer like an idiot. To that handicap, I had added another, which was even worse: not only did I stammer like an idiot but my mind was always elsewhere, in dark places where nobody could join me. In this condition, therefore, I quite often seemed like a rather sinister man.

How did I get like this? In the same way that someone becomes a gambler, an alcoholic or a drug addict: gradually.

Spoiled by my success at school, I always wanted more. That was how the crazy idea of mastering everything by thought had entered my mind. Everything, absolutely everything! An insane wish which became madness after becoming a need. So I needed – Yes, you heard right: I needed – to understand everything. Everything! Everything! Everything! And to do this, I was always carried away beyond the frontiers of reasonable thought. In that desolate no man’s land I felt as if I was sailing on a rough sea. As soon as I tried to get back to the coast and to the land of man, an undercurrent dragged me back into the open sea. Those years of exile in a wild land have nevertheless yielded something precious that I will tell you about very soon. It is a fabulous character which my sick mind has laboriously brought up from the dark depths where it struggled against a nasty octopus: it is my great friend Mômmanh.

– All this is quite confusing, you might say.

– Don’t be afraid, everything will soon become clear. Soon I will explain that strange illness. When I introduce you to my dear Mômmanh, I will tell you how she gave me this poisoned present.

Thank you, Mômmanh.

For the time being, just understand that the type of madness that I was suffering from drove away every girl that was looking for love. Therefore, when I made up my mind to become “a good man” I braced myself to dispel the demon which had taken hold of my soul. At first, despite my efforts which left me exhausted, I only had partial success. This “partial success” was however enough to make me accessible.

I have not yet finished talking to you about this demon. Without thinking, facing a mental illness of which I did not know the cause, I reacted as most Christians had throughout the ages. To start, I called it a “demon.” And in order to expel it from

my body, like exorcists, I used physical violence: I inflicted suffering on myself until the pain was stronger than its grip on me.

So it went away... For a while!

Does it need to be said that I entertained a lot of illusions at the time? I still believed that the beauties, the possessors of their carnal shell of immortality, only offered themselves to those that deserved them: the conquerors of the infinite, the best. Beauty, like the face of God, can only be associated with goodness, which protects each existence to the ends of space and time. One more misadventure might have enlightened me, but I must believe that I still distrusted that type of revelation at the time.

After I had gone to the trouble of getting my front teeth fixed, going to the hairdresser and dressing up nicely, a young lady showed some interest in me. She let me know that she was ready, at least, to walk some way in my company and that she would be willing to offer me a ticket to the stars. Never had I been so close to achieving my dreams. At last I was going to screw! My goodness!

But why then, good God! Why did I tell her about my intention to go to Africa to bring civilization to the poor blacks who lived in darkness?

She replied to me: "I am not a nun from a charitable institution." Whilst I was under the double effect of surprise and annoyance, she had offered me her lips and I had refused them. However, had she known that, in the Third World, French overseas development workers spent most of their time living a life of luxury, the pretty girl would have followed me and I wouldn't have had this story to tell.

In any case, a pretty girl was interested in me: to me this meant that I was on the right path. I kept striving to become "a good man" and soon enough I was rewarded for it. "My Love" fell from the clouds like lightning.

I still haven't overcome it.

After that day, “My Love” made me suffer a lot of disappointments. In spite of everything, my mind has not totally lost its original conviction. I no longer believe in Father Christmas or in the god of my parents, nor in the infallibility of Saint Lenin or of his cousin Saint Mao. No, fortunately I have lost my faith in all of that. But I still believe that female beauty is of divine essence, a flash of inspiration in the bedlam of life, an angel guiding us towards eternity.

Do you think that I am getting carried away? That my mind is blowing bubbles in the air which glisten for a brief moment before dissolving in the sunlight?

Is that what you think?

Then, the time has come to introduce you to Mômmanh.

A long time ago, I wondered how nature could give birth to this infernal wonder that we are: man. I explored space and time as much as I could, especially time. And I discovered it, in the meanders and the tumult of history, in the explosion of life, and even in the big bang. And I saw it at work, fumbling, gaining experience, finding its way towards whatever it was looking for, except that I was also looking for it, and that is perhaps what we call “happiness.”

What I saw is not like anything we know: it is neither God nor mortal, strong nor weak, mind nor matter, conscious nor unconscious, being nor nothingness. A massive call to being, like the Cry of the painter Munch echoed by all of the echoes of the universe, something or someone with a tremendous appetite to exist endowed with mysterious powers. That’s the best picture that I can paint of it. It is a dark force that is present everywhere, at all times and in all places. All over the world I meet her avatars. I am also wearing one of her avatars. And you, my friend, are wearing another. Oh yes!

When something good happens to her, she remembers it and she tries to repeat it. But if something bad happens, she remembers it as well and always tries to avoid it from happening again. Thus, throughout billions of years she has built up an

incredible memory. And despite her wisdom, which is almost infinite, she needs our eyes to see and she needs our consciousness to know. She leads me when I'm embarrassed, if I have found the strength to speak humbly. And to the extent of my tiny means, examining the world beyond multiple horizons, it's me that illuminates her way. She is like a big blind person and I am a tiny paralytic one.

Therefore, I carry only one of her billions of avatars. Or maybe it is the avatar that carries me. Who knows? In any case, like all of the others, this one, mine, has a tremendous memory. It remembers everything that has touched the complete line of my ancestors, from the first primates, several million years before Lucy, to the first bacteria, a few billion years ago, and even beyond that.

She says to me:

– What do you see?

– I see the sea.

– Approach it then, my boy. Lots of good things are there. Approach it, but be careful, do not go in.

– I know: the aquatic environment, which was good for my ancestors the fish, is not good for me. OK. The expired memories have been erased. Or hidden? Who knows? In any case, her memory guides my steps.”

Have I seen her? Or did I think that I saw her? Either way, I do not know anyone else who has even noticed her. Mômmanh has this in common with the apparitions of the Virgin Mary in the grotto of Lourdes: only Bernadette saw them. Or with the voices that spoke to Joan of Arc: only she could hear them.

Anyway, I have seen her for real, twice. You do not have to believe me, of course. Yes, twice she has appeared to me.

First, it was precisely in these mountains here, during a beautiful summer, a year before Jeanne appeared before me in turn. It happened as I was coming out of a large wood on the edge of a pasture amongst the flowery grass full of cows, looking at the glaciers and snowy peaks.

She rose to the sky, standing against the mountain. She had the face of a young girl at the immortal age and she stared at me with big eyes that were loaded with heavy memories. They were so eager to learn as well! Her clothes were beautiful, pure and fresh water, greenery and all kinds of assorted flowers, waterfalls and rocks. There was also the sea in her clothes. Vines and ancient trees formed her arms and legs. In her gracefully agile hands she held... she held... But what was it that she was holding? In her smiling skilful hands, she wove kisses. For me. For you, if you wish.

Her large eyes, which were loaded with heavy memories or eager to learn, fascinated me, spoke to me. This is what I read in them:

“Stop being stupid. Do you understand? Look for me. Look for me with all of your strength. When you have found me, I will help you.”

She kept staring at me intently for a moment that seemed an eternity, then she melted away into the nature.

On that day our alliance began. Since then she has continued to accompany me. It was her that helped me to stand up straight.

She does not know everything, far from it. She makes mistakes. Perhaps I am one of those mistakes. But she invented **liberated consciousness** for me. (*Dear friend, I will explain a bit later.*)

“What am I saying? For me? No: through me.”

And, as a bonus, she gave me love.

2-MÔMMANH and the STRUCTURE of HUMAN EXISTENCE.

The will for existence: the origin and the guide of life, the
origin and the guide of man.

“It is done, now. Very soon it will be time for me to leave the shore where I have lain so long, listening to the ocean... It will be chilly and I have never learned how to light a fire and to keep myself warm. I shall try to stay here a little longer, listening, for the feeling never quite leaves me that I am just about to understand what the ocean is trying to tell me. I close my eyes, I smile, and listen... I still have some curiosity left. The emptier the beach around me, the more densely peopled it appears to me. The seals on their rock are silent, and I lie here, with my eyes shut, smiling...” (ROMAIN GARY)

As I have already told you, my imagination gave painful birth to Mômmanh many years ago, in a strange no man’s land beyond the frontiers of reasonable thought.

At first, I had the idea that perhaps man was driven by a formidable wish for existence.

What is existence?

The Theory of Evolution can be called the "Theory for the Struggle for Life": the life of the individual and of its species. Here was the motive behind the evolution of the living. My theory was far-reaching. The desire for existence didn't stop once the life of the species had been assured. It also aims to preserve the life of other species and even the conservation of certain non-living elements such as beautiful landscapes made of stone, of sand, of water, of ice or of clouds, of light and fire... This is why I propose that Darwin's theory should be extended to a vast wholeness that could be called: "The Theory of the Struggle for Existence."

In order to understand what I mean, you must have within reach the table that I have added at the end of this introduction. It aims to represent the structure of human existence. I advise you to print it out: then you will be able to use it throughout the novel, each time I try to put into practice the theory of "The Struggle for Existence."

To begin with, here is how I see the existence of man. It is life and pleasures as well as communion with those of our kind, both in the present and in the long term, in eternity itself, if possible. It unfolds itself sometimes individually and sometimes through others - sometimes selfishly, sometimes altruistically, if you prefer - or else combining the two modes: our children, our beloved ancestors, our distant descendants, all kinds of celebrities, the

homeland, humanity, nature.. can be vehicles for our existence.

Here then are the six basic elements of human existence.

When one of these components is too difficult to realize, the desire for existence resorts to the others: If the present doesn't offer anything positive, man will resort to perpetuity, to religion, for example. If his personal life has no appeal, he may delegate his existence to someone better placed: a famous football player, a scholar, a great actor, his boss, a friend.. which enables him to exist by proxy, like a good dog who sacrifices his life for his master.

The most vast existence encompassing space and time and governed by moral laws is important, but the one which most closely concerns the individual - myself, in the here and now - is preferred.

At this stage of my reasoning, I still thought that the desire for existence was limited to man alone, but I observed many signs showing that it is present in animals as well.

So I asked myself when and how, during the course of evolution, could the desire for existence have appeared. When? My knowledge of palaeontology did not give me the answer. How?

Although I racked my brains in vain, I couldn't see how matter could have produced such an abstraction, how its atoms could begin to feel emotions to the point of dying for love, how it had created, at the end of the day, the essence of the mind. How?

Then, I said to myself: "And what if this desire for existence was already there, within matter itself?"

Mômmanh had just been born.

I made a science fiction model out of it to simulate the appearance and evolution of life, above all ours, our history and our stories. I shall use it now and again in the novel, in order to try to explain what constitutes matter: the characters, the nature, the countries, history, the universe. This is the "scientific" part of the work, the other part, the fiction, can be found in the novel.

"Science" and fiction: how can you know which is which? That's easy. Each time I use the scientific model, I shall write with the same script as in this chapter: big, bold letters that bend beneath their weight.

In this model, Mômmanh - i.e. matter - will be endowed with memory: from amongst the elements that have touched her, she will remember those that responded to her wish for existence, for

better or for worse. Afterwards, when the hazards of life bring her again into contact with agents that she knows, she will have the power to act upon them: she will be able to favour the elements that she has good memories of and reject the others. It is very likely that she will reinforce the memories that are evoked often whilst gradually forgetting the others. This process will have led her to write in our genes the memories accumulated from the remarkable and repeated events that happened to our whole line of ancestors since the beginning of life. In other words, our reproductive cells, our sperm and egg cells, also known as gametes, would carry in and around their genes, the memory of everything that has had a lasting impact on the lives of our ancestors.

<p>Cain against Abel, selfishness against altruism.</p>

Throughout history, the almost constant presence of selfishness can be observed in all its forms. It never ceases to find a thousand and one ways to steal altruism's first place, just as Cain was so envious of Abel that he killed him. Even when the species is in danger, this nasty selfishness only gives way to altruism long enough to immediately come back in through the back door.

"So, Mômmanh, why do you allow this cursed selfishness to have such a strong hold?"

She knows that it is a vector of death! She therefore knows that it is the main enemy of existence!

I have my own ideas about this. The need for existence, which is present in the smallest particle of matter, the need for existence that embodies each of us, is inherently selfish. Every grain of matter wishes to exist without considering all of the other grains of matter in the double infinity of time and space. But by itself, it will never succeed. It needs the whole universe to fully achieve its aims. For this, it must cooperate with others. It must delegate everything that it cannot do itself, as a speck of dust lost in the infinite.

But God, it's hard!

Mômmanh would have to find something to force us to be more altruistic. Certainly, she invented the love that is the title for this work. That is great, but that is not all. Perhaps, in addition to this exquisite sting, a better understanding of ourselves will finally deliver us from the infamous quagmire into which we constantly fall.

The time has come to mention the two great laws of history that we will develop in the essay entitled the "Theory of the Struggle for Existence."

Laws of history

The first is the Law of the Jungle (the survival of the fittest), as in nature. Those that have the power to destroy others make its law.

The second is the law of existential success: those that excel in this area attract others.

Throughout history, the power of warriors often alternated with that of sovereigns. In our time, the rich are able to monopolize power: they have enough money to buy, if necessary, the loyalty of warriors. On a global scale, the rich are buying American power in order to continue their rule over the whole world, primarily the global economy. The main objective of the rules they make up is to make them even more rich. It is up to the citizens of the world to take control of this hidden power.

How evolution produced the human intellect. Human intelligence and artificial intelligence.

Now you understand that artificial intelligence can never replicate human intelligence: this would require that it had our colossal memory that is both innate and acquired, both conscious and unconscious. If she swallowed the ocean, she would still have to feel every

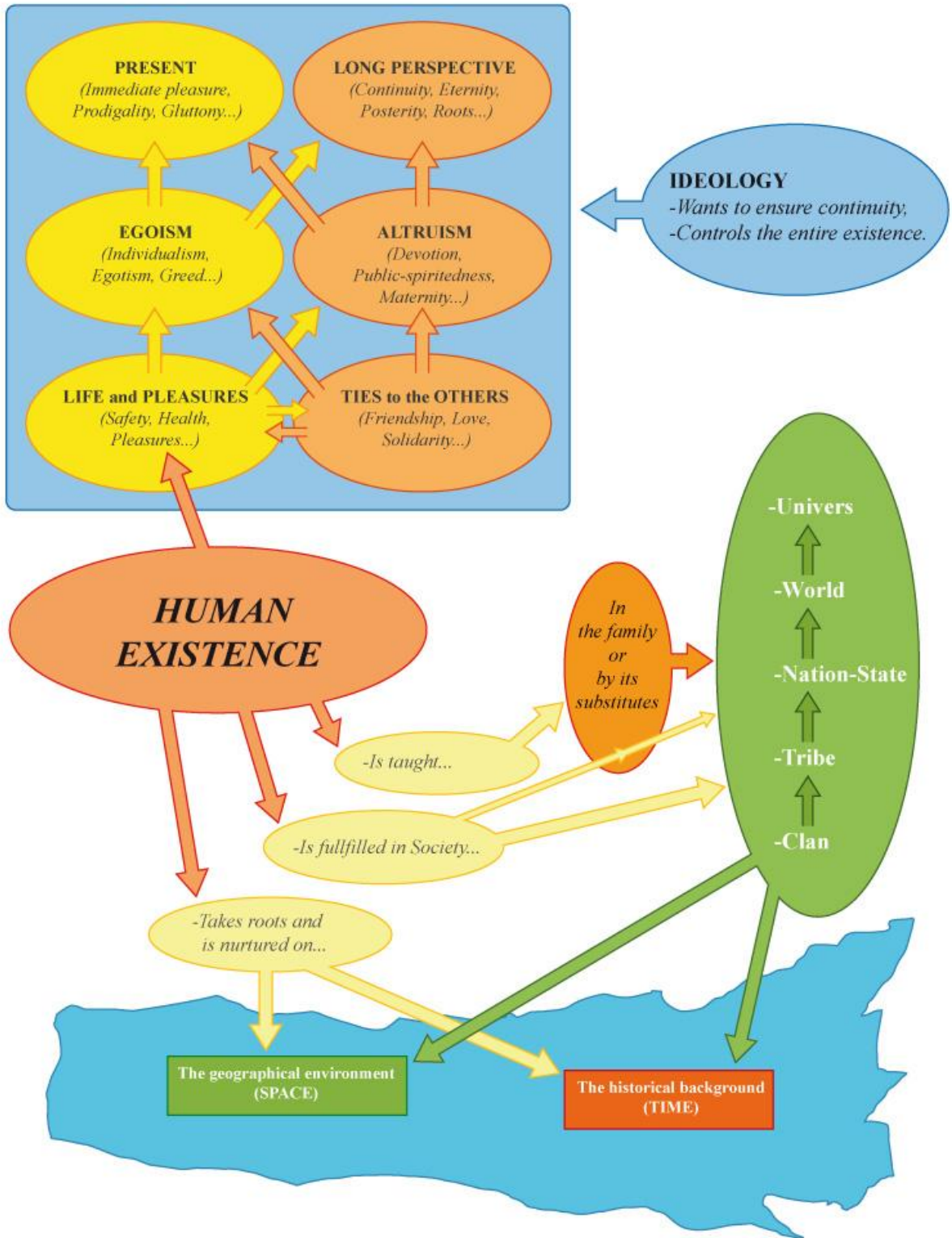
taste and disgust associated with each of these memories that are like so many drops of water in a sea. But first and above all, like any intelligent animal, she must serve the paramount need for existence.

Observing human beings with the help of Mômmanh or having them x-rayed, is roughly the same thing: one discovers things that were invisible.

Real? Or imaginary?

In any case, this is the game that I propose to you. We shall ask Mômmanh to tell us the story of love.

And, again, this is only a hypothesis that has been developed into a theory. It is up to science to test and assess its reliability. If you are looking for a guru, you will not find one here.



3-Up-there in the Mountains

The meeting took place in the mountains. Is there a better place for love at first sight? Its echo reverberated for a long time across the rocks. I wonder if the birds and the other perplexed animals that witnessed the event can still remember it? In any case, they should, because the event was extraordinary enough. Yes, because the lightning which accompanied the fusion of our two bodies into a double being didn't burn us to cinders like a common pine tree, we survived all the more easily because we were young and gifted with a vigorous heart. Later on, each of us two would feel hurt by the discomfort of this fusion, sometimes to such an extent that we would often curse the moment of initial grace: you know that it is not easy for two normal people who, so far, moved easily with their own perfectly autonomous pair of feet, to take the first steps on four legs in almost permanent conflict.

Love is perhaps the fusion of two beings. So be it. They don't, however, need to become Siamese twins.

In any case, that day, our two personalities, which were normally quite stubborn, were brought together and the love at first sight was strong enough to unite us for ever, despite everything.

– It is too much, you may tell me. Nowadays we no longer believe such fables.

– Well, too bad! This is my story and there is nothing I can do about it.

By waving a wand, two sterile beings had just been turned into a fertile being: this reinforces my conviction that the nearby animals, which are very curious about life, still remember the event. Were we exceptional beings? Each of us is, and the same thing could happen to you.

Young and confident in the future, we were discovering the mountain together.

Like the desert, the sea and the forest, the mountain is a place where the joy of existence is offered to us.

Could it be that on approaching the mountain tops one dominates the vast panorama of peaks, hills, valleys revealing their mysteries without modesty, that the chalets at the bottom look like dwarfs' huts in a kindergarten, that men, if one distinguishes them, are no more than ants and one feels overjoyed to be the only proprietors of all that, a Zeus watching the creatures from the top of Olympus, savouring the trick that he is about to play on them? In the splendour of the desert, I get a similar feeling: it seems to me that a new world is being given to me, to me alone, still more beautiful than the mountain, because it is free of your annoying presence, my dear fellow.

Hold on, since I have spoken to you of the ants, these tiny beasts that are often stepped on by mistake, insignificant beings, no doubt mass-produced, which only attract our attention when they prick us, I imagine one, clinging on top of a footstool, observing its team mates from up there far in the distance, stupidly trudging on the ground, an ant at the zenith of its wretched life, having no other goal than to perpetuate its sorry species, an ant fortunately lacking in consciousness and however triumphant, happy about its own stupid exaltation above up there at the foot of the glaciers.

Are ants altruistic?

Mômmanh interrupts me. She says that ants are not like us. I should have expected it. She leads me to believe that those tiny creatures don't suffer like humans from a chronic tendency to boost up their egos until they burst. My humblest of apologies, then, to the honourable little beasts.

Luckily, thank God, I have other reasons why I love the mountains.

In the mountains you have to climb: so much the better, because to me inertia is like an early death. My muscles must be prevented from atrophying by doing nothing in their sarcophagi of fat. Each of them must start working and become stronger through exercise. Ah! Are they begging for some oxygen? That's good! I have to throw away my cigarette and spit out the tarry soot that is fouling my lungs. After this energetic chimney-sweeping, my reward will be enjoying a cigarette at the top, peacefully sitting and contemplating the immense wild panorama that stretches below me.

The mountain is healthy.

At each steep turn of a footpath, at each moment of the day, the sky paints a different picture which is always original as if, hidden in the invisible that we have naively placed in the Heavens, the unfathomable "I Don't Know Who" nourished my soul by presenting me with multiple inexhaustible splendours, telling me: "Look! Life will always find new ways to continue onwards. Let that be a lesson to you, my son! Get off the armchair and come to see me more often."

Did nature invent beauty?

"Tell me, Mômmanh, are you doing it on purpose, when you offer us so much beauty? Or is it, quite simply, in your nature?"

The mountain is magical.

At each level I enter another continent.

Below lies the opulent, fatty domain of nature, which has been domesticated to work for us. In the course of her enslavement she has lost most of her innate defence mechanisms as if, from now on, she has entrusted her fate to man.

Does nature have a consciousness? What is the consciousness of the animals like? What is Human consciousness like? What is man's own consciousness like?

But the consciousness that Mômmanh has given us, alone, the only human animal on earth, this consciousness which seems to be man's very own, is still not developed enough for man to take responsibility for everything that lives on our planet, for all terrestrial existence.

Is consciousness that of man?

Please note, there is consciousness and there is consciousness. The first, ours, I will call "liberated consciousness" as opposed to that which can not go beyond the senses and which I will call "captive consciousness."

And I believe that there is a third type, which comes before the other two: the consciousness of Mômmanh. I will call this one "blind consciousness."

There, I think of the minute fragment of matter scattered in the universe, the minute fragment of our mother who was lucky to discover life where she settled down. From generation to generation, she has recorded the existential memory of all my ancestors, ever since the first bacteria, more than three billion years ago, until my precious person whose turn it is to live before sinking into history. And it is like this for each and every one of us, as well as for each and every living creature.

This has made of the wisdom gained a long time ago through billions and billions of years, the lives in which Mômmanh has incarnated herself. What is my little liberated consciousness worth in comparison to that? Almost nothing, in appearance, but a lot, in reality, as you will soon understand.

Here is what constitutes the best part of our beloved ego: a minute fragment of Mômmanh that carries the experience of everything that is living and that is in control of our being.

"How can someone or something control me without me knowing it?"

- Because this someone or something is you, stupid.

- My God! How can this be possible?"

I imagine that it happened in the following way. And don't forget that this is only a science-fiction model which doesn't yet belong and probably never will belong to real science.

The will for existence, which I call Mômmanh, present in the smallest atom of matter, keeps in her memory all of the events that affect her: on the one hand, those which do her good and on the other hand, those which do her harm. After that, when an event recorded in the memory of Mômmanh recurs, she treats it based on which category it belongs to, welcoming with open arms what has done her good and rejecting the opposite, what has done her harm. She has the ability to favour what she considers good for her and to reject what she considers bad for her. This is, of course, subject to the limits of her strength.

Her memory only contains the events that recur; accidental events as well as many rather random ones are therefore forgotten.

Thus, nesting in the soul of the mouse that she has been creating since time immemorial, Mômmanh has discovered that human houses can offer her shelter and food, but that she has to beware of the cat; she remembers and she nevertheless settles down in our homes, always in the same way, whilst, through the accumulation of experiences and existential memory, she develops an effective defensive strategy against cats.

This is how Mômmanh has gradually favoured the appearance of the developed lifeforms that we know. But how did the handover from one generation to the other take place, from the beginning of time until today?

The only biological bridge between parents and children are the inseminated reproductive cells. Therefore, in order to pass the heritage of her existential memory on, Mômmanh must settle there, but it is likely that all reproductive cells benefit from it.

Only those? If this were the case then cloning would reproduce incomplete individuals, poorly equipped for life. But this is another story.

And this is how Mômmanh invents millions and billions of ways of existing in the vast universe which is ever always unfolding. In spite of everything, amongst her multiple avatars, the most intelligent of her creatures were only animals until the appearance of man some two million years ago; a unique species, so different from the others that they can hardly recognize their parents. Ever since man appeared, his existential power has been growing, like a snowball. It is now an avalanche that threatens to sweep away the whole planet if we don't learn, as soon as possible, how to control it.

"What is the quality that animals do not possess?"

- It is liberated consciousness.

- Ah, really?

- Yes. Our cousins, the big apes, chimpanzees and so on have hands thanks to which they can be as skilful as us. What they lack is liberated consciousness."

Liberated consciousness?

I imagine that man's appearance started in the following way.

One day, a child of an anthropoid ape was born with an extraordinary gift: it was capable of precisely conceiving realities that were outside of the reach of its senses. It could see things that were otherwise out of sight; it could hear the cry of a bird that was out of earshot. Thanks to this anomaly, it soon managed to retain in its memory the interesting paths, leading to the river, to game, to harvest and places of safety... Without seeing the far away glade full of game, it knew how to leave and which way to go.

The intelligence of the animals cannot be exercised beyond the reach of its senses. The memories that it has of past experiences are precise enough for it to recognize what it has

lived through before when it appears, but far too vague to be able to relive and manipulate through thought. A dog may well dream of a string of sausages, but it is a prisoner of the narrow field of its perceptions. Its dream will hardly ever come true. But I, thanks to my precise memories, can reconstruct the truth with which I have been in contact. Thus I delve into my memories and take out what I need in order to build a path towards the famous sausages. My consciousness is separated from my senses.

It is a liberated consciousness.

Ah yes. Since Man has the ability to perceive the memories of the lived-through reality with as much precision as if they were still being touched by his senses, he has been able to develop knowledge, techniques and arts. He is capable of seeing and therefore of acting far beyond his senses, ever further in the vast universe: this is liberated consciousness. He has known for a long time that his death is inescapable whereas the cow, stuck inside its captive consciousness, is still ignorant of the farmer's intention to slaughter it.

We shall not, however, consider this capacity something that only man has. Many animals possess it, but to an infinitesimal degree. It is as if they had made a small step in that direction and then stopped, not seeing any reason to continue.

Let us recap. Let us observe, if you wish, Mômmanh's continuous progress towards the significant existential stage of the formation of liberated consciousness.

When she finds herself embodied in a few grains of matter, Mômmanh can only perceive the environment that is in direct contact with her: this is very little and therefore the memory that forms in these conditions is very poor. She is therefore nothing more than pure desire and blind force.

The first form of consciousness that she knows is blind consciousness.

Blind consciousness has grown considerably over time, mainly with the evolution of life. In fact, when Mômmanh finds herself in control of a living body, she creates a genetic memory, which is much richer than the preceding one. Besides, she perceives the external elements much better when she is embodied in an animal and when she benefits from its mobility. But she is still limited to the fields that the senses of the animal which she embodies can perceive.

This enriched blind consciousness reaches living beings through the heredity channel. It is expressed in the name of Mômmanh by directing instinctive actions. She is the Prime Minister of the need of existence, she is Mômmanh's vizier.

But she remains locked in the second form of consciousness: captive consciousness.

When at last she finds herself embodied in human form, through the agency of the extraordinary intelligence with which she has endowed us, her look can penetrate the heart of the atom and the infinity of the stars: she has now attained the third form: liberated consciousness.

Let's try to move forward a little more.

We have seen that, according to my basic hypothesis, blind consciousness, acting on behalf of the need for existence, remembers everything she considers good for her and on the other hand, everything that she considers bad.

Blind consciousness is the basis of our morality, which dictates our conduct. However, it may be wrong: that is why liberated consciousness has the power to correct it.

Blind consciousness is enriched by all of the experiences stored in the grains of matter that carry it. Eventually she moved into increasingly complex living beings. She then directed their captive consciousness. Finally, and this is the only ultimate stage known on our

planet, she moved into man, where she directed clear consciousness.

It follows that morality is everywhere, in matter, in plants, in animals and, of course, in our dear humanity.

Now you understand why we gave the word consciousness to these apparently foreign senses:

- to be aware of a portion of the universe,
- to be aware of what is good to do or not to do, to have a moral conscience.

And that of man in this story?

I have spoken at length to you about man's ability to see reality without the help of his senses, an ability that allows the liberated consciousness to develop. Well, I have long believed that this gift was reserved only for man. I thought it was something unique to man. I believed that until I heard about several scientific experiments that proved the contrary.

Some animals can imagine simple plans to achieve a goal that is outside of the reach of their senses. For example, a famous chimpanzee at Stockholm zoo prepared, in the solitude of his

cage, piles of stones for the tourists that he knew would come to visit him. It was necessary that there should be a clear enough image in his mind of the missing tourists. And there are other examples of this kind, not only amongst several representatives of our cousins the apes, but even amongst certain birds which are not even mammals and that only have a very small brain.

Tentatively, I deduced that animals might also have an embryo of this consciousness that I thought was reserved for humans. But it is only a tiny embryo because, between the consciousness of the bird that is able to find where it hid the food and the ability to develop the Theory of Relativity, there is an almost infinite gap.

Therefore, there must be a something that is unique to man, i.e. a barrier to cross to access human capacities. If there was not this barrier, the game of evolution would have led some animal species to get a lot further on the path taken by mankind. And there would be several human species on the earth at different points along this road that leads to the liberated consciousness and thought.

Another hypothesis is possible. It was suggested to me by the palaeoanthropologist Pascal Picq. And to quote him:

“... The selection pressures that ultimately made the length of human gestation 9 months did not emerge magically overnight. It certainly started with the first representatives of the genus homo, homo ergaster, 2 million years ago. On the

one hand, the shift to highly efficient bipedalism resulted in a narrow pelvis. On the other hand, there was the relative development of the brain. Both evolutionary trends met at the time of delivery. Then, women that carried babies with a gestation period of more than nine months died in the most terrible suffering. This never stopped, because whilst the pelvic size has changed little during the evolution of the Homo genus, the size of the brain has doubled!”
(Pascal Picq – *Nouvelle Histoire de l’Homme* (New History of Man) – Ch. 6)

This leads me to think that the evolution of man may have passed through a type of maze with a series of dead ends, the crossing of which was highly unlikely. I call these dead ends any new characteristics that do not favour the survival of the species: natural selection tends to eliminate or at least not to develop them. This would explain why only one species on earth has managed to complete this course.

First example: Bipedalism freed the hands and made the feet unsuitable for gripping. At this time, the primate needed four hands to cling to branches in order to escape from predators. Yet hominids developed this disabling ability: the first dead end.

Second example: The development of the skull resulted in the death during childbirth of a large number of human females: the second dead end.

Third example: The lack of fur forced humans to seek devices to protect themselves against the cold and other weather: the third dead end.

There are probably other examples of these dead ends. Some, such as the excessively large

skull of human babies, even represented a mortal danger to the species. However, after the improbable crossing of this cursed labyrinth, one discovers that the associated disabilities have become valuable benefits.

Even chimpanzees seem to be stuck in this maze. They have clumsy hands, but these aren't much use to them because "they can't see beyond the end of their noses," because anything out of reach of their senses is almost always outside of their thoughts. So how could they come up with the idea of making objects for use "much later"?

They have a tiny embryo of liberated consciousness, but why would they develop it if they lack the necessary support tools? It is as if they had a rudimentary engine, but neither the wheels or the metals or the technical knowledge: why would they try to make a car? It is more useful for them to develop their senses, their resistance to disease and their agility. These are the qualities that favour natural selection.

The same is true for articulate speech: what could they do with it if they developed it?

Bipedalism freed the hands to manufacture all kinds of objects, and it makes it possible to travel a long way. The lack of fur helps to regulate temperature through perspiration: it becomes possible to sustain effort for long periods and to work or walk for a long time. The

large brain makes it possible to think, guiding the hand in its manufacturing and the feet on their journeys. It is therefore very useful to develop the aptitude for liberated consciousness together with provisions for articulate speech.

It is likely that, at the same time, liberated consciousness revealed to man the precariousness of his existence, which is as fragile as the flame of a candle. This was the beginning of unbearable existential angst. It was enough to make some commit suicide. Another dead end. It was necessary, therefore, for Mômmanh to invent some coping strategies:

- a certain ability to take their desires for realities that can create ideologies, so that humans could be saved by faith,

- a certain ability to hide unsustainable realities revealed by the cursed liberated consciousness in the unconscious,

- and who knows what else...

Therefore, man is unique on Earth because his genesis results from a combination of highly improbable factors, so improbable that many human species have fallen by the wayside of natural selection, the last known of which was the Neanderthal.

With man thus endowed, Mômmanh has finally found a way to establish the reign of existence over the earth. Over the universe, even! In any case, she has entrusted this task to us, as long as we do not betray her.

Oh yes! Thanks to this gift of liberated consciousness, we have been promoted to the role of chiefs in the struggle for existence.

However, Mômmanh keeps almost all of the secrets of her blind consciousness, and here is what our liberated consciousness lacks most: during those billions of years when she advanced in the dark, like a mole, finding her way and following the instructions of her memory alone, each time a contact with the environment brought back a memory she worked miracles, the least of which is beyond our understanding. She gave us the liberated consciousness which she had previously been missing cruelly so much, maybe, but we are still incapable of giving life into matter as she did. We must, therefore, quite modestly, accept to serve and to question Lady Nature, above all the living one, for at least as long as she shows herself wiser than us.

Let us go back to where I left you, when once again I let myself be tempted by the demon of the original sin and, once again, I bit into the forbidden fruit: "... but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die." (The Bible)

We were at the foot of the mountain, where the foal gambols about, where the pig stuffs himself, a fat meat bag endowed with a puny brain, where the vine flourishes in the sun, burdened with alchemists' secrets conceived to revitalize us, opulent nature but enfeebled by man.

Higher up there is the land of the wolf, the fox, the boar, the deep forest which temple-like towers against the sky. Shielded by the swell of the trees where sometimes the black raven can be spotted, all sorts of creatures nestle in the cosy and mossy nests. They hide away as man draws near and observes this strange animal which nature obliges to clothe. If you can be discrete, respectful and patient, you will be able to catch a glimpse of the squirrel interrupting its acrobatics to hear the meditation of the old trees, the gentle darling giving a short respite to her perpetual alarm to pick gracefully a few mouthfuls of grass... Sitting on an old stump, in the soothing shadow, you will watch intimate dramas and comedies unfold themselves: so, if your contemplation is enough, you won't fail to feel the sap ply never endingly between the roots and the sky to receive and distribute solar energy...

What lessons does Nature give us?

Your life can be spent there, till the end. One must not sleep nor dream too much, as you have plenty to do for several generations: observe then and study all of Mômmanh's inventions until you understand them well. Now and then, you will have the luck to applaud a good success among the various assaults leading towards the impossible "existence" towards the conquest of the eternal joy of life. From time to time you will be the privileged spectator of the grand baroque opera of a courting couple in a tribe of beetles, or of the

subtle diplomacy of a family of aphids which do not want to vanish,

or still the genius of a clan of butterflies inverting their silk thread..

But one cannot do everything. Luckily, the biologists work for us.

Higher still, beyond the preserve of the black firs, lies the domain of the fawn-coloured cows, tinkling goatskins which, all day, graze the high mountain pasture for our sake, stopping only to look, dumbfounded, with their big eyes, at the human phenomenon crossing the territory on two feet.

Higher still, one reaches the region of the pure and invigorating air, where one has to take care not to step on the rapturously bright flowers which emit an ecstatic brightness of colour. It is the village of the marmot which, from behind the door of her burrow, seems interested in any human matters.

At last, beyond the piercing cold brooklets which escape the grip of the glaciers, I can see the inaccessible battlements: the home of the leaping chamois. I will not climb any higher...

In the mountain, nature has multiplied its inventions, irreplaceable sources of life which man in favour of slavery has not had time to mutilate.

The mountain is a witch.

One must say that the annual paid holidays, still very short, at the time were mostly dedicated to the fitting of one's homes, which did not appear as battlements yielding juicy profits. The mass leisure industry wasn't a lucrative business where holiday makers marched past an assembly line like strings of sausages in the

slaughter houses of Chicago, neither was the immaculate snow-capped mountain quoted on the Stock Exchange. For the time being, I could believe that the mountain belonged to me and I did not deprive myself of it. As it is immense and as I felt alone up there, I was ready to share it with “My Love,” if of course she was willing to show herself.

I would be ashamed if I tried to deprive the others, my fellow creatures with their “paid holidays,” of the joy and mental health which communion with nature gives, or else the happiness – which I ignore – of skiing, after skiing and between skiing.

And yet? You know only too well what “THEY” – the great Satan responsible for all our miseries – you know what “THEY” have done to our mountains. Does anyone still find places where to have a true conversation with nature?

In the same way as they have done to the Mediterranean so rich in history and poetry and blue sky, a collective bath tub, the anonymous mass of cancerous cities, pulled down on the mountains the same holds good for our motorised ants which have brought there their incurable illness. Only once we have returned to our mountains and found it devastated.

Thousands of cars, superb glossy steel beasts, falsely living. It is very convenient. Mine takes me wherever I want, when I want, it allows me to escape the tyrannical notice of gossipers lying in ambush behind the curtains of their kitchen if it suits me in order to go, to discuss with the gulls and the cormorants, it widens my otherwise narrow horizons: it is a great part of my freedom. But the millions of other cars – yes, even your own! – scandalise and hurt nature.

Should everyone succeed to have theirs, where would we end up? In this regards, I keep a dear memory of the time when having a car made a king of me, since you didn’t have yours yet. Most of you, women above all, let themselves be convinced that driving was a difficult art, reserved to some men, the knights on the

road. What happy times! Now that we are all kings, even you ladies, I feel like squashing the coaches of the other majesties. So I understand those who detest equality above all when the others are right.

Therefore, thousands of thousands of cars in “our” mountain. A driver who did not even know me, very unpleasant took the liberty of addressing me familiarly and rudely giving me a driving lesson. He didn’t know whom he was talking to, but is it a valid excuse.

All around concrete buildings, bitumen, wire or plastic fencing, arrogant publicity boards harassing us by their aggressive colours and striking us to enforce their lies, flashy artificial materials, and an invasion of clashing cacophonous geometric patterns. “Private Property, Keep Out,” or “No Parking,” paying car parks, electric wires one brushes against, cable cars and ski lifts, the sacred mountain has been torn to shreds! But who do we think we are when we mutilate and disfigure the presents of nature incapable as we are of creating the least of living creatures? Ignorant and irresponsible children who, in spite of everything, have been entrusted with the future of our planet?

We disfigure our old Mômmanh who has always been young, she whose beauty enlightens us whenever doubt assails us and which a promenade by the seaside helps us to recover our serenity. And then we mutilate her to fulfil our wishes, risking killing her. Suppose we didn’t have any gratitude shall we be from now on able to make do without her ahead?

In our youth we had known decent poor peasants, very nice indeed, amusing in their period costumes, and which seemed to form part of the landscape. It is at least like this that I remember them even if, on second thoughts, I can’t see any reason why the poor should all be nice and the rich, all crooks. In any case many of them had blessed our budding pitiful love. Where can they have gone? We needed a certain amount of time to realize that they had turned to leisure services. That they had stayed poor for our sake! Not only didn’t they go into raptures in front of our car, neither in front of our wallet, our knowledge and prestige of decent citizens “well beloved, my

goodness,” but they did not even recognise us. Were we juicy clients, yes or no? No: ah well, “goodbye” The number of “paid holidays” had altered completely even our Savoyard peasants.

Does Nature need man? What is the purpose of nature's beauties? Are nature's inventions models for us?

No, I don't think we need to go back to the Stone Age in order to preserve nature which, besides, is not always able to make it alone and may need our cares, if only they are enlightening. You know well: this is precisely why Mômmanh has created us.

You have not forgotten that, at least on this earth, we are the only eyes of our blind "Mômmanh." But, if Mômmanh needs us, we need not play the spoiled brats, all the more so, since we also need her.

Enormously.

Because you are just as well aware that, behind her closed eyelids, she carries a great wisdom vaster than the ocean, acquired in time ever since her origin.

Life is like the tree on which last spring the new buds blossomed. One bud alone is called humanity. If we chop down the tree, we shall perish: this is obvious now.

And this is not all!

In the course of her persistent groping for existence, Mômmanh has piled up an anthill of inventions which, to say the least, were useful to her for a long period of time. Many of them still have a lesson to give us, like the silkworm which invented silk and the bee honey.

"And even if it were proved that such and such a species from now on were perfectly useless, should we be entitled to obliterate it? - Without going as far as to eliminate it, we can remove it from circulation; imprison it in a bank of harmful species for example. Thus it would be removed from the march to existence. At the same time, it would be just as well to preserve carefully its memory in our archives: like this it will continue to exist in history. Isn't it fair to grant every bit of Mômmanh, and therefore to ourselves as well, the right to existence?"

There is also beauty. The beauty Mômmanh has brought forth along her many paths. Not only the beauty of creatures, but also that of matter: the beauty of the desert, of the ice floes, of the mountain, the beauty of the sea and sky, with or without clouds, of the play of light the sun orchestrates... I'll let you know later on how beauty takes us arm in arm and guides us to the Garden of Eden.

So, all the creations of Mother Nature make up our picture gallery of our ancestors. What is

there so surprising, therefore, if I like caressing my distant cousin, the shy violet, or look at my coquettish great-great aunt, the blue magpie, resume each day, her lonely fashion show on the lawn, which gives finally the weeping willow a good reason to let the tears flow? And must one be surprised if you meet me at twilight, alone in the desert, the big eyes open, on the verge of hearing Mômmanh's voice?

I still consider all these inventions of nature, as messages she left us at each stage of her tenacious struggle to conquer eternal life. "You to whom I have given the gift of eyes, to look around! A long time ago, I created the earthworm. It is not pretty, I admit, but it renders a great service to the family!" Since we have acquired such a destructive and creative power, at the same time, we are so fallible, that it is not too much for our senses on the lookout and on our souls quite alert to decipher those messages before they get burnt at the stake of inquisition, sacrificed on the altar of the god Money, or simply stifled beneath the ass of indifference.

Neither do I claim on any privileged right to converse with the boar, the lark and the wild mint, to find again the salty embrace of the primal sea, to enjoy the scorching kisses of the sun, or still to commune alone, sitting on a mossy stone in the forest, where the streamlet murmurs, under the protection of the big trees, and finding there the inner peace of the soul. I think on the

contrary that taking nature's advice, patiently deciphering its many messages and humbly, nourishing ourselves with them, allying ourselves with the infinite variety of its offspring, and acknowledging our mother finally and her loving children, on the river of existence which is carrying us along towards the mysterious infinite whose veils tear as we approach, I believe that this dispelling of our vanity belongs to all. What is there at the end of the journey? Will there be an end? It's a mystery! As long as we advance, all's well.

Yes, I let myself be carried away and I realize I have been giving you advice within the framework of a scientific theory. Like this I risk betraying the objective of science which is to illuminate rather than show the way ahead. I beg you to excuse me! It is stronger than me!

Besides, who can expect to search only to satisfy his curiosity, and not to assume a little better the control of his destiny? Ask the computers to do pure research because I believe that man is incapable. In order to erase this fault inherent to our kind, even if I take the liberty of giving you advice, I promise to respect the decisions we take together, all of us, all the billions of human beings and "Myself all alone," the rest of the world. I will keep this promise for as long as I can bear.

- And love at first sight?

– Yes! Yes! We shall get to it.

That summer, fate organised the meeting of two young people of complimentary but not opposite sexes: it was I, it was her. You will understand soon that she took the first place: the idea of occupying another one didn't occur to her. Therefore, it was her, it was me. I will call her Jeanne, in memory of Joan of Arc.

– Excuse me? What are you saying?

– Have you asked for the permission of the holy virgin?

– Of course not! And then? How many “Joans” are unworthy of carrying that name? My pretty one does deserve at least to be called that.

I could have called her Ocean. I saw in her eyes the vast and self-begetting sea, the age-old living ocean. When I first dived in it, I thought I very nearly drowned. Afterwards I have learned to turn into a dolphin before going for a swim. Tell me, isn't it marvellous to catch a glimpse of the sea in the eyes of so many women? Already, nature has given us the universal language of gaze for which no grammar needs to be studied and which even dogs understand; by putting the sea into the eyes of the beloved, the consciousness of Mômmanh obviously wants to remind us that women are the source of life, just like the primal ocean. Be it as it may, I will not call “My Love” Ocean, because I want to keep those that are healthy in my French roots and the names of our brave ancestors are part of that.

She will be called Jeanne, in memory of Joan of Arc and also of Jeanne Hachette. Let us forget Joanna the Mad, all right? Paying homage to the woman who brandished her virginity like a standard may seem worse than boorish: the rape of a dead person, what is more, of a saint, stiff in the swaddling bands of a deceased, no longer able to defend one's honour from now on. Rest assured that I would have been ashamed to associate my beloved with the gallant shepherdess who gave birth to France, if she was unworthy.

Times have changed today and the ways of gallantry are not the same. Because men establish their beliefs in function of the level of knowledge or rather of ignorance of their time. In our days, the one that heard voices from the Heavens ordering her to take command of armies in order to drive out the English would obviously be considered mad and treated with injections in a psychiatric hospital. At the time of Joan, the ignorance of man was still such that it did not seem absurd to hope for material support from God. Thus, it was only right that the Most High should speak clearly, and that his representative on French soil should be a pure young girl: a virgin.

Today purity has also changed guise. My Jeanne won't be a virgin, thank God, because my story would have ended there.

Unfortunately, in those days, people believed that carnal love was filthy. Consequently, the less one fornicated, the purer soul one had. What wicked words! What an aberration! Why did the Church graft on our minds such a painfully unnatural belief? On one hand, it fostered love among man, on the other it forbade them to enjoy it to the full! As if it had asked them to prepare a feast and that none had the right to touch anything. At the same time, she promised to those unfortunate ones the resurrection of their bodies. To do what, unfair heavens? Also, has the Islamic faith placed beautiful girls in its heavens? Doesn't it make a formidable rival to Christianity?

But this is another story.

– What? What are you saying?

– It is high time that you begin to tell your love story!

– But ultimately, I am the author! I write what I like...

– You b.....!

– Eh? What? I can't hear you very well. You read only what is interesting to you?

– M..... f.....!

– That is a good one. Finally... since the reader is the king, let's keep going. You will not get to the bottom of my thoughts: so much the worse for you. I ask you just the same quite respectfully, not to interrupt me very often.

So, that summer, destiny organised the meeting of two unique and exceptional beings – “But yes! Allow me to be the only judge on this matter.” – it was Her, it was Me. We were supposed to work during the same month, in a holiday camp in the mountain. This centre for teenagers belonged to a municipality of the Red Belt of Paris, managed by communists, which was normal at that time. I would have nothing to relate if one of the conditions was lacking. Since destiny decided otherwise, you are going, please, to continue the reading.

– Shall I tell you about fate?

– Above all no.

– It is understood, I will speak to you about it some other time.

In that holiday camp, I got a job as a driver. Jeanne had been employed to assume two functions: as a nurse and administrator. When she sat in my delivery van, among the vegetable and fruit crates, I blushed. This was only the first of a series of shocks she was to give me. She had right away, as in many other circumstances later, chosen the wrong moment to move me, because I was an inexperienced driver yet. Luckily, I was much younger than now and that is what saved us.

During the war in Algeria I had had great fears and my share of miseries: like my friends for months and months, I had sighed for the blessed liberation day and for our happy future life which would be mine, once out of that diabolical bear garden which was Algiers then. Of course, I had neither gone through the atrocious hell of Verdun nor did I know Dien Bien Phu, but as in those days life was becoming easier, I believed to have known the worst. Well no! The worst was yet to come!

The fairy was setting the trap into which I ardently fell, the exquisite beauty of the eternal flesh was preparing to pitch and keel the boat of my existence to such a point, in the series of tempests, hurricanes and cyclones, that it took me years before I

could distinguish clearly again the north from the south. At this moment I could still run away. This story would have come to an end. What does it matter! I would perhaps have another story to tell. But since I stayed, we must get to the bottom of it. Pluck up courage! It is true that by taking part in our war sitting in your armchair, you are not running big risks, you!

And now if I had to do it all over again? ... Yes, I would follow the same way. Oh! Rest assured! I will nevertheless try to avoid the atrocious mistake we have made. But, since in all ways there is no life without risks, I would once choose the same traps.

Finally, we had just brought a conclusion to the interminable debate on the sex of angels. The one who descended from the heavens and sat in my delivery van, belonged to the female sex. What must I do not to annoy her, so that she stays a little longer? The cleaning lady, cantankerous “old girl” had immediately occupied the only passenger seat. I believe I have already said, the apparition sat on a crate, amidst luggage odds and ends, piled up crates full of vegetables, fruit, as well as diverse other supplies for the hosts of the camp. Could the buttocks of an angel sitting on the sharp edges of a wooden crate stand the jolts of the rough road? Could the stomach of an angel hang on sufficiently in order not to give way under the effects of the whirlwind and turmoil which the ten kilometres of winding roads and bends were going to cause?

She was beauty itself descended from the heavens: which is why I don't know how to describe her to you. It is up to you to recognize her when she will appear. She did have several minor faults: for example, her hair was too straight to conceal the slight disproportion between her ears, but these petty faults made her look a little human. Like this, I would perhaps find the courage to conquer her. Moreover, there was a peculiar smell in the van, neither of victuals nor of an angel – acrid, rancid and aggressive. At first I attributed that smell to the sour old girl but later on, I had to admit that it was coming precisely from the armpits of the beautiful one. When we became intimate, I let her know that this dissuasive perfume diminished her

beauty immensely and that I wouldn't be able to suffer from a running nose all my life.

I never smelled that odour again.

She was still young, even a little younger than I was, and nature had not begun to undo what life had succeeded in doing so well. She kept putting finishing touches to her work, carefully choosing and straightening the traits which, until then had preserved an indecision of the youthful, rough shape, lighting up the complexion and the forms in order to fulfil the best promises of adolescence, put off for so long. This masterpiece of flesh, spirit, light, which I could later touch, and even kiss, was not wrought by the hand of nature alone. She had only made the sketch which an inadequate education prolonged by the stupid choices would probably have turned into a vain stout woman. This was not the case. Jeanne and her family had known how to achieve the poem which they had started so well.

Wholesome food, a little sport and plenty of activities kept the vigorous harmony of her shape. An education which had always kept her mind alert showed in her eyes and on her face. The practice of dancing lent her suppleness and grace and even music accompanied the slightest of her movements.

Yes, music! And if I tell you that she was a living symphony, you are going to laugh: well, laugh! She was Botticelli's Venus who had finally managed to land her scallop shell in order to join wholeheartedly an orchestral symphony. I could not list you all the instruments, but fortunately, I am sure that there was at least a trumpet.

I who regret that I am unable to appreciate the great music drunk without ever quenching my thirst.

Finally, on her face, her soul had mirrored some expressions which I liked. Her large eyes have a surprised or amused look, that which without wanting to possess the world are eager to tirelessly discover it. Wait! It was not a "rapturous" look: intelligence always sparkled in it. "Like champagne? – Goodness, yes." There

were also features in this dear face reshaped by will, by an indomitable activity of the mind, by a dignified and discrete pride: as much nobility added to nature's work.

There was also what my rapture prevented me from seeing: the fairy had undergone certain touches. Should I complain about this? On the contrary, since they completed the work, so well, it was lucky that Jeanne was on good terms with Mômmanh.

– You say that youth and beauty are fleeting?

– Ah well! If you believe so, pose in front of the objective without delay. Pictures: are all that will remain of the happy years. As far as we are concerned, neither Jeanne nor I do we resort to the need of recovering the pitiful artifice.

How do you help nature? How do you delay aging? How do you keep in good shape and in good health?

You know that nowadays in our blessed country most people age slower than they used to. You also know the reasons why. To those classic recipes to slow down aging, Jeanne and I will add our own invention. I'll give it to you for free.

You can't have forgotten that Mômmanh controls our body - "Be careful, once again, I remind you this is only science fiction." - you also know that, most of the time, she follows the advice coming from our intelligence, since she creates it for that reason. Ah well, here you are. When we are young, our brand new organs do not need Mômmanh to stimulate them; they practically function on their own, she must only remain

vigilant that they do not misbehave. With old people it is the contrary.

Consequently, as soon as you feel age catching up with you, you must appeal to Mômmanh to spur on your organs all day long, to prevent them from falling asleep and failing.

"Because can we give orders to Mômmanh who is controlling our body? Can we order our boss? - Certainly. I told you already. This is why she created us. She trusts us..."

It is here that we come upon an old belief: the distinction between the flesh and the mind, between the body and soul.

My organs are "physical-chemical-mechanical" constructions. They run the programmes inscribed in my genes. However, if they were only that, the hands, legs, heart, liver, kidneys, stomach, etc., would have been kinds of robots, flesh robots invented by nature.

Here is what constitutes my body.

Some billions of years ago, it so happened that a tiny fragment of Mômmanh took control of the first terrestrial bacterium. Life delighted her and she never left it. You know only too well how she developed, passing from one generation to the other, from one species to another, all the way from man to my parents, from my parents to me.

She is my original soul, one who has been leading me since my birth and perhaps even before. Afterwards, she has been enriched by my experience. Usually, I call her simply Mômmanh but, according to that aspect which I want to emphasize, I could call her otherwise: my soul, my ego or else my Mômmanh.

This is then what constitutes my soul. At least, the one I was given on birth and whom it is my mission to improve.

My bodily organs would not know how to function on their own. But they are very sensitive to the orders which Mômmanh sends them or, I remind you, of this fragment of herself, her representative given full powers: our person. This power which always vested in her is an important aspect of our will. It can go further than we usually think: with training, certain fakirs who can control their heartbeat.

As long as my organs were new, they had not yet suffered the slightest weakening and their cell-repair faculties were intact: they were liable to function well. As a child, my legs spurred me to run rather than to walk. Today my legs incite me to rest.

So in order that all my organs continue in spite of everything to live and develop, in order not to deteriorate more rapidly, I ask Mômmanh to make all those lazy bones function, on the

slightest occasions, without however taxing them. It is what nowadays we call sports.

But, before going along the route coughing up my lungs, running aimlessly, however, I shall use all the gestures of everyday life to stir up my old frame. Besides, I strive to go quickly, to force each action, and otherwise make all the parts of the body function in co-ordination, at least the greatest number: I try to bend my knees and all the rest each time that I squat, I go up and down the stairs not in fours but two by two, I go in search of my newspaper on my bike... In brief: each time possible, I introduce sports in the compulsory actions of daily life and I kill two birds with one stone.

And when I sense discouragement or illnesses prowling around me, ready to annihilate me, I plead with Mômmanh to send me a vigorous sound of trumpet in every nook and cranny of my old abode: "Stand up, everybody! This is the time of our lives and we have a lot to accomplish." After all, the well-known effect of "morality" in the treatment of illnesses is not there.

This method, Jeanne and I invented it together. We love repeating to those willing to listen: "When one is young everything is alright. But when the more one grows old the more he has to struggle."

By all these means combined with a wholesome diet and a bit of good luck, in spite of the misfortunes which overwhelmed us, we managed to slow down our ageing process. Jeanne kept her beauty fifteen or twenty years longer than her grandmother. We are convinced that our recipe has contributed to it

But Mômmanh cannot break her own laws: we have to age - and it is imperative! - one must die so that our children more advanced than we are take existence into the stars.

Jeanne managed to slow down but not to evade the insidious deterioration of her magnificent body. The living symphony had been distorted by “false notes” always stronger; the radiance of the immortal beauty fades away, little by little, buried under varicose veins, wrinkles, the yellowish pallor and roughness of the skin. Slow but ineluctable wrecking... Only the artifices and prostheses of beauty can conceal for a while the ravages of the pitiless vandal: aging, the forerunner of death.

The time came when Jeanne had become less beautiful than her dresses. Would the time come when, her body completely shattered, she would look like an ambassador for posterity: a great soul in a dilapidated body, all presented in a beautiful wrapping of sparkling jewellery?

Therefore I know why, on the days out, she must get up earlier and be long in the bathroom before daring to face the look of her fellow friends. It is good that women for this reason have excellent means; the important thing is that when they wake up they can endure with success the test without make-up in the merciless light of the morning. However, I was in a thousand places of that sordid realism to which, besides, I often run away, so imposing still to my eyes the former beautiful image of Jeanne which explains why, in the road, it is more and more difficult to recognize today my half-faded wife.

But let's go back to the delivery van, on the day that Jeanne entered my life.

To begin with, I had to show the Apparition what a good driver I was and since I lacked self-confidence, it was a great fiasco. Now, I would know better; I would tell myself, firstly: "So what if she runs away from you, there are millions of others." and I would add: "Go on, you just have to try your luck! After all, she is only human like you. She is not asking for the moon; just drive, which you know how to do, avoiding any unnecessary fears, and hope will take shape." Luckily, I had not yet acquired that half-wisdom, because my story would have ended there. It is exactly my lack of confidence and my clumsiness which made me attractive in the eyes of this beautiful girl. Oh yes! This is how it happened.

The journey to the camp was unnecessarily dangerous. A narrow road wound along the side of the mountain to lead us up there, to the uncertain edge between the dark forest and the high mountain pastures. We skimmed the precipice every time which the vehicle went out of control, but I always knew how to how to straighten it up in time for us to continue our adventure. When we arrived safe and sound, I was not proud of myself. At least once, we came close to disaster and some mischievous crates had even split on my beauty, the new queen of edelweiss travelling with such an appalling crew. When, moreover, the old hag gave me her compliments, I thought that I had definitely spoiled my slim chances.

– I ask myself where they can have recruited such a driver like you. I who have never touched a steering wheel; I would drive better than you. We were damned lucky that we came out of it alive! Murderer! You will not get the chance to kill me because I shall never get into your car, idiot!

For a moment I asked myself if human rights applied to this old hag. It seemed yes. In any case, miserable consolation, I would no longer have to bear the brunt of her bile in my van, except on rare occasions when I shall not pay much attention to her anyway.

It was then that the first miracle happened... Guess what the immortal told me! And in front of witnesses as well!

– It is nothing, Michel. You are a good driver. It is lack of experience: when you get used to the van and to the mountain, everything will be alright.

What a lovely creature, isn't she? In that instant, the old hag vanished for good out of my existence, like a witch dissolves in the air when the good sovereign fairy appears. Will she utter some evil cawing a few last times? It is possible. But, already out of earshot, I could not hear.

The queen of edelweiss, the divine came from some suburb of the Parisian region near the ramparts which defended the capital in the bygone days, and of a vast vague land full of mysteries and dangers, which she called "The Zone." If you want, let us rename that place Viewy-on-Seine, an ancient opulent village put up amidst the fields on top of which factories had been built, housing estates, a row of pavilions, and a series of small houses of all sorts made of bricks and bits and pieces with, haphazard, little gardens of all sorts of cultural origins and their fences cobbled together matching the discordant ensemble. Viewy-on-Seine, its "ramparts" and its "Zone" were the fulfilment of the anarchic dreams of the working class.

The new town had flooded and completely submerged the old opulent village. And then?

How do you preserve the heritage of humanity?

To ensure the continuation of the development of existence it is necessary that the old makes way for the new. And our roots? The lessons of the past? Today we have the means to represent them faithfully and to preserve them in our archives. For our edification, we should keep only our masterpieces. If, we put all the vestiges in the chariot of existence, it will get bogged down and, on our planet; we would have provoked the suffocation of Mômmanh.

That expression, on the big day, of a vast heterogeneous grouping of bad tastes of all sorts, evoked a gigantic funfair: it had its composite character at times touching, exciting, pitiable and distressing. Sometimes, however, at the turn of a street, it revealed the discovery of a pearl: a beautiful marginal creation which would not have been able to obtain permission to show itself elsewhere. Thus, as you know as well, jazz, tango could only have been born in the poor neighbourhoods sheltering outcasts.

In normal integrated society, in the world of “decent people,” the mould of received ideas, necessarily rigid, crush the more unusual beauties doubly. Because those who struggle to lay the foundations of their lives on a more or less solid ground, or otherwise stated to instruct themselves, those grumble in front of every issue all the more so since most unusual innovations are errors. Therefore like the other unconventional people, the artists and the inventors who are not so daring are driven back to the poor neighbourhoods. Fortunately, these shelter zones exist, these natural parks for discoveries in gestation, comparable to those created for species on the way to extinction.

At that time, the working class had only just begun to come out of its poverty. The absence of finances imposed a strict limit to their fantasies. The pagodas made of cheap junk and the small castles of the butchers, in praline chocolate were still rare. The houses “My Dream” were often small old houses, some boxes with eyes, a small mouth and a sun roof in the shape of a hat which they had extended several times according to the varying fortunes, sometimes in height, sometimes one on the other. You know the type of caricatures of beauty which are sold at Mont-Saint-Michel and in the other tourist spots: the small varnished boat wheels with a gleaming barometer in the middle, painted shells put together, all sorts of earthenware animals – pigeons, cats, pigs... – whose colours could enrage the dogs, post cards showing a heart of sugar barley or flowered skirts lifted revealing candy-pink behinds... In the reshaping and in the successive additions of the original little houses, as well as in all the other additions – gates, railings, glass canopies, ceramic ornaments, main front doors... – the bad taste found a way of expression in the same manner but on a larger scale. The repair of the gardens carried out with certain

salvaged materials: bricks, breezeblocks, or planks, steel sheets, fibrocement, scraps of all sorts contributed to the deterioration of the landscape...

After this period of joyous cacophony, our state deemed that the individual freedom must be curtailed when it defaces the environment. Strict town planning regulations were imposed and gigantic termites' nests all in the form of modern hutches in cement were put up. But men are not termites: you know the rest... In any case, the bad taste had to take refuge in the intimate lodgings, and only friends could benefit from them from now on. After the epoch of the termites' our epoch came when, thanks to a greater wisdom and to important material means, the town councillors transformed our cities into agreeable places to live in. Little by little, Vieuvy-sur-Seine has learned to dress up like a fine lady.

But when Jeanne, introducing herself as a Parisian, spoke to me about her suburb, and even when I had the opportunity to stroll there, I was not sensitive to its touching ugliness. Vieuvy-sur-Seine could only be a magnificent place because it had given birth to the beautiful one, to the sublime flower of the suburb: Jeanne! as regards who it did not take me long to learn that she was truly "well-bred" indeed. That city had nourished her, pampered her, educated her, formed her and kept her for me only till we met and I was very grateful. It could only be a happy city because it had the chance to see her every day. Ah! How I would have loved to live in Vieuvy-sur-Seine, in the aura of the divine and weave from now on my whole existence in the rays of her beauty.

– Wasn't I a little mad?

– Completely, you might tell me.

– Doubtlessly, I would love to relive that madness! Besides, doesn't one need to be drugged in one way or the other to find courage to go to war?

After our first encounter in the van, I sought all the opportunities to approach Jeanne and to be in her company. This was easy because, rather than shy away, she would provoke herself the encounters. I was wandering on a cloud and sometimes took pity on my contemporaries who seemed so little when, from the Sky, I saw them condemned to accomplish in sadness their daily chores of doubly handicapped, at

times terrestrial and mortal. Jeanne! Her name was Jeanne! What a marvellous name evidently! Don't you think so? Wasn't that name immortal like the fairy that brought her?

I close my eyes and see her again.

The young and the feeling of eternity. What is beauty for? Why does natural adaptation appear to obey the principle of an end?

Her skin is a river of health and of youth. It wraps up the living and vigorous flesh. She flows in the seducing forms which Mômmanh has discovered and chosen for her all along the never ending path.

She does not reveal the complex machinery at work inside the beauty factory. Those called liver, guts, bladder, spinal cord; the anonymous workers with dirty callous hands who work in the beauty factory remain quite well hidden. Only some meandering little veins are allowed to dawdle in full view. To what avail? Maybe to testify to the life we evoke with blood.

The new factory is working well. The least injury is repaired as soon as it occurs. This is why the beauty of the young girl remains intact.

Thus permanently regenerated, youth and beauty appear to be eternal. Time is abolished. Please don't go telling the young girl: "Like that flower, old age will ruin your beauty." She cannot hear that type of warning and she will greet you with a peal of mocking laughter. Because she does not doubt having eternity ahead of her. And if, in that place of living eternity a small black or dark brown sets in, it is the exception to the rule. It is welcome and we call it beauty spot.

Did Mômmanh act purposely when she gave the young ones the feeling that they have eternity in front of them? Perhaps. Because the young don't hesitate to undertake things: like this, they stretch the roads of the future.

Jeanne, such as I still see her through my eyes of a man in love, was so beautiful. She was the triumphant soul of nature, the sublime incarnation of that call to live which is struggling in the darkness of matter until it breaks free, like a mineral spring gushing from a rock and spilling across the universe and smiling at the sunshine of its thousand silver sequins. Each time when the impetuous desire to live, live, live here, everywhere and forever, each time the grim will of existence has known how to snatch beauty from its gangue of mud, she kept it in mind and cherished, protected and recreated it, so that, reappearing like the longed for happiness before our fascinated eyes, she be our guide from now on.

Because among Mômmanh's inventions, beauty ranks the highest.

Beauty is not the ideal existence: it is the representation of it. Thus you are sometimes moved by a beauty, whether of a woman or of something else. You are moved because, consciously or not, you have recognized some elements of existence to which you aspire, and which delight you. Next you have to discover and match the elements in reality through your work, because the image of ham is not the ham.

This is how beauty shows us the way of existence. Each time she came across her, Mômmanh felt the presence of good: This is why she inscribed it on her tablets. Just as she invented the prettiness of flowers in order to further pollination, she created the beauty of women to attract men. Moreover, those of us we call artists, she endowed with the faculty of creating new beauties. Perhaps they have a sensibility to the heightened existence to such a point that it can be moved by the least of her evocations?

I have been telling you about Mômmanh's "inventions." However, don't forget that before settling down in us, she can't have had any intentions as she remained closed in her gangue of matter, without her own consciousness, without a clue to the future. Everything seemed to have happened the way she wanted and planned her success but in fact, she obtained them groping her way and selecting after each time.

Mômmanh creates the characteristics of living creatures the way I make choices hanging about in a shop. The shop assistant who keeps asking me what I need annoys me: I don't know what I want, but I will know perhaps by discovering an object I like a lot, if only they would leave me alone with the items. It is only later that my aim will be revealed.

This is why biologists, for the sake of simplification, can argue according to principle of an end that, for example: nature has given the chameleon the faculty of changing colour to dissolve into its surroundings in order to escape its predators. The end is the existence: the manners in which she accomplishes herself are known later.

However, after the liberated consciousness appeared with man, Mômmanh can proceed otherwise. Seeing the immensity of reality through our eyes, she can cogitate plans more or less feasible for the future: "I shall buy a new car in three years' time... I will be a doctor... We shall make heaven on earth..." Through our own intermediary she tries to fulfil her plans and if the result matches her hopes, she validates it. It is the principle of an end a priori. This method is much more rapid than the old one. Moreover, she increases the chances of avoiding catastrophes such as plague or a world war.

Let's get back to art. A guide along the paths of existence: when an artist, not only makes

you appreciate the value of an objective but also shows you the ways to achieve it, he has served humanity well. Like this, I would like very quickly to make you taste the flavours of a great love and give you the recipe. So much the worse if you find me a mediocre cook, I continue my work just the same: "the rest will be given to you just as well."

See the little of voluptuous orchids; look at the mane waving in the wind, see the wild mare galloping freely in the boundless prairie, see the frangipani's white flowers dissolving their carnal purity in the dazzling tropical sun. Through the foliage in the moving shadow, before the gaze of the blazing panther in its smooth black velvet dress, invulnerable: her majesty stretches her languorous muscles full of energy in perfect harmony, like the music of a symphony; her majesty sharpens its nails sliding in the soft fur, steel stilettos which will flash at any moment like a blue flash amidst dumbfounded flesh, panting, definitively seized in their final movement, the shredded life that will serve to nourish the conquering life of the beast. Breathe in the scents of the month of May in the garden finally delivered from the winter "numbness" and who is ahead of the others as mad. Prepare yourself blue seaweed – or brown to the malicious eyes if you prefer – and let yourself be pampered in the folds of the serene sea, so benevolent at times. Listen how the Indians of the Andes, risen from the blind and century long colonial devastation, listen how they make their stone mountains sing: listen how their music flies away taking wings which obstinately, tell us in spite of everything the hopes of the misunderstood. The beautiful child of interminable tragedy breaks free from that land of misery and from up there, darting valiantly, sets out on a tour around the world. Let yourself, from time to time, be enchanted by the friend Mozart who establishes happiness on earth...

This is what I see in Jeanne when I look at her well, but don't go telling her. She is the favourite daughter of the multi-faced nature which I find in her. All the beauties, our sisters who go ahead in the long way to nirvana, Jeanne knows well how to take them and how to enhance them. And that is good. I shall never reproach her

the long hours spent daily in front of her mirror, making herself beautiful rather than prepare my meal or clean up.

Ah! I have believed to have forgotten her eyes, but I have already spoken to you about them: unfathomable ocean where I like to plunge, lose myself, dissolve and find myself again in the family, like a fish in the water, a recognized child of the living universe.

If the eyes are windows of the soul, why is it that some have only dusty fanlights?

It is possible that the portrait I had done of Jeanne is not enough for you. Is she a brunette, a blond or red-haired? Big or small? White, black or yellow? Has she a Greek profile? Small feet? Are her hands long and fine? I have nothing against the figurative portraits which could be very beautiful but, I don't know how to do them. Little does it matter: beauty is not the body of the woman but the message which Mômmanh has inscribed in it for us. In spite of everything, if you are keen on seeing my beloved in flesh and blood, look up in the Bible, the Hymn of Hymns attributed to Solomon.

It goes without saying that Jeanne had breasts and everything else to make a complete woman: without which she would have been a type of painting in the Louvre and I wouldn't have envisaged marrying her. Yes, the breasts matched well the whole. The mouth was well done to give generous kisses, contrary to the prickly kisses evoked by thin lips. The tummy and the hips, wide enough, seemed designed to welcome the beloved as well as, later on, the suckling who would have appeared there.

As regards her buttocks, I asked myself – and I often ask myself why – they seemed an indispensable part of the femininity. Don't they serve to sit on the lavatory pan? I also like the bottoms of the beautiful ladies and if I am somewhat disturbed, so much the worse! Those of Jeanne were sufficiently firm and quite fleshy, as it should

be, but discrete enough not to arouse the lecherous feelings of a man when following her. It was at least what I wanted to believe.

Why the heck does walk perform with her buttocks a sort of very suggestive belly dance? Is it a natural phenomenon similar to thousand expediencies, of which Mômmanh has endowed women with to attract men? Or is it just another trick deliberately used by the majority of women?

What is the purpose of the butts of beautiful women?
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Now I understand why Mômmanh attracts the eyes and hands of men towards the bums of their partners. There they find a large area of soft and warm skin that is so comforting. In bed, when the man pushes his belly up against the buttocks of his beloved, as long as love is there, something special happens. Through this interface, he comes into loving communication with the body and the soul of the beautiful woman. He just has to listen to it and she invites him to continue the conversation by making burning caresses. Freed of human misery, he is at the doors of paradise. Then the fairy says: "Enter, my love, enter!" Then he will have to make sure - most of all! - Not to behave like a cad, on pain of being thrown out of heaven. He will continue the conversation inside until the fairy says "Yes! Yes! Oh yes!" And if the "yes" does not come because of an unexpected disagreement? Ah well, never mind. It is necessary

to give up this time, until, perhaps, you finally manage to agree.

I found a beautiful illustration of this in a poem by Pierre Seghers (La rivière de ton dos), put into song:

"The river of your back...

Is it a river or a torch?

The river that goes down...

That caresses it in passing

Burns his heart to the core.

It digs a bed of flames

That goes from heaven to the tomb...

Whoever enters the dwelling

Comes back out dreaming..."

This is no doubt what the popular language has translated as "being so horny," a term that unfortunately I had not understood because of its dirty and infamous innuendoes.

So, long live bums. And so what if Mômmanh placed them around toilets.

In any case, and contrary to what one would believe, it is not enough for a woman to have “a nice bottom” to be sexually attractive, what one calls “sexy” in vulgar language. How many times have I known that disappointment: my look lured by the view of a “nice bottom,” I was eager for its owner to show her angel face but, when at last she turned around, it was a rat’s face which appeared, dressed in dead skin, with vicious empty eyes.

- Why do you insult rats, you say?
- Well, I don’t know. In any case, they will not be reading this book.

Forgive my rudeness, my friend. I wanted to share with you a few technical tricks that can help you enjoy the pleasure of love. Now, forget about all of that.

If our bodies were only an assemblage of cells just like a car that is made of machined materials that smelt bad to Mômmanh in different degrees, the technology of love would be enough to take us to heaven. But it is not so, thank God. We, the children of Mômmanh, are anything but machines that do not know anything. That will never know.

Forget about sexual mechanics, pull a curtain in front of your indecent organs and guts so that the emerging beauty of your body is hidden from view.

When your beloved and you are in each other’s arms, ready to seal the covenant in your flesh that your souls have lovingly prepared by overcoming discord, find your mutual happiness and

let yourselves be guided by Mômmanh. Melted in the immortal song of your reunited bodies, listen, listen to the cheerful music of your beloved. The pathway to heaven will open before you, step by step. Do not continue looking to find out where it goes, because it is beyond the flesh, somewhere towards the heaven that our ancestors invented.

Here it is. Let us close the parenthesis.

This portrait that I have painted of my love seemed enough for you to recognize your Jeanne when she comes into your visual field, which is certain to happen regardless of the place on this planet that welcomes your presence.

Jeanne ignored that her beauty was of divine essence and still does not want to hear about it: in that domain she refuses to share with Mômmanh her own freedom of creation. But she was an expert in the art of the seduction of love. Without my knowing, she had analysed, dissected, judged and evaluated me. That is to say: she wanted me all for herself, for ever and, of course, as soon as possible. Her strategy, prepared a long time before, was implemented soon.

She immediately set to work.

And one often hears men pretend that “they make conquests”!

INTERSTELLAR CONVERSATION

“The masters of this planet are semi-conscious animals, a lot of whom fancy themselves as gods. Among those which escape this failure, most think that they are the only men in the universe: they are incapable of understanding that a species other than theirs could become human. To distinguish them from the other men of the universe, I will call them Earthlings, if you like.

You can't imagine how far their madness can go: most of the males whose male reproductive organs are operational have, very often, one main concern.

– Enrich their knowledge?

– No, Master, the gods don't need that.

– To enlarge their territory to the near stars, or extend it to the entire universe?

– Not at all! The territory of their neighbours interests them much more.

– To create works of art to nurture their souls?

– Think again. They prefer to contemplate their portrait taken in front of the pyramids of Egypt.

– Then what?

– You will never get it, Master. I am going to tell you... Here you are: they dream about inserting their sexual appendix into the receptacle of a female and injecting their semen into her. But, wait a moment! Their aim is not reproduction, with some exceptions... When that desire for sterile coupling has been satisfied, the male rests a little. Then he tries to repeat the operation, sometimes with the same female, sometimes with several others, as often as possible, as long as his reproduction of semen allows him to. Most of the time, the females are willing: in their own way they also seek this sort of coupling. However sometimes one or several males force a female to receive their seed. That is called “rape.” As far as I know, females do not commit rape.

And now, dear Master, do you know what they call this sterile pastime? Oh! Don't try to guess. You will never get it. They call it “making love”!

Wait, Master. It gets worse. Those who refuse to waste their time in these games for the mentally ill, discharge their excess of semen single-handed, those who are honourable, they are called “wankers,” a very insulting term meaning “good for nothing.”

There you are, Master. Believe me: these Earthlings have nothing to offer us. Besides, their madness is often devastating: look at the state to which they have reduced their unique planet. Therefore, I suggest that the Intergalactic Confederation of the Children of Mômmanh seize the Earth. As for those madmen who believe they are gods, we can breed them. They will work for us, then, sometime before the appointed hour of their natural death, they will be slaughtered for their meat. I can assure you that it is excellent: a real treat for us. My mission is accomplished. I am asking your permission to return, Master.

– Rapid Exploraclone, continue your investigation. Earthlings are also the children of Mômmanh. If she has chosen them such as they are, it is because they have shown their

abilities in that manner during thousands of standard years. We cannot call her judgement in question as long as we don't have a more solidly based argument than hers to decide.

You know this only too well, Rapid Explorac lone. Why are you in such a hurry? Are you missing the children?

– Yes, Master. I would like to supervise the evolution of the transplants.

– Don't be afraid. Everything is alright. And your children are educated according to your wishes. I watch over it personally.

– Thank you, Master.

– As regards those creatures who believe to be the only men of the universe, try to understand if their preferential selfishness has been able to give the advantage in the struggle for existence, and in which way. We would also like to know more about what they call "making love."

(Exploration of the Earth. Great Archives of Waliullah.)

4-Alleluia

I am still a little nostalgic while reliving those happy days when I fancied myself as Alexander the Conqueror, even greater surely, since I was not afflicted, myself, with his incredible vanity. In the morning she had easily persuaded me that if I was not at all a god carried on the wings of love, it would not take me long to become one. Ah! That was good! If the same compliment had been made to me by a poor blood sausage of human nature and feminine sex, wrapped up in a gift package and all coloured by carnivalesque ribbons, all fixed up beneath a funny hat, however glad, besides its author, I would have sought only a strict human relationship of the type that one can have with a woman of the category “not screwable.” And then I would have had some doubts on the reliability of those praises.

In what conditions can man take his wishes for realities?

And so dear reader? It never happens to you, to take for realities the wish to render concrete certain wishes of yours, especially if they are too strong. Yes, surely, because we are kneaded of the same paste. It is one of the misfortunes of the appetite for existence.

We question our environment in a way as to be able to use it in the factory of our existence.

Never obtaining an absolutely certain answer, we must content ourselves with approximations more or less reliable and put an end to our doubts to act.

"But so, if we take our desires for realities, we risk a failure.

- That is true. Other factors intervene. If the pursued goal is abstract, that is, to say distant from our senses, if the risks of failure are feeble, it is very tempting to take those wishes for solid. Think of the dangers of the road: as long as you have not seen a serious accident, you hardly believe, isn't that so? It is because the television must show us the dead and injured by way of a precaution.

- The Soviets' paradise has lasted less than a century whereas the Christian one holds on after 2000 years. Now, one was on earth, concrete therefore, whereas Christian paradise is sheltered from the curious in an inaccessible, unverifiable and totally abstract heaven? After 60 years of efforts, sometimes excessive, the Soviets saw with their own eyes that their paradise in the making was only a bi-prison badly kept which smelt of cabbage, whereas the Christians themselves, after 2000 years, can often dream of their strictly forbidden Eden.

- You are right. And there is still the force of desire in the offing.

If she is big without however reaching the summit which constitutes this high expectation, the desire will find a reasonable way to satisfy itself. Like this the ordinary Christian will not rely on a hypothetical paradise to ensure his survival. Above all he will entrust to the concrete world which he knows: his children, his heritage, his friends, his country..

But if power of the desire reached the level of the high expectation, every time that it would be impossible to satisfy it, our man will have only the choice between madness and death. Thus, irrespective of the heavy losses, the inveterate gambler always believes that he will make up for it, in other words he takes his desire for a reality."

And this is how, all dressed up, without a lifebelt, I set sail with my boat with my entire luggage on an opulent river. Any swirls? Rapids? Well, well!

Venus herself, in flesh and bones – I am not interested in the bones, but it seemed that even the goddesses need them – Aphrodite thus was inviting me to the banquet of the gods. The harder would be the fall precisely without a parachute, when she would afterwards hurl me down the lower regions of the mortals. Groaning, moaning, handicapped by the multiple bruises, my eyes which the bright light high up had upset, incapable from now on to lead me in the half-light where the human world lived, I begged for death which luckily, was rather too busy elsewhere on our small planet to be interested in me.

Ah! The bitch! Ah yes, it was about my love. And this is only the beginning. The bitch! I cannot find again the real taste of life with in spite of everything a good zest of bitterness, which by climbing on all fours the steep mountain to find again at

the peak my idol moved with pity, condescending, and kiss her feet, like a dog squatting before its master, until she tells me: “Michel, are you sick? Come on! Come to my arms.”

I was her man. I continued to be so after we tried it out. Pardon me for having used that indecent term. To make love, it is necessary to be in love, but that is not enough.

The second important condition, I was to discover it only later, since Jeanne was careful not to reveal it to me: you must understand each other well. The souls of the lovers must be in symbiosis so that the two bodies will have the possibilities to fuse.

It is necessary that the two bodies be made for one another: you know well that the love of the elephant for the white mouse will always be platonic, that the frigid woman and the impotent man are far from the flash of orgasm...

The sexual fantasies stemming from the way in which one's mind has discovered carnal love must be in harmony. How can they unite themselves, the man who can enjoy himself only in an express train and the woman for whom the scenery of a Norman breeding stud is indispensable? How can they manage, he whose indispensable accessory is the knight's armour and the woman who can't reach her ecstasy if she is not wearing a crinoline dress? Take pity on their misfortune instead of mocking them!

Part of the technique in the art of making love.
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And last, even if Mômmanh has turned the lovers' bodies into instruments able to vibrate in unison like a celestial symphony, still one has to learn music first. This apprenticeship is served easily as Mômmanh has endowed us with all necessary gifts. I was initiated into this art quickly, guided by both instinct and the advice of Jeanne whose impetuous curiosity had set her on this road long before me.

When and only when all of these conditions were met, we finally embarked on our first journey to the stars. And we held the universe in our arms. Reciprocally. Yes! Yes! And I felt like saying "Thank you." "But to whom?" Certainly not to Jeanne as the present was mutual. Therefore, "Thank You, Mômmanh, for having conceived us so well."

I was her man. But the other Jeanne who was hiding behind mine and who had not made herself evident, that one was still not convinced of it. From her point of view, I had only bitten the bait. I had to strike without delay because, as you know, the time of the holidays which is nearly always the time of illusions or each can do what he likes as long as he does not want the moon and if one fancies himself an eagle, before finding oneself grazed again and sometimes humiliated in the hard chores of the daily necessities, that respite of the holidays in the hand of the one thousand and one nights is rather short. Don't be surprised if I speak of the holidays when both of us had a job: first of all, we had chosen that job; then it was responsible for our meeting; finally we still a month of real holidays.

There was therefore well concealed in Jeanne's head the imperative: it was necessary that I was solidly hooked before the two of us got back into harness in our respective and too distant territories.

This is how she went about it. And in spite of everything that happened afterwards. I say it to you: “If that way has to be done again, I will go the same way.”

She says to me: “Do you know that you are handsome, Michel? If you dress up well, all the women will chase you...” A swarm of pretty women running after me: a magnificent royal train hooked to the steps of “His Majesty-Myself,” brunettes, blondes, red-haired, languorous ones, malicious ones, artists, sportswomen, the right marriageable ones still virgins, to whom I will be teaching everything, beautiful mature women, experts who will show me new pleasures... my mouth was watering. But I had to stop drooling for fear of dribbling; because Jeanne did not leave me a moment’s respite.

“Yes, Michel, you are handsome. But one would say that you do not know. Hasn’t anybody ever told you?”

In fact, although knowing that Quasimodo had very slim chances of making love to Esmeralda, I never cultivated beauty as a means of seduction. One mistrusted it like a plague, in the surrounding countryside where I was brought up.

Every third or fourth summer at the grand communal feast they elected a Miss Saint-Hilary-of-the-Désert. The queens of my village had a touching beauty, approximate certainly but natural and sufficiently strong to triumph over the ugliness brought over by the hairdressers and fashion designers of the village, beauties who escaped miraculously the massacre which the tough life of the fields inflicted on them. Those beauty queens of the village never found a husband.

But you, my young contemporary, you belong to an age so distant from that of my youth that you risk understanding nothing from the habits of that era. Behold about fifty years ago, if we were not more than halfway between prehistory and the year 2000, we were not even far away from it. Whereas the average Frenchman of today lives nearly in opulence, the average Frenchman of those days was poor. The peasants of my village lived in clogs, on the over-exploited land, without heating or running water or electricity. Many of the adults, especially the old, were toothless.

For those country people, without social protection, the medical care was often still considered as a luxury.

The ephemeral beauties of my village were not short of lovers, but they were cautious in trying their luck. All those secret wooers shrank from the thought of sending their beautiful one to dirty herself at the cows' rear and to see her exquisite grace mutilated beneath the red faced callosity of the hard work of the land. They also feared that too beautiful a wife squandered a lot of money and time on futile appearances rather than dedicate herself to feed the family in the first place, and then, earn a certain "well-being" that is to say from the property above all. Beauty was then a luxury. My fellows were too poor to dream to afford it.

My mother, that cunning peasant, half redeemed from the slavery of the fields, had carefully avoided letting me know that I was handsome. Beside others induced by the peasant tradition, she certainly had other good reasons for that.

Once, however, once, she made an exception to the rule. I was then about twenty years old and, from her point of view, I had brilliantly succeeded in my studies since I had escaped from the world of the little peasants who bogged it down. I had become a "Sir," and so she saw clearly that I was not attracting the girls. Thinking that it hurt me and also that I risked not bringing her any grandchildren which she was waiting for, she decided in spite of everything to encourage me to seduce with my good looks: "Michel, don't you have a lover? A young handsome lad like you? I am sure that there are about a dozen around you who are waiting only for you. But if you do not say anything to them, how can you succeed?"

Beauty? The fairies whom I did not know how to seduce had an abundance of it: they must, therefore, ask for other qualities. Proof: despite my angelic face, nobody had made eyes at me yet.

Why do women know how to distinguish the men of merit?
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In fact, I was not far from the truth. If the majority of women appreciate the good looks of men, most often, they find that the beauty of souls counts as well. And one can see a beautiful woman love a brilliant and generous hunchback. The probability is the sense of the myth "Beauty and the Beast."

Because Mômmanh has endowed them with an amazing faculty: they are capable of feeling and measuring men's merit.

That is done by intuition: like this they know how to recognize the artist although they are not necessarily capable of appreciating his works. After all - or rather, above all - it is they who choose the father of their children and it is quite necessary that Mômmanh in her millenary memory chose a means to help them.

Instinctively, they can recognize beneath the tatters, the errant knight, the cursed poet, the wise outlaw... There were the eminent experts, blinded by their prejudiced scholars, discard the revolutionary genius, be it Socrates or Galileo, the most subtle detail.

I was right when I said to myself "Become a good man and love will come as well." I had undertaken to eradicate resolutely the evil which was "blocking" me. As I went along I had progressed that way, I could read in the eyes and on the lips of some fairy the outlines of encouraging smiles.

Spoiling a child causes his misfortune. Why?

What was the evil which had deprived me from love? Yet another gift from Mômmanh, this time poisoned!

Yes, remember: in the human existence, the preference given to the merry troika "Myself, Here, Now" would have a difficulty bowing in front of a priority due to the severe trinity "Other, Universe, Continuity." Why should Mômmanh have to be predestine to unhappiness the spoiled children?

The first born and only child of the eldest of a big united family, my father went to war for an undetermined time which was over six years, my mother taken up by all the work of the farm, my grandparents right next door were in permanent adoration in front of the child-king, I was extremely spoiled. When I had a wish, it was enough - in the order - to give a winning smile, or to start crying, or to stamp my feet, and I obtained nearly always what I wanted. Little man, I was master of my small world.

How good it was!

Consequently, I could never renounce to it truly, while my universe little by little broadened itself in the direction of all the infinities. And then, something which resembled a

miracle happened. At my village school, I was right away the best student, he who was pointed to as an example for those around. This glory lasted sufficiently enough for me to catch the illness.

Yes: the "Illness" which kept the beauties at bay, that from which I suffered to such a point to call sometimes death, that which caused me so much disappointment and which, in spite of everything, revealed itself beneficial since she permitted me to conceive the present work, the message which I would like to give you.

After having been praised for a long time as the best student of my country school, I ended up by realizing that I owed those compliments to a particular aptitude: I understood more quickly and better than the others. I then had the idea that the intelligence well directed could bring me much more than the praising of my surrounding. Yes, it would give me the power to satisfy all my desires: cure the sick, gain a fortune, seduce the girls, overcome death, conquer the world.. and why not the universe? My frustrated high expectations of a spoilt child resurfaced with a happy and an irrepressible violence. Yes! Yes! Yes! I was going to be again the master of everything. It was enough for me to understand everything: it was as simple as that. And it was like this that I put myself to the insane task of understanding, **EVERYTHING, EVERYTHING, EVERYTHING**. I wanted - what am I saying? - I insisted on being a God.

You are telling me that to have such a stupid behaviour, I must have been short of intelligence. And the gambler then? He whose sick soul demands a luxurious lifestyle and who, to satisfy that tyrant, resorts to gambling till he is completely ruined, the latter is he deprived of intelligence as well?

Thus, like many insane passions, mine was formed in two stages. First of all, the spoilt child who I was, had acquired the need to be always master of everything. Secondly, with the discovery of my intelligence, I believed that I kept the means to satisfy that demand, which from now on knew no limits.

I was victim of the process which I evoke soon. We are sometimes condemned to take for realities some of our desires: those which have become imperious and destructive passions, high expectations.

The passion of being God blinded me so much more than its origin, those high expectations of a spoilt child, found themselves locked in the subconscious. In fact, since all those who had been leaning on me had instilled in me generous morals of equality, of solidarity, of a struggle for the prosperity of everybody, my monstrous selfishness could only express itself under disguise. I had no problem finding it: it appeared under the evidence, that the need to understand everything had to be of service to humanity.

I must explain to you now how that drawback could render me unfit to live.

What is stress? How can stress release the existential reactions? How is stress indispensable to existence?

Stress commands our existence. I use it in a general sense given by the Canadian researcher Hans Selye, inventor of the concept. He said it many a time that the stress general syndrome of adaptation, is indispensable for life and that its total absence, is death. Therefore, the elements which release it are not always seriously traumatizing neither frustrating. Joy can cause it as much as sorrow.

Stress shows itself when we perceive the taste or the foretaste whether of deprivation or of satisfaction: a burn as well as the fear of being burnt; the taste of the first kiss as well as the hope of tasting more of them are all stress. That arouses the desire which is the voice of Mômmanh in each of us. She makes herself heard throughout the day, and even at night during dreams.

And, guess what boredom is? Simply the absence of stress.

To fight stress man resorts to the tools which Mômmanh has bequeathed him: the senses to perceive the environment, an intelligence to understand it and find the means to avail himself of them, the tools such as the hands to act accordingly.

As soon as he concludes that he as a worthy answer to stress, the human mind orders to pass to action. If he recognizes a pleasure, he orders to welcome it and to prolong it, if he sees a perspective of pleasure he orders to try and fulfil it.

<p>To obtain a better response possible to stress, what qualities must man develop?</p>

Let us look for the best process of an answer to stress!

One must develop knowledge to know how to act on nature. One must develop the skill and its extensions which are our tools to subject nature to what one wants. At the moment of stress, we must call on these aptitudes.

It is necessary to be able to see whether the resources we have enable us to respond properly to the stress. I insist: we must know how

to properly assess our capabilities and adopt a self-confidence that is justified.

At the moment of action, those who have developed an excessive confidence in themselves will experience some failures. Those who have developed the opposite shortcomings, the lack of confidence, will often fail because their actions are clumsy.

Justified self-confidence: let's assume that this quality has been acquired. What happens to those that are slaves of expectations that are impossible to satisfy? They will not be able to believe in their abilities for this impossible mission; therefore, they will fail.

Let's go over one or two experiences that you have surely experienced.

My wife, busy with a crossword, asks:

- How do you spell "Elephant"? I knew it, but now I'm not sure...

- Elefan, Elephan, elefen? Good grief! Me neither.

- Write it at full speed, without thinking. That way it will come to you.

- Without thinking? I see that you don't know me. I try anyway... no good!

And I search my memory, I try, I try... and the more I try, the more the word elephant breaks up before disappearing into the fog of my memory.

In the end I gave up.

"Come on, let's cut some wood for next winter."

I am in the middle of the forest, where spelling does not interest anyone. Well, guess what happens to me? Without asking it, my unfaithful memory gives me the spelling of the word "elephant." Now that I no longer need it!

Do you understand what happened here?

The ink that prints the spelling words into our memory is often pale. If you ask your mind to find a tenuous memory immediately and without fail, that is more than it is capable of. It does not have enough confidence in its abilities so it panics, it stumbles, and it gives a wrong answer. If, instead, you ask it without any pressure, it will easily find the answer. And the spelling of the word "elephant" is consolidated in your memory.

Another example?

You have to take a path that is about one-meter-wide, on the edge of a cliff overlooking a

steep drop. If you fall, you will definitely be killed.

If the path was at ground level, at the bottom of the valley, you would have no trouble following it. However!

Suppose that you absolutely must not fall. "No! No! No! I do not want to fall down there!" As no one can give you an absolute guarantee, you do not trust yourself. Besides, you start to shake..

And so, you say: "If I fall, so what? The risk of that happening is very small. I know how to walk, anyway! You just have to be careful, man! After that, you will be proud of yourself."

And the obstacle is overcome. "Bravo!"

Instead of having an absolute requirement, you have adapted your level of desire to your objective abilities, regaining justified confidence in yourself; you have then blindfolded your desire.. and the obstacle is overcome.

<p>How does the requirement of happiness transform life into hell?</p>
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Ah well! my sick mind was never satisfied with the answers, since he demanded the impossible: the absolute intelligence of everything, including, therefore, the most insignificant problem. None of the answers sketched inspired me with confidence, but it was necessary for me to act: before opening my flies to satisfy an urgent need, I could not wait to know with absolute certainty if it had to start being opened from the top, from the middle or from the bottom. Then my actions were so hesitant that I happened to dirty myself.

And that lack of confidence in the slightest of my gestures revealed itself every day, over and over again. It happened often that I could not speak, my language having become an incomprehensible mess. It happened to me that I had difficulty in driving a car, and forgetting how to swim.

My natural state had become that of a zombie constantly absorbed by painful problems, I was incapable of interesting myself in whatever happened. In spite of everything one invited me to play, to dance, to discuss, even to eat, I did it in a mechanical and clumsy way.

It was because as long as I had not succeeded in pushing my demon, I had not been allowed to make love. It happened that if an attempt of a committing smile appeared on the lips of the girls attracted by my good looks: but then I found myself quite too far away from the other

side of an invisible barrier, and above all, I was incapable of communicating the least information about myself.

However, that was not the last fault which repelled them; the most patient would have in spite of everything attempted to penetrate my secrets, by hoping that their curiosity will be well rewarded. No, my condemnation without appeal came from what they had read in my eyes: a desperate and tenacious aberration, the reflection of a sick soul, gnawed at by cancer, closed to life, doomed to disappear in the limbo of forgetfulness, a limbo which had already started to swallow its living victim. So, seeing that there was nothing to love behind my angelic face, the beauties kept on going.

Once I had constrained my vice to withdraw itself into forgetfulness, I could practice the habit of seduction of my era. I was convinced that, in a couple of lovers, beauty must be the privilege of the woman. To each his role. While playing the symphony of her body, the woman showed each moment the way to earthly paradise: while studying, reflecting, working, and struggling... the man derived from nature the elements which would make a reality of that divine promise. The feminine beauty was the revelation of the primordial aspirations to which the power of the masculine creation had to give body. Venus can only be the Muse which inspires the creator: man

I was a man of my time: that era in which one idolised Brigitte Bardot in the role of the “ravishing idiot.”

How did I want to seduce? With my intelligence, above all. I believed to have set myself free from the hole in the countryside which had been my nest, muddy and

full of dung, thanks to my superior intelligence. From now on I saw myself actor of a marvellous world of cities, that world without hindrance which was advancing at great steps towards the opulence, freedom, conquest of the stars. At least, this is how I saw it. But if you believe that I scorned my fellow peasants, my brethren, you are wrong: I was sorry for them and wanted them to be free in due course.

So? Why did I feel my body dissolve itself in happiness when she told me: “Do you know that you are handsome, Michel!”? But surely, I remember it now. It is because at the same time, she wrapped me up in a long loving look, like the fisherman imprisons his fish in his tender shrimping net.

She loved me! Alleluia!

Besides that meant: that my mind is finally free from that cursed concrete wall, since she reads it on my face which has become again intelligent, curious, open, and so on and so forth...” I concluded equally that she appreciated what I believed that my essential qualities were, my qualities of a man: a well-formed intelligence, open, capable of beautiful performances and a knowledge already well understood which asked only to develop. She told me yes, surely, she appreciated those qualities which she had looked for in vain in other men. Why had it taken me so long to come?

Together, we were going to put that into practice and work out feats. She made me her oracle. God! That was good! Finally a fairy appreciated my merit. At last a divine accepted to weave her existence with mine! SHE had come down from the skies to look for me! From now on I would be her master and her slave because it was like this, that paradoxically I conceived love.

She asked me if I wanted to have children.

- How? If I wished for it? But I wanted it.
- Because you believe that everybody wants to have children? Some don’t want any of them absolutely.
- I do not understand the latter. But how can they deprive themselves of

such happiness?

– Some children, they are not always the joy, you know. And then, one can have other goals, in his existence.

– It is true. I have not thought of that. But you?

– Rest assured, I want to have children, also. We are lucky.

At that time, I still found it absolutely normal to be lucky. It was another consequence of the little treats which had filled my childhood. Much later, in our house in the countryside, there was a period when we ate a cat each year. No, not stew. In Autumn we used to take in a kitten; he spent a comfortable winter in the warmth, pampered by all; in spring, he was overtaken by the eagerness to see the world: he left to explore and disappeared, killed by an environment whose dangers he did not suspect of. Ah well, when I found it normal to be lucky, I was similar to those kittens. Fortunately, Jeanne's education did not have that serious fault of having given her excessive confidence in life.

– Michel, how many do you want?

– Three.

– But how did you guess? Even I want three.

– It was luck once again. But tell me, why three?

– I have been an only child. One gets bored and risks being spoilt. Two are always bickering all the time, and then it is not a real family; and then I like better the number three. Here it is.

– And you, Michel?

– They can play together and help each other. In a case of a fight, they can call their brothers. And then that would give us a big family when we are old. Finally, it will increase our chances of having grandchildren.

– Don't count too much on that. But tell me, you want only boys: and the girls, what will you do with the girls?

– Oh! The girls...

– Yes, the girls, like me. Do you know what I mean?

– One must...

– I know what one must! But do you want any?

– One does not have a choice. If we have a girl, we must take her.

– We will bring her up to do the housework and the kitchen. She can also iron her

brothers' shirts...

– Stop there, my dear, where are you going with this? You know well that I am in favour of progress. I defend the equality of sexes.

– The equality for the others, surely. But for you, hey? Can one make a small exception?

– The girls, when they are pretty and gentle are pleasant. But I think of their future: they do not have the qualities it takes to make a man at all.

– Ah Michel, tell me that I am dreaming! If they come home pregnant, the only chance would be to find them a good husband. Tell me if I am wrong.

– Hey...”

I lifted my head. She had gone out to do a stroll around the camp. She walked with quick steps and it seemed to me that her breathing was halting. She did not take long to come back, wearing a smile which attracted me irresistibly in her arms. Her tense body was rather cold.

– Dear, are you alright?

– Yes, yes... Tell me, have you related to me that you have prepared your higher education in a mixed school?

– Yes.

– Were the girls less successful than the boys?

– No, I have not seen the difference? Ah yes. I see where you are heading. You know the equality of the sexes, it is all new. So, like everyone else, I drag with me the remains of the old habits.

– Yes, yes! It does not matter what remains. So what are we going to do with the girls, if we have any?

– We shall accept whoever comes. If unfortunately... Excuse me! If we have only girls, well, well... I will love them as boys.

– That is not bad for a start... Oh my, my!

– What happened? Are you hurt?

– Oh my my! I am afraid! Granted that they are normal!

– Ah! It is only that... Certainly they will be normal! Is that a funny idea?

– That idea gives me nightmares. When I wake up, I no longer want any children. But what can one do about it? Hey, Michel?

The tone was full of hope. Alas, the knowledge of which I was so proud did not bring me any solutions to those painful problems.

– I never asked myself the question... It seems to me that no, we cannot do anything about it. But there are no abnormalities in the family, at least among two or three generations which I know of and which I have been told of. And in yours?

– As far as I know there is none to my knowledge.

– So you are not sure?

– Not completely. You know, that, that type of accident could happen to anyone. I have seen some in hospitals. Oh! It is horrible!

– Come on, Jeanne, the risks are minimal. Each time we take the car we can have a serious accident. Do you think of it?

– No.

– Yet the risks are bigger.

– A fat lot of good that does me! Well! Let's talk about something else. Our children will study for a long time. Do you agree?

– Certainly.

– Estelle will become a lawyer. At least if she is not a scientist, a researcher.

– Who is Estelle?

– It is my daughter.

– Ah good. She is mine equally. Our sons also could become engineers, doctors, researchers, renowned artists. Perhaps I am dreaming.

– So, I dream with you. Since you are a teacher, you will be of great help so that our children will succeed in their studies.

– I will try. But you have not forgotten that we want equality.

– Yes. And then?

– We therefore want all the young ones to be successful in their studies. And we shall do our very best to succeed!... or rather. At that moment – there, our children will have the same chances as the others to be plumbers, architects, cowherds, swineherds...

– Ah no! not a cowherd or a swineherd! My children will not smell of manure, not any more of cow pot, besides, not even fish or grub. And they will not have big

podgy hands filthy with dirty oil all callous like the skin of a crocodile. No, my children will be “well to do.”

– Ah! Comrade! Tell me that I am dreaming.

– I know! All you are going to tell me, I know it. It is not worthwhile starting it...

We were, at that time, communists both of us. Still another stroke of luck, no?

– Jeanne, you know the meaning of “freeing humanity”: in the communist world all men can develop the gifts which, today be dormant in it. Everyone will be sufficiently educated to understand what is happening on earth. Anybody can be president, Member of Parliament, mayor, general...

– There will be no wars...

– Ah! That is true... Well... In any case it will no longer be like in our foolish epoch, where we spoilt millions and millions of talents...

– Mother Lopin will no longer have to wear out her back doing housework when she becomes a dance star. Father Magloire will no longer earn his living gathering up old rags when he is the pilot of a spaceship...

– It is easy to caricature. Perhaps their children will know that life.

– And ours? They will do the housework and gather up old rags. Fortunately, it is not for tomorrow.

– If I understand well, you want all men to be equal below us. Here is a problem... Besides, even if the Grand Evening does not come soon, the ideal of secular schooling, is that all the children succeed in their studies, and we will end by getting there. Don't you wish so?

– Yes. In the meantime, I shall strive so that our children will have a good education. You also, surely?

– Yes, obviously...

– As for the others they only have to do likewise. If they expect to find it readily cooked in their plate, so much the worse for them.

– Nevertheless it is necessary to help them.

– Certainly.

– At last, we agreed. Kiss me, dear.

- Michel! There is something else which is worrying me. You know that my father died in a concentration camp. Other relatives, also died in the same way, and even friends of the family. When I was young, I believed that it was normal to live in fear.
- And, before, there had been the carnage of 14/18.
- Yes! I would not want my children to die in a war, I cannot take it.
- And if you fear car accidents, what will you do? You will compel our children to go about in an ox cart? Life is full of risks: you accept it or die.
- Words, that’s all. Hold on, imagine... Oh! It is too hard! If one comes to tell me that my twenty-year-old son has died. You cannot know! It is impossible to think of that horror. There are no words. If I must imagine that? I will vomit the whole world. Oh no! I don’t want any children!
- Let us see, my dear... As you said, they are only words... Have you surely already chosen plenty of names?
- Wait a little, please... Let me get back to myself.
- Excuse me, dear. Let’s go for a stroll in the mountains if you want.
- It is too late. Besides, I feel better... Michel dear, there is still another thing.
- Yes?
- Sometimes it seems to me that I cannot have children...
- Have you seen a doctor?
- No! I am not talking of that inability. I am thinking of my character. It happens to me often that I do things I do not understand. Afterwards I reproach myself, but it is too late.
- Often the subconscious commands you: it is normal. Or rather your will is perhaps weak: everybody knows that.
- No, it is about more serious things.
- I will understand it if you tell me what it is all about.
- I am going to try. You see, it is not weakness, much less in the ordinary way because, I have a surplus of will: so when the normal people have one, I have many.
- Is it a split personality?
- But no! Let me continue, please. You see in this moment I want children, I want them very badly; ah well, it is possible that tomorrow, I will not want them, with the same strength.

- Do you keep changing, inconstant?
- Oh? Something similar. For example, I always agree with the last person who has spoken. I never manage to keep my promises. But I feel bad about it, you know... Oh! I fear for our children... You will help me, Michel? Don't you? Will you help me, say?
- Certainly, Jeanne. We will find a way to get to the bottom of it.

Do I have to tell you that I took advantage of it, rather cowardly, to hug her in my arms? What happened next is none of your business: let us draw the curtains...

The sky has become clear again. Jeanne told me again.

- Will you give me beautiful children, say?
- Yes, they will be beautiful like you.
- Beautiful like us. And intelligent, no?
- Intelligent also, and everything and all... Oh! I adore the babies. They are so cute, with their rose bottoms, I could devour them with kisses.
- I prefer them grown up... And kiss their face! It is very good like that: we will take it in turns.
- Oh my God!
- What else? What are you scheming with that God in whom you never believed?
- Shall we hope that you won't spoil them?
- Spoil out children? With the means that we have, that surprises me.
- So much the better Michel! Don't you think that you would be a little too overconfident?
- I don't believe. Each time that one of our children will seem to take a bad turn, we will find the means to set him right.

If you judge me, I will plead not guilty: in that which remained of my folly as a spoilt child, I truly believed that my intelligence would bring me the solution to Jeanne's suffering as well as our pains.

In fact, she had gone into depth much further than my essential question: “How to make children succeed?” I loved her even more for it. For me, in spite of everything, they were only ideas: for her they were nearly real, nourished by her body, her little loved ones already curled down in her flesh. Don’t be surprised: when we were bent on this problem, Jeanne abandoned all the loving strategy. Besides she never lied to me on that subject.

Another vital question for our love: the ideology. Just as one can mate with all his might a parrot and a salamander, one cannot marry a fundamentalist Muslim with an atheist feminist. In this regard, I have an anecdote.

Odette, one of our friends, had suckled communism with her breast milk after the 39-45 War, when the Red Star of Moscow was like the Bethlehem star that guided the Three Kings to the baby Jesus in his crib. Since then, the French Communist Party, the “Party,” had declined continuously... nevertheless, Odette still clung to her faith. One day, I had the stupid idea of trying to convince her to join those seeking a different path. She jumped up, grabbed her things from the couch, gave me a murderous look and left, slamming the door behind her. A few days later, because she really was a good girl, she was willing to accept my apologies. She explained to me: “When you attack the Party, I feel tingles all over my body, as if all of my hair stood up suddenly, ready to go. Do you understand?”

What is an ideology?

Mômmanh has created us to fulfil her project, which is also ours: it is necessary to develop the existence as distant as possible in space and time. To this end, we need to establish a plan: for this purpose, Mômmanh has given us a

brain that can see far, far away. Afterwards, also thanks to Mômmanh, we have hands with which we can put this plan into action.

As frail and defenceless newborns, we are propelled into this mysterious universe, with nothing more than our insatiable appetite for existence. Babies, themselves, rely completely on their parents. The first men, almost as defenceless, took what little they were able to take from nature. Then, to calm their anxiety in this world that is so mysterious and full of danger, they invented the "Spirits": it was the best thing they could find to replace their parents.

Let us put ourselves in the place of these early humans. Just to live our life in our small cabin and its surroundings, we must keep in mind a map of the area; we must discover the places where there are animals that can be hunted, where there are paths and edible plants, which beings can harm us and which can help us and which can heal our diseases; we must learn when winter comes and when spring comes, in what season the young shoots come out and when to harvest... in short, we must know our universe. At the same time, we must also understand it in order to satisfy our thirst for existence. How is a child made? What makes plants grow? What causes disease? What goes on in the head of wild beasts?

To know and to understand: this dual map of our clan's territory is already complex, but when

it needs to be extended to cover the obscure infinite around us, it becomes insurmountable.

And when, additionally, we must involve a certain number of our companions, because it is obvious that we will never get there alone, it is almost a nightmare.

This becomes the basis for an ideology. Knowing our environment up to its extreme boundaries, or rather thinking that we know it, we see that it is possible to hope.

Really not much, in this time of early mankind.

So, like the little children that we still are, we seek to make a good life for ourselves whilst rummaging through our environment. We soon discover that there are things that we do not understand. How are babies made? What causes disease? Where does the sun go at night? Who lights up the stars? What happens to the spirit of a dead person?

Because we really want to continue to understand the universe, we must now look into the invisible, i.e. into the dark. So, we create the most plausible hypotheses to guide our thinking. "Diseases are created by evil spirits." "The sun, at night, sinks into a big hole in the earth. It travels all night and comes out in the morning in the east, through another hole." And we try to

create a good life for ourselves, eternal if possible, based on these assumptions.

Why does ideology

rest on the explanation of the universe?

Because ideology must assure us of our existence in the present, past and future, because it must enable us to overcome DEATH, it must have solid foundations: the pillars are useless if they are planted in the fog and the shifting sands, we need our knowledge about the universe to be as perfect as possible.

Karl Marx expressed this basic approach as follows: "It is necessary to understand the world in order to change it."

To understand our environment, natural explanations and the experimental method (a broken bone repairs itself if it is immobilised for a long period of time) have always given us the most reliable answers. But the first men knew almost nothing of our monumental modern science.

Yet they needed answers to satisfy their unbearable anguish.

So they imagined the "Spirits": at the time this was the most rational among all possible explanations about the universe, in these prehistoric years that are lost in the far distance, thousands and thousands of years before us. They created animism. What else could they do?

"Who gives life to all living beings?"

The explanation they found seemed completely plausible:

"Just as man is moved by his spirit, so are animals, and even plants have a spirit."

This eventually led to the invention of prayers, offerings, sacrifices, witchcraft, the immortality of the soul, funeral rites, ghosts, etc. because it was not enough to understand the world to guarantee his daily life, it was also vital to satisfy the existential need for immortality.

How is it that, usually without ever meeting each other, most of the earth's peoples have invented animism?

Because at the time it was the best answer to their often unbearable existential angst.

When the advance of natural explanation rendered animism irrational, men invented polytheism. The latter had soon to give way to monotheism, however with difficulty. And now, the latter tries hard to resist the onslaught of materialism, that is to say the explanation of the world by way of the natural laws only.

This materialism together with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights constitutes the dominant ideology on a worldwide scale. Even though it dispenses with gods, it can not dispense with beliefs. What ideology could? Here, for example, is the dogma that my theory of the Struggle for Existence contests: "There is no trace of spirit in matter; it only obeys the laws of physics and chemistry. During evolution, it was more and more complex physico-chemical combinations that created the life from which spirit eventually emerged." When he believes to be holding the proof of long distance communications between the molecules, Doctor Jacques Benveniste clashes against this same dogma.

As a result, a lot of scientists are looking for "the" very complex algorithm(s) that enable

them to create an artificial soul, in the same way that one develops a computer program. But if, in its biological implications, my Theory of the Struggle for Existence is right, then they are the ones that are wrong: physico-chemical reactions are not enough to generate life or, much less, the spirit: the need for existence must also be there together with its millennial memory, as installed in man.

But this is another story. Let's go back to the subject of ideology

Its pillars are placed in the best reinforced concrete: after all the effort it took, we are not going to rebuild them every day. Our cathedral is finally completed: it must not move for centuries and centuries. Its pillars are now sacred: these are the articles of faith, dogmas. Often those that question them are even killed: cursed infidels, cursed apostates, the henchmen of the devil, lackeys of imperialism etc.

Dogmas are not recognized as such: they are The Truth. "Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life." (The Bible. John 14.6) That helps us a lot when we must at all costs put this faith into practice, even sacrifice our lives so that the sacred cause triumphs.

The evolution of belief through the ages is reflected in the way the mad were treated.

Long ago, it was believed that they were inhabited by a benevolent spirit and they were honoured as such, up to the point that they were asked to tell the future or to heal the sick. Or, on the contrary, it was thought that they were possessed by an evil spirit. Later, it was not much better because they were considered to be possessed by the Devil himself; they were therefore tormented to bring out the devil and sometimes even burned as witches. Over the millennia and centuries, it has hardly changed; the Sun King had them locked up; then they were treated with hot water, cold water, purging, bloodletting, the straitjacket, electricity, drugs, the couch, etc. Meanwhile, the Nazis executed them.

And the cultural evolution continues, of course. By correcting each error with another mistake, we hope that we will gradually get to the truth.

A philosopher that enters an ideology leaves his philosophy at the door. Because philosophy questions everything, including the ideological "Truth." In churches, whether religious or atheists, philosophers are replaced by the guardians of the faith, theologians and other ideologues.

This is probably due to Mômmanh, who has predisposed us to seek and receive faith.

Most often, the temples of antiquity were representations of the universe with the heavens, the earth, the underworld, the visible and the invisible, the natural and the supernatural. Our churches are the same. This is a reflection of the ideology that is our everlasting home, not as a tomb but as a vessel that travels through space and time, in the present, past and future.

Ideology is our ship on the ocean of eternity. If we leave, we become a man overboard that will disappear forever, forever leaving the warm safety of the ship and all of his companions. That is why so many people cling to their faith and deny the evidence against it. For them to attempt the great leap, they need at least a lifeline and the hope of quickly reaching a stronger vessel.

Can we live without ideology? Live, perhaps; exist, surely not. That is why each of us has one in his head.

All the men who are associated with this plan will increase our chances of success, and vice versa. Those who do are our brethren; the others, if they do not do it already, could one day oppose our ideology: they are, at the very least, our potential enemies. It is primarily for this reason that over time the religions have evolved from the local to the universal.

Let me explain myself.

The first animists believed in the spirits of their small territory, the jaguar for some, the bear for others, when it was not the cow, crocodile, sun, fire, and all the holy places, without forgetting the spirits of ancestors. As knowledge was gained and as their domain expanded to take in the neighbouring tribes, which were sometimes hostile, as the victorious warriors trampled on their totem poles and masks, this first animism was discredited and gradually developed into polytheism: the Spirits were separated from nature, where we no longer saw them, and they became gods. Thousands of years later we arrived at the age of empires and when invincible armies crushed them the local religions showed their helplessness, and from the heaps of corpses came the need for a universal religion, in the hope of sealing an alliance between all the men in the world. And so Buddhism, Taoism, Christianity, etc. were born.

But let's go back to the earliest men who were in the situation of a newborn: they came to the world with a huge appetite for existence and they had almost no means to satisfy it. In this situation, babies rely entirely on their parents. Therefore, instead of parents, early humans invented their ideology, probably animism. In this way, the spirits became their mothers and fathers and for tens of thousands of years our ancestors felt too weak to venture out of their protection. To be quite sure of not going astray, to the golden rule of "respect for religion" they added another: "Respect for tradition": "progress"

encountered such resistance that it took centuries, except in the field of war.

You can see for yourself how the gods took the place of the spirits before being replaced themselves by a single, universal god. But they were still religions - the protectors of man were still in the supernatural realm.

It is only since the Enlightenment that we dared to leave this "cocoon" and to venture out alone on earth. Alone, without the advice or protection of the gods.

Today, February 11th, 2016, these ideologies without gods have disappointed a growing number of earthlings. A lot of them are trying to recreate, by fair means or foul, the cocoon of the old religions. May free men find good reasons to hope.

In a family the beliefs are as important as children, sometimes even more. The gods of the past, from time to time, sold their assistance to men in exchange for the sacrifice of their beloved daughters and sons. On nearly all over the world, we have stopped that atrocious deal concluded with fantasies and we have transformed most of the gods in myths which haunt our museums, but modern ideologies often demand that sometimes one sacrifices his children, to war for example, or denounce his son who has become a dangerous criminal.

To look for love for those whose majority of beliefs are conflicting? Impossible. At least insofar as these beliefs are very important to those involved. Hold on, here is the story on this subject.

A young woman had decided to make love to a Nazi admirer: because he was handsome, because he was intelligent, because he was an artist... because she liked every aspect of his character except his execrable ideology. She realised that she could not come when he was well on the way of reaching an orgasm. Outraged at the idea of giving him such a present, she told him: "Do you know that I am a Jew?" He broke off. "Yes, I am a filthy Jew. The Nazis gassed my parents and burnt their bodies in the flesh fired boiler? And what's more, did you know that I am a communist? When the time comes, we shall kill the hideous beast. You, as well, we shall crush you like a cockroach." He smiled: "I met your mother this morning." then he took his pleasure all alone in an inert frigid body. Because Mômmanh has made women like this: a woman cannot have an orgasm if there is no love. (I will tell you later what I mean by that.)

Ah well, on this mined ground of beliefs, once again fortune smiles at us. I did not have to undertake the arduous task to convert Jeanne. How lucky I was! Ah but! Like myself, that magnificent flower of the suburb was "fighting" to render the world better and make out of the world the "paradise of workers." She knew how to proceed just as much as I did: one only had to follow the "Party" directives protesting from time to time – the rebellious French spirit obliges! – against such or such an error which will take some time to be corrected thanks to the "Democratic Centrism" and the vigilance of the "Comrades." Ah! The good times, the marvellous era when our spirits, up till then blind, opened themselves dumbfounded, on the "Radiant Future."

To exploit us better, to make us kill one another in their wars "to crunch us better, my child!" the dominant classes had always known how to conceal the truth, but this was all over. Like me, surely, Jeanne read "Humanity: the Newspaper which said the Truth." It is true that we did not read the same pages: I studied the articles concerning the situation on the "front for the struggles of classes" and the strategy to adapt; most frequently Jeanne contented herself with the crosswords. In any case, we were both well informed and it was useless trying to deceive us.

Although our own standard of living has noticeably improved and there was no unemployment, France was the country on the way to impoverishment. – Yes, yes! It was written in the “Human,” for those who could read.

So our looks moved to pity looked towards the happy “Soviet Countries,” the paradise that was being built where thanks to the enlightened government of the communist party, everything was more successful than elsewhere: the kolkhoz, the tractors, the lorries, the dams, the industrial complexes...were gigantic, the cows were fatter and gave more good milk so that the happy children of paradise could be more beautiful still, the perfectly well-formed athletes were the best in the world, the glorious Red Army was invincible...

The summer evening after the opulent harvests of the blond ears of corn, the young and beautiful kolkhoziene labourers in good shape at the end of their working day put on their traditional costumes so rich in colours, then they danced and sang till the late hours of the sleepless night, their sometimes devilish music, sometimes tender and languorous, the popular music, surely the most beautiful in the world.

The U.S.A. remained the principal “reactionary” force which was delaying the triumph of communism and the happiness of humanity all over the world. But the hot-headed Khrouchchev had just launched a challenge to the grand Yankee puppet: in some year – ten or twenty, I do not know how much – the paradise of the workers would have surpassed the American giant in every field.

The “Dictator of the Proletariat” was opening the doors to freedom: it was the real democracy while that of the liberal countries, ours, was false. There, I found it hard to believe: that resembled too much to the “Mystery of the Holy Trinity” of the Christians: one had to accept the absurd. He who followed scrupulously the directives of the Central Committee was a free man whereas an individual of my type wasn't: I had the tendency to think only with my head, then, try to share my convictions, which were too frequently out of the “Party Line.”

A section secretary, irritated, once told me: “It is necessary to shoot all the intellectuals!” It was precisely during a little trip to the soviet paradise. It is true that the comrade was upset by the general mediocrity which we discovered, similar to a great upsurge of inedible mushrooms; it is true that he was dumbfounded because a young and beautiful soviet comrade, our guide at Bakou, in Azerbaidjan, was wooing him in the hope of gaining a ticket for the capitalist French hell; it is true that in the group we were two or three intellectuals who asked un reasonable questions, going as far as to call into question the dogmas; it is true at last that we had drank a lot.

Nevertheless, an acid idea wedged itself in the corner of my mind: “In the marvellous Country of the Soviets, would my place be at the gulag?”

But when I had met Jeanne, fifteen years earlier, our faith was still roughly intact. Should total freedom follow the advent of the communist society, the ultimate stage in humanity’s painful history, after that period of purgatory where the “shock workers” were building the socialist economy, protected by the “dictatorship of the proletariat.” That was the earthly paradise to conquer. There would no longer be even the state! You will realise! Even though there still, I had my doubts, my faith had its roots hooked to the three matrix of the future, to the three hopes that swelled my heart: equality for all men, the universal peace, and the fortune for all the world.

One day, I saw my father, a small peasant, grovel himself in front of “Our Master,” Mr The Owner of the farm; he even gave him the most beautiful pears of the garden, those which I hoped to treat myself with. In the world which the comrades were going to build; that did not happen: the land belonged to those who worked it, the equality would no longer be but a word; none would have to kneel down, each one would have his seat at the banquet of existence.

You have noticed those people, our fellow creatures in spite of everything, settled down on the front box seats of the grand theatre, those people, who even when there are free seats, trample on our fingers when they try to climb the social ladder. In communist language, this cohort of enemies of the people, have a name: they are the dominating classes, the responsible for human destitution. Ah well, in the new world,

there would be no more talents, even geniuses, still-born, stopped at the bud, as much by the will of the dominant classes as by the lack of teaching, of money, of time... Above all on earth millions of creatures would arise who, from their audacity, would transport the entire humanity in a marvellous dream: the dream which she followed after the first stumbling steps in the hostile obscurity and which so often had taken a nightmarish turn, that old dream finally became a triumphant march.

We live a transitory period, but the end of History was near. Because, according to the prophet Karl Marx, History was only the Struggle of the Classes with all its sudden new developments: the free men against the slaves, lords against churls, capitalists against proletariats... But the dominant classes knew their last misfortune: capitalism. Soon, thanks to communists, the whole world would be delivered from the yoke of capitalism; then, one after the other, the liberated countries would build a socialist economy, this thanks to the dictatorship of the proletariat which will be merciless towards the saboteurs, those vile flunkeys of the nasty capitalists. Those true democracies, not the false ones like ours, the popular democracies subjected to the enlightened dictatorship of the proletariat would give birth to the communist society. Then, the “Struggle of the Classes” known also as History would come to an end like a car which breaks down when there is no petrol, because there will not be any more classes. In that world from now on without “History” a new man would rule definitely wise and good.

My friend, you know that “the happy people don’t have any history.”

No more brigands no more crooks; the rare conflicts will be settled by means of wisdom: the howling pains of the tortured bodies, the incurable pains of the dead who parted prematurely, the despair of those who look to start a new life amid the fields of ruins, all those horrors will be only terrible memories of a past history. There will be no state again longer, imagine! Ah yes, since the state serves only to assure the domination of a class, one would no longer need it. The sky will be often blue, the earth will be our garden, all the world will be beautiful and will remain young for a long time, all the world will be entitled to a refined cuisine, to the emotion of arts, to

the pleasure of the mountains and the sea, to horse-riding, and yachting... Everybody will be rich! And what else still?

What remains of these loves?

What has caused the fall of communism in the Soviet bloc?

So, an ideology rests on the explanation of the universe. And it is always false, given the inadequacy of our knowledge. She is always wrong and however its articles of faith must be unchangeable. How the heck break the deadlock?

Quite simple: through freedom. When free, men can search for other ways. Some won't fail to use that permission and from time to time, one of them will find a way to improve the ideology.

Now, the communists did not want this "bourgeois freedom" because, like many others before them, they believed to hold the definite "truth." In fact, they believed to hold the scientific explanation of history, what they called "historic materialism." That science was not debatable, but to be put into practice. It was the good medicine for the pains of the people and one had to leave the good doctors do their work. That was what led to the dictatorship of the communist party.

We can say that the communist ideology was a prison for the mind, just like the Church was for a long time and that silenced Giordano Bruno, Savonarola, Galileo and many others. We will come back to this matter later. Let's just say that it was a closed ideology. To open it and allow it to evolve, it would have needed two elements: freedom and the opportunity for party ideologues to question the dogmas without undermining them unnecessarily, as the Chinese communists have managed to do through their pragmatism.

To make things worse for soviet communists, the orthodox historic materialism teaches that the socialist economy is the best when it has produced only generalised mediocrity, if not poverty.

The liberal economy rests heavily on the selfishness and the socialist economy claims to be altruistic. Knowing the big love of man for his ego, you know why capitalism triumphs. In a capitalist country, a company owner, normally makes his fortune by making his employees produce maximum wealth. Like this, by working for his dear "Myself," he contributes to the enrichment of the country. In a communist country, a company owner usually makes his fortune by pleasing the rulers, by not vexing his employees and by embezzling the wealth of the state. Thus even he working for his dear "Myself," he contributed too often to the impoverishment of his country.

I must admit despite everything that the socialist economy has sometimes produced

satisfactory results, which relaunched all of the hopes placed in it. Looking more closely, I can see that there were certain short periods of time when patriotism was essential for the survival of the nation. Thus the Soviets worked very hard during the Second World War, when they fought virtually alone against the Nazi army: women worked eighteen hour days at the factory. And, after the liberation, when it was time to build a better world on the ruins of the old, the people of the communist countries still made great efforts. Then, gradually, as the danger receded, man's favourite characteristic, selfishness, showed that its time had come. And this is why all of the socialist countries sank into widespread mediocrity, with the large-scale production of junk and scrap of all kinds.

In a communist dictatorship, the economy was not the only thing that suffered. Still on account of his foul preference for the "Myself-Here-Now," the men in power ended up by giving way to the temptation of attributing to themselves all sorts of privileges. It is because it is necessary to establish an opposition.

Absence of freedom, absence of opposition, absence of liberalism in economy: here are the three principal causes of communist failures.

So much needless suffering for some errors!

"This is rather abstract, practically unreal, you are saying.

- well, rack one's brains, now that you know the price of the error. When one governs the men irrespective of how he does it, one obviously obtains nothing. What happened to the people that our generous actions helped to liberate? All those people of the Soviet Empire? And the Afghans? And those of ex-Yugoslavia? Are those happier than those of the Chinese empire who still "groan" under the communist yoke? What is your share of responsibility in their hardship?"

Isn't it high time to make an effort to understand history in order to try perhaps to control that dangerous wild horse?

Today it is evident: the framework of the big Moscow circus was shoddy. The top has collapsed, a sorry shroud for the dead ones of the gulag and the tortures, awaiting the judgement of history. And now that the country of the Soviets had fallen apart on its own, without anybody touching it, like a gigantic cheese soufflé, what remains of the marvellous project that has become a monstrous enterprise?

And those comrades whom (Jeanne and I) have loved so much, those who have found themselves unsuspected resources, who have given all their time, their energy, their love, as well as their life? In the communist epic, those brave men will they become damned in History?

Certainly not! They will carry the burden of their errors, but they will carry also the merit for having tried. In wanting to construct a world for the future, they have set the house on fire. During that time, some of their brothers devoted themselves exclusively to making their wealth work for them.

Do those who at the battle of Stalingrad have saved us from the Nazi hell, deserve to be condemned to hell in our memories?

Honour those who rose up to save us from the quicksand. By trying we will certainly succeed.

And what about China in this story? China, this giant that seems determined to become the world's greatest power, this empire that was born at the same time as the Roman Empire but that is still standing, more bravely than ever, is still run by the Communist Party. Whilst the Soviet Union was trying to break the deadlock by introducing democratic freedoms amongst people that did not know how to use them, thus speeding toward chaos, China adopted the market economy whilst trying to control it with an iron fist. This is what it calls a "socialist market economy." It has managed to pull off a remarkable economic take-off. Is its Communist Party, after abandoning the socialist economy and many other dogmas, still Marxist? By that, I mean that I wonder if it continues to seek a materialist and scientific explanation of history so that the Chinese can become capable of governing themselves. Is it heading towards the type of enlightened and open ideology that I call for with all my strength in this book? I can only hope that this is the case.

Why does an ideology need to be open?

I think that China has found the tools to bring communism out of the deadlock that it had fallen into in its ancient culture. I see two old traditions at work: the open ideology, which I advocated, and good old Chinese pragmatism. Regarding the first, the cult of the emperor has always accommodated other ideologies such as

Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism whilst our Christianity was hermetically sealed. Regarding the second, it is perfectly illustrated by Deng Xiaoping re-introducing the market economy: "It doesn't matter whether a cat is white or black, as long as it catches mice."

An open ideology has two qualities: tolerance and the opportunity to question it.

Catholicism and the type of communism that has developed here are two ideologies which were very intolerant when they were in power, and there is no evidence they have changed. They did not put up with any competitors, which they persecuted, sometimes with great cruelty; moreover: "What harm could be done by rooting out evil?" In doing so, they are prohibited from changing by the whip of criticism, thus depriving themselves of the improvements that other people's knowledge could bring them. But what ideology has a definitive knowledge of reality? They were therefore locked in the prison of their convictions, and their people with them.

Is this the price to pay for making dogmas solid? No, on the contrary, it's foolish. It is foolish to deny the progress that new knowledge can bring. Thus, we have made human sacrifices, which are as useless as they are cruel, for millennia. What makes it even more foolish is that it is a straitjacket for the mind that is not allowed to venture off the sacred trail, precisely

where the sources of the most fruitful discoveries are to be found.

And I will not speak of the joy of explorers!

The second quality of the open ideology is the ability to question it. But how can this be developed without undermining the pillars of faith, the sacred dogmas. Because, remember, no more than a man can rebuild their house every day, can they continuously question their faith; and this is all the more true since, apart from philosophers, most people have multiple obligations that leave them little time to think.

How can this dilemma be resolved?

Quite simply. That people quietly go about their business and keep the simple faith. Meanwhile, intellectuals and especially philosophers explore the universe in search of new knowledge; they are free to venture outside of the boundaries established by dogma.

Let's go back to that epoch bursting with hope. Oh yes! I was a communist and so was Jeanne, my radiant flower of the red suburbs. Wasn't it marvellous?

We were for so different reasons, but Jeanne, subtle fly, was careful not to let me know. She did not want to sacrifice her whole life to the "Party" anymore than I did. Both of us, while waiting for the workers' kingdom to come, wanted to share the pleasure which our capitalist society was offering already and fit into its promises which seemed within arm's reach: earn money, travel, build our house... Besides,

Jeanne had heard, well beneath my words of a fanatic activist, that I was a potential turncoat and she accepted it. Didn't we agree on the essentials, that is, on the equality of men, the need to keep wide open the mind, the research of natural explanations for everything. It was enough. Finally, nearly.

I was a flying seed, swept off the compost that had nourished it, in search of new soil in which to plant its life. Born in the heart of a small Catholic peasant family, educated by the school of the Republic, I was deeply attached to the ideal of equality. I had arrived at the Communist Party because the explanation of the world according to Marx had fascinated me. In particular, he believed to have made a science of history reliable enough to draw practical applications out of it: guiding towards a definite goal humanity towards a radiant future and I liked that a lot.

“Understand the world to transform it,” had said Marx. See how it complied with my obsessive desire: “Understand the world to master it.”

The will to understand: when she hasn't got like me a neurotic character, here is what characterises the intellectuals. Nothing surprising so if, the following day of the Second World War, there were thousands like me, the historians in front, who became more or less communists. After, the former after the others, nearly all withdrew, often on tiptoes, like me.

But I was still far from this disruption.

Jeanne, she was still living on her native soil and it continued to nourish her: I have already told you, she was a flower of the “Red Suburb.”

The alleged scientific history, materialism at times dialectic and historic, did not interest her. She had been breast-fed on communism. Besides, she had become attached to it through all the martyrs of the family, the heroes of the Résistance, her father above all, a victim of the decree “Night and Fog,” whose body as well as the memory of the painful day which followed his arrest, had deliberately been lost in the Nazi hell. “Nacht und Nebel”: that sounds very nicely for those who do not know.

So, she came from the “working class,” and I, from that of the poor peasants. We were genuine children of the proletariat, we did not belong to the capitalist class and its flunkies. Well-born, free from stubborn vices which the bourgeoisie education instils in their own children rendering their souls black in the new world which we help to build up, we belonged to the new nobility, the ones which, in principle, should exercise the “dictatorship of the proletariat.” We were the incarnation of a grand monument in Moscow which we revered, at the time, as one of the most beautiful in the world: “The Worker and the Kolkhozeau.” We fulfilled the union of the sickle and the hammer.

However, our capital of nobility was already seriously chipped off: of good birth, certainly, we had just entered into the bastard category of civil servants, and among the least honourable, too, those who did not work with their hands. We did no longer have the right to be called workers. To aggravate our case, we had chosen to be intellectuals, suspects prone to heresy. But we were not conscious of that discrimination, that had just been sketched, and we were singing at the top of our lungs:

“Stand up my blonde, let’s sing in the wind,
Stand up my friends!
It is going towards the rising sun,
Our country.”

The worker and the Kolkhozian, the sickle and the hammer: the hammer can serve to forge the sickle. I hadn’t thought about it yet. Ah well, I did not take long to discover it.

I have already told you: at that period of casting off of our love, our two experiences appeared made to complement one another like two halves of an extremely complicated puzzle. Our harmony seemed so perfect that I was nearly certain of having found the only woman I could love in the whole world, the one I had been looking for a long time. The “Unique” one amidst two billion others, the “Woman of my Life.” Ah but! How lucky!

What are the conditions of a great love?

There are plenty of us who feel the illusory certainty of having finally met the "Unique." It is probably a trick, another one, which Mômmanh plays on us. She must have inscribed this in our genetic code: "If you meet a being of the opposite sex which you like immensely, you will feel for him from now on an attachment as strong as for your father and mother." Now, aren't father and mother quite unique in this world? No?

A long time ago, in her memory, Mômmanh discovered the benefits of sexual reproduction. She let it have a place of honour, very near to her, endowing it plentifully with both desire and pleasure at the same time.

Recently, in her human memory, Mômmanh realised that even when it has nothing to do with reproduction, love is beneficial. So, she installed it in an ideal position and endowed it as if it were the dearest of her children. She gives the most beautiful gifts to those lovers whose existential qualities complement each other.

What does that mean?

Among human beings in which they recognise their sexual complement, humans look for the one that will enrich their existence the most. For example, they can look for strength, beauty, intelligence, wealth, power, health... and more! And more!

But, let's suppose that the ideal being possesses these qualities without attaching any importance to them. Let's suppose even, for example, that they are rich and that money disgusts them: they will soon lose their fortune. Conversely, if money is a value for them, they will do anything to gain as much as possible. We can say the same thing about all of the qualities of the beloved. If they do not care, if they are not supported by values, then they could leave at any time.

They must have, in the first place, the same values. Otherwise, their alliance will be as temporary as the Americans and the Taliban against the common Soviet enemy.

The moral values come first, but there are also others. So one couple might give a lot of importance to culture and another to horse breeding. These other values, even when they take the form of passions, must remain secondary in the name of morality, but this is not always the case.

Assuming this is to be the case, it is not necessary that lovers have the same tastes. If

both of them adore arts, for example, one can love the baroque and the other the classical style, one painting and the other music, the important thing being to help and complement each other as best as they can. If they both appreciate the good cuisine, one can like preparing the dishes and the other washing the dishes, one can love jam and the other cheese. It is necessary therefore that, in their preferred roles, they complement each other harmoniously, the way Mômmanh has conceived them: one nourishes the future baby in her womb, the other protects them.

And this is not all. Having agreed on their existential desires, values and tastes, they must also provide the resources to achieve these desires, otherwise they will remain just painful dreams. Candidates for love must possess all of the qualities that it takes for this: beauty, intelligence, strength, courage, culture, etc. This should not be the first condition, but it is nevertheless the most important.

Love is like a trade. No! Not of the type "I'm selling my ass." A sort of exchange where, rather than swap, one shares essential assets. Each shows to the other what they have brought and the two candidates negotiate for a long time: "It is not enough. - I don't like this at all. - Add this and that thing..." When each one is satisfied of the deal, love, which by then has gone to their heads to the point of overwhelming them, begins to strengthen the ties forged between the two. Soon

enough these ties will become too strong that it will be very difficult and painful to break them.

So, the time has come to proceed to the first signature of the contract. For practical purposes, it is better to do that in a good bed. It is there where Mômmanh gives her present, when the lovers feel an outburst of joy. A spray of joyous sparks is produced inside them. It goes reaching for the stars. They are under the impression that they are delivered from their wretched "Myself," melted one into the other at first, then together into the moving universe. Can they have joined Mômmanh? Perhaps have they found a window on which Buddhists call "nirvana"?

Love is a business, we have said, but it is a very special trade. It is not carried out with money as you can not buy a feeling, especially the feeling of love. Still, money is taken into account in the love market: those that have it have another quality to add to their credit.

The love fair is in full swing in spring and it lasts throughout the year.

At the love fair, men are looking for a goddess. She must have beauty that will illuminate his path, she must also be sexy and enjoy making love, she must embody work, intelligence, inspiration, motherhood, she must, she must, she must, etc. It is his turn now. At the love fair, the woman is looking for the God that will fulfil

all of her desires tirelessly, nothing less. You know that certain qualities are required by everyone: beauty, knowledge, courage, humour, etc.

But there is no god or goddess at the love fair, that does not exist. So the customers will simply look for the best they can find, which display the best existential qualities. A young woman that is beautiful, rich, intelligent, active and cheerful will be in high demand. From her multitude of suitors, she will choose a young man that is handsome, rich, strong and inspired, that knows how to banish sadness with humour. And the others will continue to sigh if they wish. The most beautiful people will pair up with the beautiful people and the pathetic ones will just have to find their happiness with those that are left behind. That is what they usually do.

However, to increase their chances of pairing up with a beautiful partner, they may also try to acquire the skills that they lack. This is also what most people do. They understand that if you ask for a lot in love, you must also give a lot. And in what one offers the beloved, it is necessary that the concern to please the other outshines the concern of himself.

All of this brings us to the obvious fact that you already know, of course: to have any chance of achieving the love of your dreams, you must surpass yourself time and again. Otherwise, you will have to make do with the leftovers that nobody else wanted. This is the most important

rule of the strategy of love, which is so pervasive that I forgot to mention it at the beginning.

This is how love elevates men.

At the love fair, then, nobody has found the carnal divinity of their dreams. Amongst the limited choices that exist, everyone must make do with what they are capable of paying for in the currency of love. Everyone should feel frustrated, but this is not so because the feeling of love works miracles.

Why is the pleasure of love inscribed in our heredity?
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To increase my strength thanks to my other half, to elevate myself through the competition for love: here are the two perfect ways of enriching my existence. Mômmanh knows it, and she gives the best of her rewards to the best lovers.

What probability is there for two hearts in search of love to discover right away that they complement each other best? None! Even you are right in thinking that the negotiations of love will inevitably be prolonged and punctuated with crisis. Besides, very often, they are broken off prematurely. How could I believe that we were a chosen couple on the verge of joyfully climbing the heavens without even stopping to take our breath?

Ah well, can you bear to hear for a short while this symphony of the happy idiot?

I wanted to leave for Black Africa. Discover there another world, mysterious, new, simple, amidst an exotic and intact nature, an admiring grateful, friendly... world where I would bring progress in return for a very comfortable salary. Thanks to what I learned about the benefits of education and the equality of men, we were going to achieve remarkable feats in Africa. Ah but!

Ah well, Jeanne had the same intentions. She had waited to meet me to fulfil them. Many years later, I learned that she had never thought of expatriating before I talked to her about it.

We kept on knitting together our two existences: the agreement was perfect, the more delightful the more our beings melted into a happy couple.

I had been thinking of the big rustic house we were to buy later on, in the country, in the middle of a large park, not too far from the sea and close to a town steeped in history, a town of reasonable size so long as its centre of culture was well equipped with necessary facilities. There, our children would grow up harmoniously, nurtured by nature, culture and freedom. There, at our home, our friends would be warmly welcome thanks to my charming wife who would do the housework, shopping, and cooking. Our material comfort being thus assured, I would devote myself to filling the leisure of our guests generously: I would offer them games and excursions, I would start gripping discussions on the dialectic materialism, for example. I would direct the experience and together we would weave some unforgettable moments. The big house in the countryside will be the estate where our group, like the club of the Jacobins, would apply itself to rebuild a world of our liking.

Perhaps I would also do the washing, at times.

Ah well! You have guessed; of course Jeanne had been dreaming of such a country-house life without servants. It was marvellous!

Each stage of our mutual exploration this brought an unexpected revelation and the fusion of our beings went on, sparkling like a diamond, a delight, subtle, delicate, elegant, strong, perfumed, tonic...exquisite! in a word. Ah! The good times!

I am greedy. And I was hoping to become by dint of practice a refined and happy gourmet. The method was simple: for years on end, I would taste and compare the exquisite savours that I had not been able to treat myself to so far. By sheer determination, as time went by, the sensitivity of my taste buds grew sharper. And the moment would come when a beautiful culinary orchestration would carry me with emotion as far as the paradise of gourmets. Thus, when your soul has finally opened up to the music, a symphony of Mozart brings tears of joy to your eyes. Thus you will find yourself drifting in the starlit infinite ocean like the blue seaweed. No?

That put in current language: "To have one's head in the clouds."

However, I did not envisage at all learning to cook, which, in my mind nowadays, has been improper: to each his role! Heaven had just sent me the cook. Therefore I was expecting my love to prepare tasty dishes; surely, because of her diets she could hardly taste them, but I would tenderly praise them, and even in public. There you are! As regards this, a childhood memory has come back to me.

My grandfather was angry at my kind grandmother and, out of the window, he threw her evening meal into the mud of the yard: a bowlful of soup. Bread soaked into a lard stock served with garden vegetables: it was this same peasant soup which he used to eat twice a day; but, that evening, according to what he was saying was certainly an exaggeration, it was revolting. Well, that would not take place in my house.

That my loved cooked for me seemed as natural as breathing and, besides, Jeanne showed a lot of enthusiasm at this idea. There you are! She even knew how to

make my mouth water when describing her specialities, certainly delicious, but whose name I have forgotten, even though its mere mention makes my mouth water. Whereas I did not ask her for anything, she had promised to treat me to that dish which had to be doubly delicious, because prepared with love and on wood fire.

I hope to have the opportunity one day to taste it.

She shared all my tastes, approved all my plans. I loved her more and more until the moment when she told me: “But so, I’ll have him always breathing down my neck!” I don’t know why, despite all my love, that perspective gave me fits of anguish. I told Jeanne about it, and it made her laugh.

- Locked up for life, the two of us alone, in a bubble, warming ourselves by the fire of our love? But soon there would be no more fire to burn!
- Closely knit one to the other like Siamese twins? No, love must not be a disability.
- Oh! What horror! Tell me, Michel dear, you will never be far away from me will you? that I can call you if I need you.
- I will do anything possible, Jeanne dear.
- Tell me, Michel, you will not take advantage to go and chase girls, hey? You promise me that, Michel? Besides, if one of those silly geese tries to pick on my man, I will skin her!
- Then I shall have to bring you oranges in prison, my dear...

Petanque ranked first among the activities which I wanted to practise without Jeanne. At the time, that game was part of a series of leisure activities where the presence of a woman was inconvenient: the bar, the sports events, the tierce well sprayed, hunting and fishing... A “good” woman wasn’t supposed to drag in male company, and then she had quite enough to do at home. Therefore, from time to time, I would go for a game of petanque with friends as keen as I am. I would not fail to report to Jeanne honestly, the good throws which I would have succeeded or missed, as a marksman, as a checker or as a strategist: she would know how to appreciate.

I also contemplated going fishing. Like the intrepid hunter of the prehistoric time, I would brave the dangers of wild nature while, in the warm hut, my staunch companion would watch over our little ones. And I would bring home triumphantly a basketful of wriggling fish and throw it at her feet. – On second thoughts, it seemed to me I had better not throw it. And I would be happy therefore to just put it down. – and while my Jeanne would be busy gutting, washing, cooking the product of my fishing, our laboriously earned food, I would be gladdening her heart with the exploits worthy of Ulysses, letting her know how I, “Sly Fox,” thanks to an intimate knowledge of nature combined with a lot of slyness, I could have succeeded in bringing back big catches. And there once again, she would know how to appreciate it. Certainly she would not wear a collier of the teeth of my most beautiful pike, but she would at least recognise in me a fine fisherman and a friend of nature.

I also wanted to reserve a lot of time for my intellectual research as well as, every now and then, hours on end to walk cogitating reciprocally. You cannot have forgotten that I had made it my mission to do the world all over again?

While I would be occupied with my personal activities, Jeanne would be able to devote herself to hers. In the first place she would take care of her body and of her beauty, and I approved of it unconditionally. She would like this attend various places: the gym, the swimming pool, the hairdresser and the beauty salons, boutiques and shops... I discovered that that daily artistic creation is time-consuming and requires a lot of money: it is the price to pay for the evening star to go on shining and I accepted it with all my heart, on condition that she did not encroach on the time devoted to priority activities.

As for the rest, except, of course, for the occasional visit to a painting exhibition, Jeanne did not have other personal passions to satisfy. While I would be away, she would be watching over the brood and preparing a welcoming nest for my return.

At the holiday camp, remember, she was the administrator and I the driver. We spent a lot of time together, in the delivery van, on the mountain roads. Did the

grand scenery inspire us? It seems so. We talked a lot, making our existences flow one towards the other like two streams.

It is like this that some of the fields where our common tastes lay, were explored: the trips, the cinema, reading, music, lectures, life sciences, gardening... We did not risk boring each other! Ah yes, even gardening! If she did not like ruining her beautiful hands by working the land, at least she would appreciate the pretty flowers that I would be growing, and she would be delighted to peel the vegetables of the garden.

I told her about my family, my friends and she did the same: there still, our understanding was perfect. Our two existences fitted exactly, like two parts of a torn portrait. It is impossible: I should have known better and be suspicious. What do you think? I was literally ravished.

Yes. This is exactly how, from the top of my twenty five immature years, I was living Love. And now when the excess of maturity drags me to the grave, our love is no longer the awakening from a dream. Alas, time and again it had been threatened, scratched, brutally hurt, but it is still alive, standing firmly on its roots like a garden which one revived on the rubble of a battle field. There is a tomb in this garden. The price of our mistakes is heavy: we shall never finish paying it.

You know one must not go waging war without a good preparation: ah well, the same goes for love, especially when one must have children.

During those long breaks of those summer days we used to love climbing up to some high mountain pasture, on the edge of a forest, along a small mountain torrent where it formed a sparkling cascade. Here I took an icy shower that irritated all my muscles and compelled me to run a little on the slope: thus I satisfied the desire which overcame me and my boundless energy. Calmed down, in great shape, I had just stretched out in the sun, in the thick grass of the pasture, close to the marvellous peak of the flesh.

I learned from her pretty mouth from where only pearls and kisses could come out – Not lies in any case! – I learned that which I had been doubting a little but which nobody, besides my mother, went in to the trouble of telling me. I can well repeat it here where false modesty is out of place: I am very intelligent!

That is not evident and only a subtle mind can notice it. In fact, before speaking, I look for a long time for my words, so long that my interlocutors, run out of patience, express themselves instead of me or change the subject. You have understood that one rarely lets me speak. Under that deceitful guise, Jeanne had immediately been able to perceive my immense intellectual qualities and told me so straight forward, taking spontaneously in our couple the place which I judged as naturally hers: she would ask for my advice as if I were a benevolent teacher and she would wisely put into practice my enlightened opinion. Ah! A sly minx. She had known how to discover the best in myself. How I loved her!

At the touch of her tender skin, I felt warm waves of happiness which radiated all over my body. Some parts were more sensitive than others. She told me that she felt the same thing and I asked her:

- Does an electric heater have the same feeling when the current is switched on?
- To know it, it is necessary to teach it to speak.” she answered smilingly.

Ah but! What a wonder? What have I done to deserve this?

She revealed yet another thing, this time, I ignored completely. Ah yes: I am brave. I could hardly believe it. There still, it is not evident. It is a quality that one shows in the face of danger. I was not even convinced that she was right: so much worse, I accepted the compliment wishing never to be put to the test or, at least, not in the presence of my queen. Alas! It is a dog’s life! I was going to be given notice to honour uncovered cheques.

One evening at the holiday centre, one of our guests had broken a leg and it was necessary to call an ambulance. The telephone box, amidst the chalets of the

peasants, was watched over by two sheep dogs who were growling and baring their frightening teeth. If I had been alone I would have jumped at the steering wheel of the van to go down as far as the valley along the winding road which you are already familiar with; there, in the big village of Bellua, I could have phoned in complete safety.

But “She” was there.

So, I took a deep breath and took a step towards the threatening fate. I put on a determined air which, however, revealed itself to be a little stumbling and I compelled my mind to concentrate on that blasted telephone conversation. I didn’t talk: because although the semi-darkness concealed my trembling, it would not muffle my quavering voice. And “She” was there! “She” would have approached me, “She” would have discovered everything! A stumbling walk, trembling hands and a quivering voice: my count had been correct! “Farewell, my beautiful one! And you, pathetic! Go and join that herd of creeps!”

Had that been a miracle, that evening, to help the scoundrel I was? In any case, it is certain that, like the lions of Daniel, the two Cerberuses that had appointed themselves guardians in the telephone box of Montchauvin lay at my feet. And the great adventure continued. I still tremble about it.

So do I say: “Thanks my God? Perhaps... led by an old habit. Maurice, one of my favourite uncles likes to quote. “A smile from you and I can do the impossible!” Rather, I should have said: “Thanks, love, you who makes us perform astonishing feats.”

With the same insight Jeanne discovered again that I was a born artist, that my taste was most reliable, and that I possessed many other treasures that I was not aware of: gentleness, patience, endurance, generosity, tenacity... All delivered in bulk because we do not have the time to do a complete and detailed inventory.

But how could I stomach such a cramming of compliments? And in raptures, too! You find me stinking of pretensions: ah well no, rest assured. I knew well that I had not acquired in my short experience of a young man, all the qualities Jeanne attributed to me. But I believed, and I believe even more firmly, that man has superior possibilities to what one commonly admits. I was far from having embellished those talents to embellish our existence: but, to get there, couldn't I see life ahead of me and the strength which Jeanne's encouragement would give me?

In my exciting plans, I had neglected at least an important factor: time, the short time of which we dispose. But, aren't you there to continue your conquests?

My immense knowledge grafted on a great intelligence, my methodical, rigorous and open mind, my moral sense enhanced by generosity, my energy and my strong will: these treasures of my personality made of me only a guide. I would be a revered as well as a beloved leader. We shall discuss everything, of course, but the decision would always be up to me as well, as control of its execution. I found this constitution of our future family empire very wise indeed. But yes! it was still like this at that time!

However, I had studied at the Teacher's Training College and practised Marxism: those two schools held as natural the equality of man and woman, but it is necessary to believe that I had not understood everything. Perhaps I have already said to you, at the Teacher's Training College, in the final year, I had studied in a mixed class, which was then an exception. Competing with girls, I could notice that they were as intelligent as boys. I still recall the conversation that seemed to me scholarly and being all enriched in imagination, in poetry and humour. The world which took scope beneath a new day was rich in promises. These conversations are delightful moments.

In spite of everything, like most men up till then, I believed that a woman should never "wear pants." I was convinced that despite their intelligence, the girls had a capricious character, certainly charming, but that barred them the access to high responsibility. Therefore Jeanne would be the wise wife I have been waiting for.

Although untidy, absent minded, impulsive, often clumsy, she committed herself whole-heartedly not to let down her beloved husband: my sensible advises together with the strength of our love must bring this too human a part of her being to become worthy of me.

“And I saw that that was good.” (These words, in the Bible, are attributed to God when he contemplates the fruits of his creation.)

Yes, you are right to laugh.

Besides, Jeanne did not take long to give me the proof of her good will. I had an old Deudeuch which reached 85 km/h on that stretch, and even 90 or 95 with a back strong wind blowing in the sails. I was proud and I was keen on it. I had had the intention of turning it into a pick-up car luckily, because I did not have the means to treat myself to another – and I was well convinced that the beauties who did not know how to appreciate it would be immediately discarded.

I used to find that her swaying sometimes surprising were a game in full harmony with the beautiful curves of our planet, surges of tenderness towards the landscape of some sort. Likewise, her figure of a peasant without pretensions who goes to the market and her modest behaviour were well designed, in my opinion, not to offend nature. As to her nonchalance, it allowed me all the leisure to observe the landscape without being hindered by the effort to pedal imposed by my preceding vehicle or the extreme attention which the racing cars of today demand.

The Deudeuch took us out for a ride on holidays. But why on earth did I want to persuade myself and convince my beauty that it was the best car of the world? Why did I go so far as to want to ride it up the mountains?

Here we are: having gone down a jeep path into the pastures, a really very straight path, we had flaunted our love in the mountain. The sun, the sharp air, and the tenderness of nature had done her good: it had continued blooming. It was time to go back. Deudeuch, in spite of all her courage, couldn't go back up the slope. Thanks to

Jeanne, I didn't have any complexes. The car was an automatic clutch model: the engine running I went into the first gear, put on the hand brake, and I told Jeanne to sit at the wheel while I pushed behind. She did not know how to drive, but I could carry out a few simple gestures which I showed her: accelerate all the way, release the hand brake, hold the wheel.

The operation began well and I believed that it was going to succeed: Jeanne accelerated thoroughly, I pushed with all my strength, and the car advanced metre by metre, slowly up the hill. It is then that my love had an inspiration! It is necessary that you know it: when she is overcome by it, she acts immediately. – She suddenly went down from the car to help me push her! Deudeuch moved back quickly knocking me over without much attention; she managed on its own a superb half-turn, then it slalomed breathtakingly in the pasture and, without hesitating any longer, resolutely headed for the invisible valley faster and faster before planting itself far from us in a majestic fir tree that nodded its head as a sign of astonishment.

Then a great silence followed.

It was at that moment, in that sunlit nature which had regained its peace, that irresistible sobs burst out watered by a torrent of tears. Some cows taken aback came to see, then having given up understanding, went on grazing, an occupation whose importance left no doubt.

Now that I understand how much I was lured, stricken, picked up, tied and dragged by my Love in her lair, I know that those sobs were not part of a stratagem: they were true!

Jeanne doubled up in the grass, careless of her beauty. Through the sobs, the tears and the stray hairs which fell on her mouth, she belched out noisily a stream of words which I listened to piously, like a priest of Delphi listening to Pythia. Here is an approximately faithful translation: "It is always the same. I mess up whatever I undertake to do. Michel! I will never have children. I will kill them, clumsy as I am!

Oh I want to die! No. don't touch me. You do not know anything. Leave me. I want to die..."

Oh dear! Jeanne's distress was too strong to penetrate my thick skinned vanity. I who believed myself capable of controlling everything thanks to my enlightened mind, there I did not understand anything of that apparently serious crises. I was distraught...

Now, I think I know what scared Jeanne to such an extent. But the moment has not yet come, I shall explain it later on.

So, my beloved one was overcome by a crisis of self-confidence, and as she did not want to leave it up to anyone, not even myself, to manage her own affairs, it was a tragedy. All the more so since, in order to carry out certain sinister plans cleverly concealed in her disguise of a submissive woman, she must have the qualities of a leader. Fortunately, with her, if the tragedies are severe, they never last long: they are swept away by anger like wrecks by the raging waves of a tempest. This is her natural defence to pull herself out from the dizziness of anxiety.

Is anger a hereditary characteristic?

Ah yes, whatever the demon to fight against, Jeanne had received, in her biological heritage, a double edged sword to defend herself with. On one hand it is a quality, on the other hand it is a fault which Mômmanh pours into each one of us, but in variable doses. It is an extraordinary resource to face up discouraging situations.

Ah yes, you have guessed it, it is anger which gives us a tenfold strength but risks being dangerous.

Jeanne has had to receive a big ladleful of this irascible elixir and pass again in front of the water to have a second helping of it.

But at that time, I ignored all that. As for Jeanne, she knew that the time of anger had not yet come. Her “Man” was not sufficiently hooked for her to risk losing him by frightening him.

What did she do that day to contain her anger? I don’t know anything, but in any case she managed. Later on, I would regard this event as evidence of her aptitude to control herself in case of necessity, which would be of use to us several times.

I believe she channelled that suppressed anger simply towards an increase of tears which I had the pleasure to wipe away, all the while shamelessly displaying hypocrite compassion. My beloved had her shortcomings (“so much the better!”) but firmly guided by her adored master, she would from now on succeed in her life.

Willingly, Jeanne promised me that from now on, rather than yield to an impulse like the one which had just killed Deudeuch, she would follow to the letter my instructions. She could not forgive herself for having acted like a child. She even promised to offer us a new car, more beautiful, so as to be forgiven. On one hand, I refused her offer, on the other hand that the broken one could have been for us the ideal car, and that above all I did not want one which was “more beautiful.” She agreed.

Ah! The happy times when she always agreed!

Deudeuch had perished on the altar of our love: I accepted willingly the sacrifice. When Jeanne’s beauty emerged from the mess and started to shine, we went

down hand in hand towards the wreck, towards the big fir which had found again its serenity.

Deudeuch had hugged tightly the trunk, its front wheels apart, its bonnet blown off, its cloth torn; broken down as far as the intact steering wheel, she embraced without modesty that majestic tranquil father. The scrap iron warm from the mechanical effort which we had asked of her was still vibrating, doubtlessly excited after that crazy escapade, or else terrified after our cowardly desertion.

We spent a lot of time looking for the little belongings which were hidden in the wood, beneath the pine needles. We found some chanterelles, but these did not make up for the loss of a pair of glasses, a bunch of keys, and a camera and other trinkets. Then, without any regrets, we simply abandoned the shell of the Deudeuch, dumped in its private cemetery, from now on doomed to nourish the great firs while decomposing a mixture of oil, of plastic, of broken glass and other varying food, whether that modern alimentation was to their liking or not.

Damaging the landscape and environmental pollution? These ideas did not occur to our minds, and yet we were not irresponsible. The harnessing of dragons without a coachman that is the world open market has not been yet launched in full gallop. It was gathering speed. It was not poisoning the atmosphere with its burning sulphurous breath; it was not tearing the earth with its claws yet; it wasn't defecating its mountains of poisonous waste over the children of Mômmanh, guests of the living earth. No, it contented itself with bringing us presents which we accepted without worrying our minds. Our tiny wreck lost in the wild immensity which the Alps were at the time seemed to us to be no more than a fly's dropping on the palace of Versailles.

Deudeuch was dead: long live Deudeuch! We decided to pool our resources and buy another one, second hand, of course. Jeanne had difficulty to make her contribution. My love managed her budget in a funny way: while I counted my savings she counted her debts. I wanted to play the part of the grand prince, but she

was keen to pay her part in full. In order to do this, she borrowed once more from her good grandmother.

The new Deudeuch was well on the way to being spoilt but like the majority of the French at that time we were not rich. Irrespective of the fact that it was scrawny, that didn't prevent us from taking walks in the mountain, sometimes on the French side, sometimes on the Swiss side, and even on the Italian slopes. With the exception of people, everything spoke the same language, even the cows. We had to lose the Deudeuch at Geneva, having out of negligence both of us forgotten to notice the name of the street where we had parked it: it took us three hours of searching, on foot of course, before we finally found it. Fortunately, it was in the middle of summer and there was no snow to camouflage it.

It is true that we had otherwise important and exciting occupations. There was no end to the exploration of the extent of our love. Thanks to Jeanne's clever lies and to my naïve inexperience, it kept growing stronger and assumed an insolent vigour: we felt a certain pity for the poor ordinary humans, pitiful disabled who had remained on earth.

Certainly I found it marvellous, but absolutely normal that such a love should light up my life. I had prepared it, looked for it, waited for it. No, I was not at all afraid of melting in that fire. In the contact with nature and men, along the routes and mountain paths, along the edge of the torrents, at the foot of glaciers, in boutiques and even when clearing customs, at leisure as well as at work. "SHE" was there! After each new and welcome little secret, I could even touch her, kiss her, feel our bodies enter into ecstatic communion. With rapture, we could go on for ever revealing ourselves to each other. That was good: each piece added to the understanding of each other was a note in the divine symphony which was being composed.

"This does not exist!" you are telling me?

– No, really! I am not exaggerating."

With our two beings, with our two faces mirrored in each other, we formed a new invulnerable creature, delighted to have been born, delighted to be living and shouting it from the rooftops. There are always strangers moved by the happiness of the young lovers who would bless them by a benign smile: that did not fail. They were good people, those who were gladdened by the joy of others. Hail to them.

How could I guess that that new double faced creature into which I had melted concealed, beneath skilful make-up, incompatibilities, unbearable malformations that later on would cause a lot of suffering. I can see now that Jeanne was right: it was worthwhile that I ignore them, before being bound by passion, I would perhaps have run away and would have had no story to tell you. Oh yes! If that story is not really exemplary, I believe that it could be useful to you.

When, so bouncing across the Alps the tender jerks of our peaceful Deudeuch, our motor donkey, we had finished the inventory of our agreements, since surely there were no discords, when we arrived at the frontiers of that exciting exploration and we had penetrated as far as the sources of the soul the certainty that we were made for each other, when we had understood that love had made us grow and that it would always rescue us from the mire towards the celestial gardens, so naturally our bodies looked out for each other to initial the contract.

It was much better than at the notary...

Besides you had already made love.” you might say. It is true, but up till then, we had been trying to establish an agreement. This time, it was a matter of nuptials.

Difference between love and sexuality

When a couple of lovers have carefully matched their bodies and their souls, when they imprint in their flesh the fusion of their existences, Mômmanh gives them the present of love: an unheard of pleasure. "Yes, I have already told you, but believe me, it is worth repeating."

Between having it off and that pleasure, there is the same difference as relieving one's bladder and discovering America.

And yet, if she had achieved its ends, the Christian education of my childhood would have prevented me from enjoying this gift fully. I don't know for which reason the Church considered the act of love as filth capable of sending us burning in hell. She did not have a word to refer to it, except when she wanted to spit its disgust on that unspeakable act: "lust, fornication, sin of the flesh" were still common words. Since the Church had not found another means of conceiving children and as it had to follow the instruction "Increase and multiply," the odious act became a duty within the framework of marriage, but only in that framework, and surely when one wanted to give life.

Since the priests had covered with despicable dirt the taboo act and since a powerful instinct, far more ancient than "Our Holy Mother the Church," called them to "sin," the peasants of my village had grown to love the "dirtiness": at threshing feasts or at wedding parties, the salacious stories those which now you call "dirty jokes" and which go with the dessert were quite frequently repulsive, yet everyone revelled in them, even the women. As for the children, they organised themselves to translate clearly the filth.

The poets had started to wash this stain off my soul. Jeanne finished the cleaning. She managed to teach me that the act of love is beautiful, that it must be beautiful, that it couldn't be love when it's filthy.

Therefore you who are looking for a big love, remember: the “big bang” is only granted to true lovers.

If you want, go over a childhood memory: in the family car, you have slipped in the driver’s seat. You stretch your too short legs in vain and your head too low: your legs can hardly brush against the pedals and if your look can see a patch of sky over the dashboard. Turning the wheel, handling the gear roughly, you reproduce with skill dad’s (or mum’s) gesture. You do “Vroum! Vroumm!” and “Tuutt! Tuutt,” you insult a stranger who does not know that the road belongs to you, you talk to your passenger: “85 average on a national most winding road: not bad, no? – Not so fast, my dear, look at the sunset on the blue mountains. Aaah! Watch out!” So proceed your imaginary journey and you are in a hurry to be big enough to drive “for real.”

Ah well, you would find a similar experience if you try to make love without love, except that you will be ashamed as you are no longer a child. As for the moaning of pleasure, one must content himself with the sound effects.

It is because we have often been deprived of fireworks, when we were torn apart by conflicting ideas. In that case, each time we tried to cheat the Apple of the Garden of Eden, our distress socket takes off; our bodies were only cold and clammy flesh, matter without soul, rather revolting.

Contrarily, it happened that a quarrel which appeared real was only purely formal: in that case the miracle took place and we knew like this that our love was in good health.

The best moment took place in the middle of nature, in a beautiful summer in our mountains, on a grass carpet with small vivid flowers. Mômmanh had sent her witnesses over: the big trees, the birds, the animals hidden, the flowers, the cascading stream whose diamonds launched flowers of sparks, as well as the snowy tops of the Alps from where it seemed to us that a kindly eye was observing us.

5-The Great Manoeuvres

From now on I knew what the expression “to have someone under your skin” meant. Seen from a window of “My Love,” the operation seduction had gone off perfectly as far as the apotheosis which we had just lived. She held her man: “I have caught you right away.” she told me.

Immediately she began, in the morning, the second phase of her plan. Doesn't one say “strike while the iron is hot”? Jeanne undertook to shape me to her liking.

Come on! Let us see what brought about the first scene? After all it does not matter: it was only the first of a long series of battles broken by some happy truces. So much the worse if I relate without any order. But I owe you some more explanations.

Jeanne, in order to seduce me, used the same strategy of love as Don Juan: she had lied brazenly. Fortunately! Fortunately, her aim was not the same as that of those tireless collectors of female trophies, those love thieves who are always “in want.”

I know if there are any female Don Juans, but in any case, my Jeanne was no one. Fortunately! She had lied to me, of course. But when her carnal body of a fairy, offered to me unhesitatingly, all vibrant with sea waves, had said: “Yes! Yes!” she could not cheat. Of course, she had embarked us on this marvellous journey as stowaways, but she was used to buy on credit and she was convinced that we would

later find the money to pay our trip fare. This time she was right to obey her impatience because if we had to wait for our disagreements to fade away before embarking, we would still be besides the quay. Or rather, our ways would have been separate.

Well, where were we? After our nuptial in the Alps, under God's watchful look, nothing less! – with the snowy tops, the impetuous torrents of pure water, the high pensive firs, the grass so green and fresh of the pastures, as witnesses, Mômmanh embodied in wild nature blessing the love of her children, after the mouths first, then our bodies all quivering under the divine caress had sealed the pact of eternal union, our clasped souls excited, after we had put our clothes back as the custom required, without knowing what we were doing, then the time of bitter revelation and disenchantment could begin.

The first disillusion fell on me like a stone hurled in the window by a friendly neighbour.

With my van, we had gone together to take fresh supplies to a group of campers. We took again the way to go for about fifteen kilometres, to recognize the site of the nearest camp. It was the moment which Jeanne chose to start what turned out, for me, the beginning of her metamorphosis.

– I am not coming.

– What?

– I am not coming. Take me back to the Centre.

– But? But... we have promised to do this job! And what's more, we are paid for it!

– You! have promised. It is not my job.

– But finally, remember: haven't you too committed yourself to this job?

– At last? At last? Ah! That is a good one! Have you gone completely deaf? Since I am telling you: I haven't promised anything. Ah well? Find at least the courage to get to the bottom of it. Tell me that I am a liar!

– Ah, really? I thought... Well, then I must be wrong. But if I first take you back to the Centre, I am going to drive for another thirty kilometres and waste a good hour.

– You call that “wasted time”? Well thank you! I thought I deserved a minimum of respect. Your time so precious, save it for those little brats who don’t know what else to invent to get on our nerves. Your time, you come entirely in your intellectual masturbations! I am not having any of that any longer!

I tumbled down. As when one is given a brutal shock, I did not feel any pain, on the spot. Besides, since it wasn’t a physical wound, it was possible not to believe it: I only had to close my eyes for an instant, and my Jeanne would materialise again, the pretty flower of the suburb which I loved, the young and beautiful comrade; the other, the vile witch, would end up by dissolving itself in the pure sky of the Alps.

This evoked the image of my mother, she who raged during many a domestic quarrel when, to my eyes, she transformed herself in a spiteful bad-tempered witch to torment the good man my father. I had sworn never to marry such a dragon: I’d rather become a monk (a red monk, of course).

No! It was not possible for Jeanne to become what I abhorred. Her delightful mouth so finely chiselled, her delicate honey mouth made for kisses could not belch out such insane talk! That sublime door, which if need be was used for food deliveries, that sublime door with tender red lips was made to utter soft words and beautiful speeches, songs and laughs, burning kisses, but not those disgusting things. Ah well, listen: the worst has not come yet!

– Are you ill, dear? In that case I will take you quickly to the Centre and I will take you to the doctor as soon as possible.

My mother had often been seriously ill, each time for a longer period, each time more seriously ill, till she finally died before the age assigned by nature. She was asthmatic. Being unable to overcome the illness which deprived her of her strength, she decided to give in to it: like this she found in it a refuge and a weapon in her struggle against my father. But my Jeanne couldn’t be like them. In fact:

– I am not sick, idiot! Stop taking me for your mother will you! You are flabby like a slug, my gosh! You need three days of reflection before you decide to lift a little finger. It's lucky that I am not ill because I would die before you got me back to the doctor. But how could I let myself be seduced by such a good for nothing? I must be blind. Turn back and take me to the Centre. You will take up your day dreaming and your dribbling delirium afterwards. Come on! On our way! Stop looking at me like a fried whiting.

Although I was a progressive as the communists and their sympathisers defined themselves as such, I was not prepared to bear the breaker of the feminist putsch. I was the less so that, in this revolution, Jeanne was at least ten years ahead.

I tell myself: “She is intelligent, certainly, but like all women, she is whimsical, capricious, prone to follow any fantasy. This is often charming, and it is also the source of good funny moments which enliven our existence: sometimes it even gives us, surely, good ideas: yes, this fanciful functioning of the mind leads the thought on to unusual tracks which she would not have been able to discover by following the roads marked out, and it happens that some uncommon roads can be fruitful. All right! (With myself.) But we have now played too much. Myself, the man with sharp intelligence, I must take my responsibilities.”

– Darling, I can see that you want to go back to the Centre, probably because you feel a bit tired. But...

– You see very well? Do you see well? How could you know what I feel with what serves you as a brain? Besides, I forbid you to try to understand me. Take me back at once!

– My dear, I don't recognize you any more. In any case, this is enough. You must understand that your tiny whim would embarrass a lot of people. We don't have the right to do that.

– My tiny whim! But you deserve a slap. If your mother had given you twice as many you would have certainly been less stupid. For the last time, turn round without overturning in the ditch, and take me back.

– No! I...

- So, stop here: I’m getting out.
- But surely you’re not going to walk fifteen kilometres? I will be back at the Centre long before you. Let’s see...
- Stop! Or I am jumping off!
- After all, you are entitled to it. Ah well, get off! Go on! Throw your tantrum...

And to my great surprise, she got off, slammed the door and, while she was at it, without turning back, started her long march at a very rapid pace. My surprise quickly turned to consternation. When I lifted my eyes up, asking myself if I was going to call her, she had already vanished. Quickly I made half a turn and went in pursuit of her. Alas! Alas the road was deserted.

Besides, if I had seen her, what would I have done? I believe well that I would have taken her hand to feel her sweet warmth and check if the “current” was still getting through. – The current? Come on, of course! You know it well! It is the delightful quiver which runs all over the skin when two lovers touch each other. Then I would have taken her in my arms and hugged her for a long time, delicately; I would have caressed her and kissed her till the peace in our two bodies was reunited. Then I would have carted her gently as far as the Centre, just as she had asked me to do insistently.

When my tongue hanging out, alone and thirsty in the desert, she was the spring I no longer believed to be near. She had quenched my thirst: how good that water had been! And behold she transformed herself into a coarse pile of stinking muddy pebbles. That was not simply possible. It was necessary to be impossible as I could no longer do without my spring from now on.

And then, I have a confession to make: my vanity could not bear having been so badly wronged.

Therefore, if only I had seen her, I would not have said anything, putting off for later the delicate enterprise that consisted in “reasoning” with her so that a similar misadventure would never happen. It was unthinkable that, in a love like ours,

between two exceptional lovers there could be certain trails of strength. The reason had to come to the bottom of all our disagreements.

Oh yes! As she had put it so brutally: I was a “fool.”

I had to admit that she was not along the way...

I clung to the hope of recapturing her on the way back, after having located the site of my next camp. I had great difficulty accomplishing my work. Finally, I could take the way back. On the passenger seat, quite close to me, there was a painful emptiness. From time to time, I had a look, hoping to find it occupied, that the bad dream was over.

But I had to get a grip on myself so as not to lose definitely my chances by overturning my van in the ditch. I was driving slowly, intensely scanning the road as well as its verges with the violent hope of discovering the gracious silhouette of my carnal fairy and knowing relief in her arms.

I saw nobody except for a hitch-hiker: he couldn't have known that his presence there in such a moment was uncalled for and that he insulted me severely when I passed by. I had an unusual reaction quite completely: I lowered my window and stopped at a good distance to hurl a series of vile insults more or less. Then I let out the clutch abruptly making the tyres screech. But that blind anger did not bring me any relief.

The sun, in good shape, was playing with greyish white clouds, massive like rocks. The golden silver platinum light, and the shadows streamed on the mountain sides, the woods, the pastures, the rocks, cascading as far as the river buried down in the valley. But the divine carpet dealer however can pack up again his gear with him. Jeanne was not there, nature was dead. Besides, I don't know why I made this picture for you since I was in no condition to see it.

At the camp, I parked the van anywhere, without even closing the door, and I ferreted everywhere discreetly as I did not want her to see me or notice my distress. It was she who had given one stroke of axe which cut each in half! I was hoping also to see her suffering as much as I: like this, I would be sure that she loved me. But I did not want to do the first step and come like a beaten dog, sweeping away ground with foul grovelling, at my mistress's feet.

Yes, evidently she had to do the first step. On condition that she still loved me? What a test! But I would not welcome her like a triumphant victor. No, I will not give her a frozen look and I will not tell her: "Ah there you are! Ah well, the little stuck up things like you do not interest me. Consider yourself lucky not to have been slapped and go and wait for me in your tent. I will call you if I decide to continue with you. Otherwise, you will have to find a fag: that is what you need." No, that time was over and, anyway, I would not have taken such a big risk. It would be enough to make the first step, and I will welcome her with open arms. Later on, I will find other means to assert my natural and kind authority.

On seconds thoughts, a quarter of a step will be sufficient...

While waiting, I rummaged about, but did not see her anywhere. I wanted to see her so very much, if only in a shadow theatre, about which I started to hallucinate: "Wasn't that she, at the end of the road, behind the service building? Or else down there, between the big tents of the "Red Army" and the "Resistance"?"

The pain grew more intense. I decided to do the first step, for that time. Let the one who has never loved cast the first stone.

So, renouncing to discretion, and trying hard to render my voice normal to ask the cook, the manager, the supervisors – in brief – everyone I came across: "Have you seen Jeanne? Have you seen Jeanne? Ah! You don't know where is Jeanne?" And each time the reply was: "No. No! No!" like so many club blows on my head already afflicted with a turbulent migraine.

In such situations, my “demon” attacks always. He comes back in full strength, he whom I believed to have chased away for good. Just as he does in such cases, he presented himself as the indispensable friend who would bring a solution to my problem. My resistance was swept aside. I was going down a steep and slippery slope, carried away by the whirlwind of my passion, and my efforts to clutch the bushes seemed ridiculous. I abandoned myself to my tormentor who would not take long to suffocate me.

What happens when a desire is so strong that it becomes a high expectation? What are the risks of spoiling the children?

You have not forgotten the strange illness which had handicapped me to the extent of blocking my road to love. The theory which I had put together and the applications which I had derived of it to safeguard myself are disputable, but the sort of madness of which I suffered is not. It is no longer a theory, it is a testimony.

Ah well, I shall take up again the explanations which I have given you because they deserve to be clarified and deepened. Judge them yourself.

Let us suppose that in our childhood, when our being is formed within the family, let us suppose that a great pleasure is never denied to us, not even calculated. In our existence, that great pleasure soon becomes an essential element,

then indispensable. Impossible to do without it. It eclipses the others. Our nervous system learns by heart the circuits which lead to its fulfilment. We cover them incessantly to repeat the pleasure demanded, like a laboratory rat repeats indefinitely the gestures that bring it his favourite threat. We have become dependent, slaves.

Those circuits of the nervous system which lead to the satisfaction of pleasure which has become high expectation, the more complex and the deeper their imprint is in our memory, the more difficult it would be to avoid them. The hope of being cured will move back.

A great pleasure that has never been denied to the spoilt child creates a lifelong dependence, a cancer of the existence. How many adults are handicapped because of their parents' faults?

Let us suppose, later on, to satisfy that cursed high expectation, we believe to discover a means which is not hoped for, the latter would transform itself in a consuming passion, a hard drug occupying the first place in our existence, when that is not all the space. That demon becomes our poisoned consolation: the compulsory reply to all stress of some importance. Even if one had victoriously fought against it, it remains lurking in the secret place of his soul and it comes forth as soon as a great anxiety overwhelms us, like charlatans who extort like this every last penny from the desperate ones.

To take only one example, the high expectation in question can be that of physical well-being. To achieve it, you have a big choice of means: bulimia, excessive sport, any drug.. Usually, one settles on one alone.

Spoiled child, frustrated child: the same fight.

Now I am going to go over some pure theory. Dear reader, if your experience confirms or disproves my hypothesis, let me know and I will update this book based on your information.

In his short story collection "Love of Life," Jack London tells the story of a man who almost died not of old age, which is normal, but of hunger, which must be excruciating. Once saved, this unfortunate person became addicted: he couldn't stop stocking food everywhere even though he was no longer likely to run out.

And therefore a child that is deprived of what they need the most, a child that is deprived of love, will develop the same needs as a spoiled child. This love that has been refused to him - throughout his life he will never feel that he has enough. He will need everyone to be interested in him - him, him, and him alone. He will need riches and honours to be for him, for him more than

anyone else. And woe be to the others if anyone or anything resists him.

As for the spoiled child, the means used to achieve his impossible end will depend on his nature. This may be violence, deception, seduction, self-pity or who knows what? The character of Larry Flint, as presented by Milos Forman in his film about the king of porn, illustrates my point. He claims to defend freedom of expression whilst defending above all his tyrannical power and the lifestyle of a pasha in his harem that he leads.

Before knowing the pangs of hunger, Jack London's protagonist did not know his addiction. At the same time he discovered the need not to be hungry - never, ever! And also the inability to guarantee his supply of food. So he panicked and started to keep reserves anywhere and everywhere, like a squirrel. In this way, very often, an accidental shortage of something reveals an unexpected requirement or an addiction that becomes a tyrannical dependence.

Allow me to make a small comparison. Imagine a hospital where the directors are being particularly irresponsible. The first time that an extended power outage occurs, we note with dismay that electricity is essential for the operating theatre, the incubators for the maternity ward and many other vital devices. Lots of people are killed. We now know that not only the hospital can not do without electricity, but that it has

changed its structure by adapting itself the benefits of this new fairy. The hospital has become "addicted" to electricity. It has developed an addiction like our body does when it changes its structure under the effect of certain drugs.

But back to the spoiled child and me, me, me.

For me, my high expectation of a spoilt child, was to want to be lord of everything, and the drug supposed to please me was the repeated endless attempt of understanding everything. Behold therefore that demon which I believed dead and which haunted me again, lord of house.

As a start, it appealed to pedagogy.

Yes, I had studied pedagogy at the Teacher's Training College. I had not understood much, but they managed to instil in me the belief that still persists: developed properly, this applied science would work miracles; there would be no more academic failure and all the delinquents as well as the deviants would be led on the way of reason.

It was almost as if I had believed that medicine could cure all the ailments and render man immortal. From time to time, a pedagogue sometimes self-declared, believes to have found the magic formulas of good teaching; as a result he tries to found a chapel of which he is the high priest. After which, beware of the unbelievers! With that belief in a supreme pedagogy, there follows that public opinion tends to consider the mediocre teachings responsible for the scholastic failures. In the same way, the Jews and the lepers of the Middle Ages were accused of bringing the plague: since God was good, he could not send that scourge without reason, it was necessary to find some sinners responsible and they were found.

But let us come back to my “cunning one,” the vampire of thought. My naive belief in Holy Pedagogy was only the mask behind which he was advancing. He did his work. Beneath his influence, I wanted to understand perfectly this Jeanne whom I had just met, in order to bring her back to reason. As for me, it did not take me long to lose the little reason I had left.

The process followed its course. I started to stammer again like a drunkard, to stumble, and to do anything irrespective of how I did it... to break down in my weakness.

How to obtain the good dose of self-confidence which allows you to act in the best of ways?

Yes, you know that Mômmanh appeals to our liberated consciousness to serve her as guide out of darkness. In other words, she relies on our intelligence to find the appropriate answer irrespective of the stress. If we have an exaggerated confidence in the solutions which our mind proposes, if therefore we suffer from an excessive assurance, so much the worse for us, Mômmanh believes our answers and orders their application immediately; the accidents will be our share. On the contrary if we do not have faith in any of the proposed answers, Mômmanh cannot give any coherent answers; so much the worse for us, this time still, we are doomed to the accidents.

You know consequently that the incarnation of Mômmanh in my being had assumed an errant form: she wanted me to be God, thanks to a perfect knowledge of everything. It is impossible, surely that I knew it. Therefore, when my demon, that metamorphosis of Mômmanh, was in command, no response to stress seemed worthy of confidence to her and he could only order faltering actions, not to say contradictory ones. Besides, that state of vulnerability generated fits of panic.

So if I had to talk, I stammered, if it was a question of writing, I trembled, if I had to walk, I stumbled, and so on.

Like Monsieur Seguin's goat, I fought, but in the small hours, the fight was far from over. I wanted to win at all costs, to have the chance of saving our love and find again the way to eternity amongst the immortal stars. Jeanne had just returned to the Centre, but I succeeded in avoiding her all day long: above all I did not want her to see me in that state!

Alas! She found me, in the evening when I was still in a crisis. My overpowering demon was not the well-mannered type who withdraws when he feels indiscreet. I tried hard to suppress it with all my strength, it remained to destroy me. I opened my mouth like a fish out of water, but I believe surely that no sound came out of it. Jeanne came towards me, inexorably, tender, smiling and saying: "Well, my Michel, what happened to you?" Stammering, mumbling, stuttering even a little, I managed to emit out of my mouth an amount of gibberish of which here is an approximate translation:

– I do not feel well. I will come to you tomorrow when things will be better.

Tomorrow! I beg of you! I shall explain to you.

– Don't be afraid. I am there. Things are going to be all right now.

– I am not afraid of you Jeanne. It is this nasty illness which overcomes me. Tomorrow! We shall meet tomorrow! We shall have breakfast together. And you will come with me to do some shopping. Can you?

– Not tomorrow. Right now. You are not ill, Michel. I have confidence in you, and I love you. Let's go! Pluck up courage!

– Oh! I do have courage. But sometimes it is too hard. Ah! If you knew!

– I know my dear. Well, I will soon get to know because you will relate everything to me. I am there, and you will overcome this difficulty! Come on! Come to my arms.

Since you are well-mannered, my friend, you know that you have to leave us now: even the writers have a right to intimacy.

In this way, our first quarrel came to an end. I appreciated with great joy the fact that I was loved in spite of the strange evil which was crippling me too often: that relieved me of enormous weights. I swore to recover definitely. I was feeling my strength tenfold by love and the “cunning one” remained lurking, prudently, at the frontier of my consciousness, waiting for its hour.

Taken care of, consoled and encouraged, loved in the arms of my tender nurse, I abandoned myself to happiness.

Thus, watch strong and formidable strapping fellows ruining themselves in the bosoms of their sweethearts and becoming once again helpless little infants. Human nature is very surprising: don't you think so? Ah well, things were even stranger; during those hours of my distress, the birds were silent and nature was in mourning.

Oh yes! Believe me if you can.

Now that I had found my love again, the birds started to chirp again. Once more, the fresh and crystalline water of the torrent fell in cascade and bounced amidst the rocks. The mountain was joyous and her breath was emitting very subtle and tonic perfumes. What magnanimous painter, what genius of nature was painting all day long those landscapes which were telling us: "Don't look for heaven: it's here." The divine symphony orchestrated by Mômmanh was welcoming us again and, once more, we were feeling our hearts beating together bosom against bosom.

Nowhere near the oppressive heads of department, the jealous colleagues which give you a trip-up, far from the forms in quadruplicate, the hierarchic way and the internal regulation, far away from the noise of the pneumatic drill, the traffic jams, the bills to pay, the flu, the toothaches, without counting hunger in the world and the threats of war...

So I was not being over fussy! Therefore, I did not ask for any explanations from Jeanne about our quarrel. Besides, since I was temporarily broken down, I would have been incapable of giving her the advice which she needed very badly.

However, I knew that the happy days were only a truce. I had to leave soon the Garden of Eden to take up my human adventure; so much so that I had to leave the bosom of my beloved one to become again head of the family, because I was convinced that it was up to me to take up the reins of the household. I was overcoming my mental handicap and I was making use of pedagogy to lead Jeanne to follow the right way, that which I would have traced after having heard her opinion.

You understand that I could not envisage acting otherwise. According to the convictions I had then, the roots of which had developed during centuries and centuries, it would have been a great cowardice to obey my beloved one. Not only would I have lost my freedom, but I would have placed my love in danger of extinction. I could not leave the reins of our household to Jeanne, in as much as the pilot of a plane cannot abandon the commands of his plane to his favourite hostess.

Thus we started again to weave the happiness underneath the slight wound. I was hoping that we were going to stay for some more weeks on our cosy cloud; I was counting on it all the more because our real holidays were approaching and we were going to spend them together in Austria. Do you find me quite naive? Ah yes. A brutal landing was preparing itself.

The day came when our bawling youngsters, a tear in their eye for some of them, made their way again to Paris, accompanied by their group leaders. When, with the other comrades, we had folded our tents and placed all the material in the only building of the camp, we bid farewell to all, friends and not, and we went up into our pumpkin transformed into a car looking more like a horse-drawn coach. We had about fifteen days left to discover some new places, and we did not want to lose not even a fraction.

What happened afterwards?

Indeed, although I now remember that period vaguely, I will never be able to talk about it, my memories being so confused. I could not understand anything there!

That started like this.

The seats of the old Deudeuch being dirty and even torn out of sheer use, I had wrapped up with travelling rugs of very bright colours, worthy of my princess. Now Jeanne had taken off one of her overcoats to cover her shoulders with it. Moreover, she had ruffled hair and she dressed carelessly, and this gave her the air of a neglected gypsy. Such a metamorphosis would have been enough to prevent me from seeing the landscape, but there was more there: in no time at all, the decaying fairy had spread all her belongings and part of mine anywhere in the car and she had already covered everything with some papers, depressing sight enhanced by the skin of a clean banana.

– My dear, why don't you tidy your belongings? This mess is lousy. And then, why are you dressed up like this? One would say that you look like an old witch half

asleep, who has just left her straw mattress. I prefer you when you are happy. Hey, love?"

She spent the rest of the day without opening her mouth. And when at last she consented to talk, it was to send me a shower of abuses. I spent a first sleepless night. Before she woke up, having found nothing better to do, I decided to delay matters. Besides, Jeanne made herself attractive and loving again. But the disorder had worsened: she was therefore the mess.

This first truce was quite short. Apparently, my temporary surrender was to no avail. The annoyances, the quarrels, the anger had to follow a very rapid rhythm. Therefore, don't be surprised if I do not speak of Austria: I have not seen much of it.

During most of the day, I was too busy looking for our love which did not stop slipping through our hands to vanish in certain inaccessible places. In order to have a chance of finding it again, I had to accomplish certain acrobatics some of which some seemed against nature, that is to say that many were against my convictions which neither I, nor anybody had ever pointed out, and much less contested, since they seemed so obvious to form part of the laws of nature, in as much as breathing, nourishing oneself, blowing one's nose, refusing the insults, express myself freely... Thus, not only I had to accept that our things were spread everywhere in a permanent disorder, but equally, that my opinions were squashed by contempt and bad faith, that our itinerary which had been prepared for a long time had been brutally changed to follow "a small secondary road on the map" and that half of my savings vanished in one single night in a luxury hotel, and what else still? The unbearable annoyances followed, giving rise to never ending quarrels during which we hurt ourselves always more deeply.

What sorrow do two Siamese twins feel when they cannot put up with each other any longer!

I make one, then two, then three concessions, then an unlimited amount of renunciations to important aspects of myself, I sometimes go as far as betraying my

duties, such was the price to pay to have a chance to recapture our escaping love. And when by chance we would find it, quickly we would shut the door of our intimacy, so airtight like an eggshell.

Alas! Very soon we would start to tear ourselves apart in our empty shell.

Love, even that of crooks nourishes itself on beautiful and good substances: ours had to treat itself, increase and strengthen itself because Austria was offering it delicious meals. Instead of that, being sick, it was refusing the food and it was declining from day to day. We would not have had to choose a sumptuous setting for that episode of our life. It was a mess. We should have gone to another part to be torn apart: a field of beetroots, or even a waste land filled with rubbish would have suited us. Besides, we would soon have to do this wasted voyage again.

Luckily, it rained heavily during our journey: that took away a little part of responsibility.

In fact, I did not understand anything there. So, you must not expect me to enlighten you! I have nothing to propose to you except to do yourself that which I was compelled to do during that hazy period: to struggle obstinately in the fog, pulled by the hope that by means of light, the remedies to heal my painful ailments would be found.

I did not understand anything there but Jeanne had changed into another person, whom, very often, I hated. But for some moments, she was becoming the wonderful fairy with whom I wanted to set forth for eternity. So we were in love. However, those holidays of the Garden of Eden had been granted to us in an increasingly tight-fisted manner.

So much the worse. The important thing wasn't that the miracle became rarer, and rarer, but that it was still happening. It was a sign: since love sometimes was succeeding in taking the upper hand, it was always alive.

Why is the orgasm of love a product of the natural selection?

I have said all too well "Miracle" and I maintain it, above all if you find that I am exaggerating. In the act of love, when the flesh finds itself and then the bodies give themselves to each other, at the moment where fusion of bodies takes place in a sparkling flame of love, it's there when the miracle takes place.

Do you know about the mother of life, Mômmanh who watches over and quivers all along the space and in infinite time, as well as amongst the billions and billions of stars and in the slightest grain of pollen or in the most trivial molecule of water? Do you know our tireless Mômmanh, she who always watches over, who never dozes off, she who wants to see the toad, the doe and the lotus live eternally? Ah well, when she perceives this duo of sincere love, she recognizes the powerful father of life and of existence whom she loves so much. So, amidst the waves of happiness which she has felt at the great moments of her conquest over existence, she chooses the best and she sends them to us: the birth of the stars, the opening of life, it's blooming in the ocean...

That is the ecstasy, the "Miracle."

Don't you believe me? Try and you will know... What? I have already said it to you? ... It is true, but it is worthwhile to repeat.

Therefore, when once again, the "Great Voyage" had been granted to us, I was seeing the sign that our love was once more escaping from a nightmare: we had not "screwed up," we had "made love."

Why is the deceived lover the last one to perceive it?
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Yet, the moments of ecstasy could have well been nothing else but false. Oh yes! Jeanne who had seduced me could have been nothing but a swindler. In the personality of a good red fairy that I loved, could it be that she had nothing real other than beauty, youth and the feminine sex? And her love for me, because at the time of the meeting of the body, Mômmanh no longer allows women to cheat: if the lover is just a little bit in tune with the beloved, they can distinguish the pleasure from simulation.

I could have asked that question: "The true Jeanne, isn't she simply the woman, loving for sure, but for me hateful, who poisons my existence?" But I never asked myself this question. At least, not yet: it takes much more for me to lose my faith.

Let us suppose that a man, having consecrated all his life to win one of the best places in heaven, arrives at the last moment of his last hour, nailed to his dead-bed, and that the last breath of his conscience reveals to him that horror: there is neither hell nor paradise! For his soul and his body, everything is over... Does he go, in a supreme spasm, to vomit all that to which he has consecrated the best part of his life?

Most probably the answer is no.

Every time that he feels stressed, man entrusts his intelligence to find him an appropriate answer. It is almost the same: that's life.

There happens that stress is a desire at the same time important and very strong: desire of love, desire of a child, desire of glory, desire of eternal love... In this case, led by Mômmanh, my ego orders a profound research: "What sort of means approximately sure was my environment offering me to allow me to satisfy my desire?" Intelligence must find him the best answers possible and their reliability to a vital importance.

This search could last for some years and cost some very great efforts. Also, when she has arrived to her time limit, it is difficult to conceive that she starts it over again. Therefore,

her answers are recorded like articles of faith, like an ideology, except that, this time, the phenomenon is not collective.

Here is explained why the deceived husband is always the last to discover the infidelity of his beloved spouse, and reciprocally.

<p>The origin of a great deal of consuming passions or vices: the game, avarice, jealousy.</p>
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The process is upset when the desire is so strong that it becomes a demand. I have evoked that insanity in a moment while talking of spoiled children and of my own madness. There are also other demands even disabling, which do not attract spoiled children, even if education has given them birth. Certain parents, for example, instil in their child the absolute need to succeed brilliantly in his studies, going sometimes as far as driving them to suicide. Will you say that those unlucky children are spoiled?

Here are some more examples. Do you know a sure method to assure your immortality? To guarantee your health? Or your fortune? Or your love's fidelity? No, surely: in any undertaking there are always some risks of failure. So, the unhappy one who refuses his risks becomes a slave

of his demands. He can never acquire the serenity which gives him reasonable self confidence, since nothing can bring him such confidence. He is condemned to look always for more reliable means to calm his insatiable thirst, his passion which will destroy him.

Never enjoying peace, never enjoying freedom: always in anguish, day and night.

Does he demand fortune? He is a miser. Is it the luxury he cannot do without? It's probably a big-time gambler.

Does he want to have all the love of his better half? And behold a jealous person. His existence has become unbearable. He can renounce to it, or proceed towards madness. Luckily, I had seen my mother's life transformed into hell because of this slavery and I did the impossible to avoid it.

How far is the Buddhists' control of desire healthy?
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Here is how Buddhism, which has the "control of desire" as its primary objective, helps men to live: it relieves them of their demands.

I realised that we had left a dying person at the doors of paradise, some paragraphs above. We now can set him free. If his faith answers the desire to live for ever and if it rests on solid rational principles, our dying person will take his last step believing he is entering paradise. But if instead of a simple desire, he has a demand, doubt will have tormented him all through his life and this torment will redouble itself at the moment of death. It is only later that he will finally experience peace.

I came across a situation comparable to mine; I still had the time to correct my mistake and to reshape my life which, in spite of everything, toned down markedly the pressing character of my desire. I was hooked so strongly to the love of my dreams, to my fairy of peaks that the reality of the new Jeanne did not manage to impose itself on me.

The exquisite naivety about which I have spoken to you at the very beginning strengthened my blindness. Since a beautiful girl was a fairy, a perfect being, she could not be neither silly, nor crafty, nor naughty, nor sick. Not even mortal.

Luckily enough, Jeanne could not refrain herself from exaggerating as she normally did.

On her request, I had lovingly and for a long time prepared the itinerary of our journey: she threw it in the dustbin and drove us at the will of her fantasy, “free, she said, and no longer chained like bloody fools to a stupid programme.”

During our wandering, she suddenly vanished for a whole afternoon, without warning: she came back in the evening at the camp site where I was walking in the rain, together with a handsome young man who invited us to dinner. During the whole meal, she gave him sweet looks, then she did not withdraw her hand for a long

time when he took it in his, and finally, she said that she would follow him whilst I went to put away the tent, but seeing my expression, she changed her mind.

I could not close an eye all night long, while she slept peacefully, huddled up against me. The heat of the waves emitted by her body could have told me that she still loved me, but I did not know yet how to translate that language. The following day, when I had told her what was tormenting me; she accused me of being a jealous pervert. The scene lasted all day and however, in the evening, love was still holding me chained.

Then Jeanne started to treat me as if I was her bastard dog and she was a sadistic teacher. All right, she did not beat me with a stick on my nose: what she did was worse. For whole days I had to follow her as if she held me on the lead, and I didn't know what the plan was, supposing that there was one. If I dared to ask what she needed me for, she shouted at me furiously: "Poor coward, look at you far away from your niche! You are scared stiff and that gives you the impression that you are walking on nails, you wretched person! Well, I am free! You just have to follow me, as long I still put up with you. Come on! Wake up and go ahead. And then close your mouth; otherwise you are going to swallow some flies."

The episodes were linked to a mind numbing rhythm, all the more tiresome the ones as well as the others.

– Jeanne, the tank is dry. I am going to top it up.

– Poor idiot! If, instead of mentally masturbating you tried to be a little more efficient, the tank would be full. You are going to run out of petrol in the middle of a deserted forest, smart as you are. But what made me set out with such a half-witted person?

One evening when she had gone to sleep without warning me, as usual, I found the tent shut from the inside. I dared to call her and ask her very politely to open for me: "Ah! There you are! And you have the nerve to wake me up just when I was dreaming of Gérard Philippe. Instead of my handsome knight, it's the head of a

nightmare that comes to harass me once again. Well no! It's my night of rest. Go to sleep in your car, man..."

It had been another sleepless night. I spent it tearing away the rope which was still tying me to Jeanne. At the beginning the image of the sweet fairy that had taken me in her arms and offered me her body emitting lights from its pores was imposing itself very frequently. That vision towards which I was stretching my arms while sighing was being over imposed by another vision, that of a virago who had just chucked me out.

What exceptional resources do we have to face the immediate dangers?
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Since I did not understand anything there, my demon of which you know, did not fail to come and propose his services kindly, but I crushed his mouth with a blow of my heel. When my existence is in immediate danger, my Mômmanh mobilises all unsuspected forces to send it back to its niche.

Little by little, I became capable of telling myself: "The true Jeanne is that witch that is a hundred times worse than your mother. Forget the other one. Since you could light up the love of one beautiful girl, you will soon find another. There are at least two billion of them on earth. Do you think that you will not find the one that you are looking for? Come on then! Rather ten times not one! Open your eyes well in order not to miss her. And try to read well in her eyes the call of the ocean if it's found there."

The used seats of the Deudeuch together with the humidity of a rainy night had broken my body and my bones. In the early morning, it was painful to stretch myself. It was still raining. I understood the expression “not to feel well” in a new way: my senses perceived the surroundings with an unusual acuteness, but it seemed to me that the messages which they were sending me had a strange taste, as if a different body and not mine had sent them. “I was no longer feeling (my own body) well”: it would have been wise of me to rest a little before taking up the road again. I glued my ear to the tent and I listened: Jeanne was sleeping peacefully. Despite my resentment, I was careful not to wake up the dragon. Since I was not suffering any longer after my decision had been taken, I considered it useless to provoke a new fit of anger.

I managed to find a youth hostel that was already open whose sweet warmth together with a copious breakfast cheered me up. I went to look for Jeanne. When we were seated, I said to her.

- How come you slept so well? Don’t our fights make you suffer?
- I am not like you, a masochist that tortures his brains. Me, I am free. If you poison my life, I can take back my freedom at any time. I will never be attached...
- I thought that you loved me.
- For a while, yes. But now, what are you giving me to love? Nothing! It’s never won, you know: you have to deserve me and you are getting further and further away from that.
- Further than you think.
- Ah well?
- I am leaving you.
- Oh my goodness! What a big boy! Oh well... anyway it was nice of you to warn me. Are you going to take me back home? Or do I have to walk back?
- I will take you to Paris. We leave.

She finished her breakfast and left quickly. I did not even notice that she was pale, really pale! She spent an excessively long time on her personal hygiene and I didn’t realise that she needed to be on her own to cry. Afterwards she started to sort

out her belongings frenetically, something which she had hardly ever done before. Therefore, I was not surprised that she had done that work in a very illogical way, mixing the dry with the wet, the dirty with the clean, and her things with mine. She packed the luggage three times, always with the same ardour which resembled rage.

I felt like a prisoner that had just been completely relieved of his shackles. It was necessary for me to learn again how to move freely. I did not hate Jeanne any more, because you have to love someone in order to hate them. So tell me, how on earth could I be aware of the suffering she was concealing in such a staunch manner?

It is much later that I understood. At the holiday camp in Montchauvin, the red fairy of the suburbs had given me everything that could make me a mad lover; little did she care whether it was true or false. Later, when she thought that I was completely attached, she started the taming: it was necessary for me to submit myself to her will. But, in keeping with her character, my fairy having removed her make-up, did not do things by halves: with big buckets of ice water, she carried out the schooling excessively enough to sober up any man that is drunk with love.

Then, as Jeanne, swept away by her own momentum, had made herself so repulsive that she had nearly snuffed out my love for her and it was not too painful for me to bid her farewell after our arrival. However, she quickly became charming again. I feared falling again into her trap. I wasn't going to visit her family or her glorious and proletarian red suburban city: Vieuvy-sur-Seine.

After having left her and her luggage at the door of her apartment block, I set out back on my way. These idiotic lines came back to me:

“Parisian,
Dog's head,
Parigot,
Calf's head.”

They were crying out to me. I started to shout them out at the top of my voice. That did me a world of good.

In spite of a strong tempest which was pouring bucketfuls of water on my windscreen and which left me guessing now and then the route, I drove Nouvelle Deudeuch as far as my house, at the heart of the hedged farmland.

6-The Marriage.

What did she do to obtain two weeks holidays? I quite believe that she underwent surgery. It seems to me that it was some kind of fashion at that time, amongst the well informed young girls: to avoid all risks of appendicitis which could have thwarted a pregnancy, they used to have their appendix removed. The fact is that she arrived at my house, without warning, on a beautiful evening of the month of October.

A primary school teacher, I “was teaching” at a school in the countryside, in a big village with sweet hedged farmland to the West: Landory. I had rented a little house at the edge of the fields, near a little wood dominating a charming valley, rich in pastures, with extensive fertile lands, of cheerfulness, of scents and of fruits. Its branches have just started to blaze the reddish colours of autumn.

Buried in this flourishing countryside, concealed beneath the hotch potch of greenery; I often harboured the illusion that the evil ones would not come to look for me there. On this planet which sometimes seemed to me too vast, sometimes too little, Landory was my intimate refuge. But I also had the recollection that this shelter had been ripped open during the carnages of the last World War. Thus, if I was well here, at my house, I was thinking that I had to leave, for plenty of reasons, the most pressing was this: the destiny of this little world which I loved so much was a gamble elsewhere, and I wanted “to see.”

What is the field of active existence?
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I call "the field of active existence" that in which we can act. Oh well, you can notice that the field of our active existence has become worldwide. Doesn't our Mômmanh request that we try to come out in the best way from that big planetarian mess? She even asks us to go and look beyond.

Because, as the Ameridians before the conquest used to ignore the surprise which the unknown ocean could bring to them, we do not know what the intersidereal space is reserving for us.

And if it contains the same surprise as that of the Ameridians: whatever it takes to destroy us?

My teaching day being over, I used to go home. I had "done my teaching" three hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon: during the breaks, I had strolled to and fro the courtyard, chatting with my colleagues; I had assured the supervision of the canteen at noon, in exchange for my meal, I had kept my grown-ups an hour longer, for the evening study, to perfect their preparation for the examinations, by making them swallow a supplementary problem and a dictation; I had finally prepared my chart for the following day as well as my lessons. Ah! I was going to forget to correct the copybooks. It was an ordinary day which ended well and I was beginning to enjoy the two or three hours of freedom which were ahead of me.

I had the senior class, and naturally, they were all boys. The co-educational system in our schools was still an exception: therefore the girls were in another school. That is why all my students were boys. The inhabitants of the village, who could be considered as important, all little "bourgeois," sent their children to study in the city, to the elementary, then to the secondary. AND that is why nearly all my students were peasants. They were between eleven to fifteen years of age. Some of

them were preparing for their entrance examination to the sixth class, some others the famous “Certificate,” the Certificate of the Primary Studies, the test that these sons of the working class had well acquired the “instruction” sufficient for that period of time. In fact, the initiation of the young peasants was marked by two tests: the “Certificate,” and the revision council, republican tests in which one had to be successful to be a real man.

The “Certificate” was the crowning of the primary level studies. One had to do it at the age of fourteen, the end of compulsory schooling, and whoever obtained a pass mark in it was very proud: “Ah! Good God!” For the occasion, they had the right to some brandy, a “Man’s” drink, and there was some in excess.

The Revision Council was an examination of good physical and mental health for which it was necessary to present oneself naked in front of the Mayor and plenty of “sirs.” The “sirs” were people who in all circumstances spoke correct French and who, everyday, wore shoes, a suit, a tie, and were “intelligent,” that is to say cultured and consequently destined to managerial posts. The young peasant, the conscript who had passed successfully in front of the Revision Council was classified “Suitable for military service,” that is to say that he would soon have the honour to serve in the French army. “Suitable for the army, In the Name of God”: with this declaration which they declaimed proudly for whoever wanted to hear it, the happy chosen ones finally felt fully fledged men; they were so expected to celebrate in the company of the “conscripts,” and to wash down copiously, with plenty of rounds, the happy event.

But History was not trotting: she had already started galloping. She was relegating rapidly in the folklore and in the museums that way of living which my youth had kneaded. As a little ordinary peasant, I had known school in clogs, the trips in the cart, the common room of the little farm with its two big beds, its big chimney and its beaten earth floor, lit by an oil lamp, the water which we used to bring up from the shafts, the poultry which pecked and shook themselves in the yard and on the stony path... And now, you see where we are! The speed and the nature of the

changes which have appeared on the menu of these last thirty years are such that I suffer from a permanent indigestion. Slow down, please! But, as the song goes:

“It’s not you who are leading the train, it’s the train which is leading you...”

However, as regards the changes, I formed part of those who wanted some of them in big numbers! When you will know the original meaning of the expression “All the time and at every opportunity,” you will know what sort of world I wanted.

While the peasant complained “all the time and in every opportunity,” the factory worker did the same thing “all along the chain”: this last expression which I have just imagined is the equivalent of the first. You know how the factory worker complained, he who all day long, of the week, of the year, and even of the very same life sometimes, in his noisy factory, he remained tied to a manufacturing chain or to the assembly line, the body and the mind totally absorbed in repeating indefinitely the two or three precise actions for which there were still no robots.

Oh yes! Man, that dear child of Mômmanh, so gifted, and who does not know yet the limit of his capabilities, compelled to be nothing else but a living part of the mechanical chain of the factory: it was the last dated of his broken hopes and all those promises of fertile lives once more thrown as food to the business sharks.

The factory worker evaded that slavery at the end of each week, during the two precious days of the weekend; he escaped from them once more in the occasion of numerous public holidays, sometimes stretched by the extended weekends; he finally got to know the total escape during the plentiful weeks of the paid holidays. The less known condition of the peasants, at the same time, was worse.

Most of the time, the peasant was busy working a field, strip by strip, his big clogs weighing down by the sticky land, progressing painfully from one end to the other of the land, coming back in the same way and doing this till all the surface had been entirely done, in the same way the labourer advanced heavily furrow after furrow. This boredom was increased by the physical effort, sometimes painful, which

rendered the body heavier still. Having arrived at the end of the field, the peasant was highly tempted to stop to “have a sip,” or simply to rest, or still go back home saying: “I shall continue tomorrow, considering that I’m not in good shape.” from which the expression: “All the time at every opportunity”: one could not “drink all the time and at every opportunity,” nor idle about, much less have a nap or go to see his beautiful one at the end of the field!

And it is because, although the cities are more and more distant from the countryside, one hears nevertheless reflections of this type: “Refrain from asking me the time all the time and at every opportunity!”, “One must not sound one’s horn all the time and at every opportunity!” and even, with a great depth, “One cannot make love all the time at every opportunity.”

Ah well, for me, this expression has kept all the strength of its origins. When I hear it, it always attracts in full light, towards the eye of my conscience, some enduring and painful recollections of my youth as a peasant. Yes, I still see that blasted field and its end often worked till the brink of despair. After having grunted for an hour to hoe and earth up a row of potatoes, I finally reached the end of the field; the only perspective was to grunt all along another row and so on and so forth till the end of the day, then till the end of the week, and start again for all the other heavy manual jobs such as the spreading of the manure, the hoeing, the reaping... till the end of the year, till the end of life.

And do you know that it was not the only sorrow of the peasant? It was not enough to deprive him of the slightest real chance to start a surprising voyage towards the infinities of space and of time, to start to weave his existence in a cloak of stars covered by millions of springs; it was not enough that he had been nailed to the soil, condemned for his whole life, not to have any horizon but the end of his field, it was also necessary for him to suffer and that his body in pain had been disfigured, dirty, worn out prematurely by that work which was too hard. When compared to his great-grandchildren, the youngsters of our time, the peasant of that time was short because his slavery did not allow him enough time to grow up, and he was doomed to a premature death, worn out by an exhausting job. If you do not truly understand what I

have wanted to say, take a good spade like ours, solid, quite heavy, and dedicate a little time to turn over the soil of the garden: well ahead of the falling of the night, my message will be inscribed in your flesh.

The Church used to ban work on a Sunday, except when necessary otherwise it was necessary to ask the permission of the Parish Priest. It was the Day of the Lord and also the only day of rest of the week. Ah well, do you know how it was spent? It was necessary to wash oneself – Yes! – in a cauldron of hot water, to go to mass; it was necessary to milk the cows, clean the cowshed and the stable, feed quite frequently during the day all the animals: cows, calves, bulls, horses, pigs, chickens, rabbits... which did not exempt him at all from preparing the meals for the human beings. Guess how much free time did he have left to widen his horizon?

It is because, on reaching the end of our potato or beetroot field, many a time I happened to have a fit of despair. It is because school had become so important to me, after that day of my infancy when I had gone there out of sheer curiosity: Mrs Dorisse, the infants' teacher, had kindly invited me to look in her magic lantern. It was like a box into which one could look through a hole. One could see photos which for me were marvellous: mountains, rivers, black people, cities, and Chinese... a glimpse of the vast world, inaccessible after the prison which my village stood for. After which, Mrs Dorisse had crammed my pocket with biscuits and had sent me back home because I was too young.

Guess what I am thinking of.

From my school, I was expecting my freedom and, since I was not completely selfish, that of my young peasant friends. I hated the slavery of the fields; I refused that pseudo-existence of a mole or an ant. I wanted to see with my own eyes the vast world, and I did not want to be happy with the stories which they related to us. I wanted to taste with my own mouth the amazing flavours: the mere evocation did not give me satisfaction. I wanted to contribute to the development of the machines and expertise, a progress which was already well-committed and which would bring well-being and leisure to the peasants. And even if I had, with my own

eyes, to discover that the universe was not turning as it should, I quite had the intention to contribute to rectify its function.

Finally I reckoned that school pulled me out of the slavery of the fields that it led me to a vast world to taste the new pleasures I caught a glimpse of in the books, and finally she rendered me master of my existence. Besides, the expression “to be master of” was part of my peasant language and when I used to tell my father:

– I am quite free to do what I want, anyway!

– My little boy, you are master of your soup when it is eaten.” he answered me.

The immense call for freedom which, for me, made itself heard at school and encouraged me to study, and I was far from thinking that it would have led me so far away, on tracks which sometimes were difficult and dangerous. For all that, I have never given up: when I believe to have the permission to rest for a long time, it does not take me long before I am spared to get back on the saddle. But does knowledge truly render a person free? What do you think?

In which way is knowledge a liberator? In which way is ignorance a prison?

I asked the question to Mômmanh. Quite often, her answer was confused. I believe that she wanted to say this.

"Knowledge, is the freedom which is no longer blindfolded. Let us see, I have created you so that you'd be my liberated consciousness, my

clear perspective on the universe. Do you want to deprive me of this so, so precious consciousness?

- Surely no.

- Without this knowledge of the world which I beg you to bring to me, my wish for existence cannot find ways to realize itself. It is not free to do what it wants. The chains and the prisons are not the only shackles: ignorance too."

It is because my return to my native land, as an instructor, was only temporary. I was preparing a new take-off to discover the world. I dedicated a good part of my spare time to inform myself about the possibilities of a career abroad. Was it that perhaps I had to leave alone, without my beloved one? "Ah well, so much the worst!" Since I had finally succeeded to seduce a beautiful girl, I should hope truly, to find another one whose behaviour was not totally disconcerting, where my road led me. Was I dreaming of the Polynesian girls? It seemed to me that it was so. Luckily, "My Love" had not renounced to her prey: I therefore did not have the opportunity to follow to a bitter disillusion this mirage of a beautiful exotic virgin kissing, my majestic feet of a great white sachem, after having washed them.

While waiting, not having the slightest suspicion of the new turn which destiny was going to play on me, I returned peacefully to my house, on a sumptuous autumn evening, dreaming that the mushrooms would become rare but that the time of the chestnuts was nearly there. The air was lively: there would be the dew the following morning, and perhaps even some fog. Behind the little wood with red foliage, the sun was on the verge of setting. It was embracing the sky with an immense firework, with an orgy of colours which moved me. Who was the generous leader of the orchestra? And where? Whoever he was, a thousand thanks!

Was it for that reason that there was an apparition on the threshold of my house? Yes, I know: you are not at all surprised, since you knew it before my arrival.

But for me, it was more than a surprise and I was quite close, that evening, to believe again in the supernatural.

She was sitting on the granite doorstep of my house, indifferent to the freshness of the air, although she was sensitive to the cold. In fact, I realised soon that she was shivering, and I know now why she exposed herself to the freshness of the evening: it was “to be better warmed up, my child!”

God! How beautiful she was!

How the theory of the struggle for existence is still nothing but a hypothesis.

Don't worry, if notwithstanding the fact that I had become a materialistic atheist, I address God just the same. Be assured, there is no sign of madness. When beauty is soon given to me suddenly, fulfilling with one stroke my desires beyond all the hope, that I exclaim: "Yes! I will follow you everywhere. I will never forget." when it is so strong that I will fall on my knees if the fear of being ridiculed will not hold me back, if it is not God, whom therefore do you want me to take as witness? Mômmanh? Surely no! I would be showing off, to invoke a hypothesis.

“What? Well, I agree! I continue my “story.”

She embraced me lovingly as if the tearing apart of our couple had never taken place. With one stroke I was conquered again. No, I was not feeling like a net which fell on me and paralysed my movements: on the contrary, I was feeling a sensation of great freedom, even of release. I warmed her with my body, then I lit the fire in the fireplace and we celebrated our reunion as lovers.

Although we carefully respected the loving ritual which our young experience had taught us, we could not know that evening, ecstatic union of the bodies and the souls. A little disappointed, and vaguely worried, we tried to sleep just the same. Later, we discovered that such a partial failure followed nearly always an extended separation. It was necessary that our two beings would discover themselves, assess themselves again; re-adjust themselves one to the other so that our bodies could in their own way enter in harmony and so they would enjoy the inspiration of a beautiful concert of love.

What is the negative stress? What is the positive stress? What is anxiety?
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Reconciliation follows the fight. It is then; a friend said to me, that one finds the pleasure of making love.

Is it necessary therefore to provoke some fights to get to know the best of love? That will be enough to drive you up the wall "because that does so much good when it stops." But, in what concerns us you could have realised that it is not at all necessary to provoke artificial conflicts. Let's make the best therefore of this opportunity.

And as for you, there is a less painful technique which you will know well how to discover.

Mômmanh has put in us two types of stress: the pain when we lose the existence and the happiness when we gain some of it. Two types of anxieties correspond to it: the fear of losing something acquired, which we call "fear," and the hope of gaining new existence, otherwise called the "desire." Fear gives us the chances of avoiding the catastrophe and the desire helps us to construct happiness.

We enjoy a moment of happiness when stress is over.

Having said that, is it better to have to celebrate the armistice of 1918?... of the discoveries of Pasteur? It is because we classify as "negatives" the first type of stress, related to sorrow and as "positive" the second, linked to happiness.

That does not prevent the negative stress from serving existence: they reveal their weaknesses. But it is better that they produce themselves under the form of anxiety, before the catastrophe. In other words it is better to be afraid of the accident before taking the wheel than when arriving at the morgue.

The outcome of a lovers' fight when it solves itself happily, puts therefore an end to

the weakness of their love. It was one more step ahead.

If the peace which was hard to achieve is true, if we make love at that very moment, if we know well how to do it and, finally, if we are rather generous for the right thing to do, therefore our confused flesh must sing a new air, an exquisite music that we have never known yet. We will feel like hearing it.

Do you want an example? Here it is.

My well-beloved Jeanne declared: "If I am going to say "yes"-, if one day our children will have better chances of succeeding in their studies at the catholic school, I will send them without hesitation to the priests, between the woolly demagogy of the laymen and the success of my children, my choice is done."

She did it, one more time. There followed a long period of discussions which, too often, led to violent disputes. They ended sometimes with break-ups which I did not know if they were definite and that hurt me.

Finally the day of reconciliation arrives.

This time, it's a true progress. Each one of us has shown himself capable of improving his point of view to do something more reasonable, that is to say a better perception of reality in order to build a better existence for us.

The secular's ideal is a priority, because, without it, our children as well as the future humanity will be in danger: such is the new conviction of my beloved one. The scholastic success is another priority and the bad management which reigns in certain schools does not allow them to reach it: here is the new opinion which I owe to that crisis. We have at least agreed.

A glowing kiss seals the new found peace. This peace seems solid, because it is good, good... We feel the pressing desire to go further in this way.

We chatted while we caressed each other all over.

– If, in their school, the proportion of the dropouts becomes such that it is not possible to follow completely the course, what shall we do?

– We shall look for another secular school for their own good, and that, will not be too far away from us. We will find a means to enrol our children.

– Yes, but what if they refuse to enrol them under the pretext that we do not live in the area of that school?

– We shall find surely a means. Others will follow...

The conversation continued peacefully accompanied by caresses which were more and fierier. Soon I remained silent to enjoy attentively the pleasure, especially the one I was giving because it guided my caresses: this way, it does not matter; here and there it is hot; here and there, it's exquisitely burning. Oh my my!

We found ourselves naked on the bed.

While our souls have given themselves again to each other, our bodies were talking. While feeling each other, they found the best ways to communicate to fulfil their fusion. These contacts are hot, sweet, sources of waves which go flowing like a stream, like a river, like the sea. Electric? I don't know anything about it. Exquisite these waves, in any case. Much better than my grandma's apple pie. I understand now the expression "I have it in my skin."

Jeanne too is listening to my pleasure. She adjusts her caresses consequently and creates an excitement in certain parts of my body which I did not know to be so... so... much?

– Erogenous, you might say. Perhaps, but it's a word which does not speak. Let us say that they are the doors to paradise. Yes, dear reader, what else do you wish to know?

– Is it truly necessary that each of the two partners looks for the pleasure of the other?

Making love can be compared to a voyage in space. By means of caresses, the two lovers lead to the fusion of the two bodies which provokes a concentration of energy. When that concentration is sufficient, it is enough to stimulate the two detonators so that they explode at the same time, provoking the setting-off of the rocket and its take-off. These explosions are called orgasms. The vagina, the vulva, the clitoris and the penis, surely, can act as detonators.

I will now try to answer your question.

One can, in fact, love a selfish person. It is necessary however for the selfish person, when he feels the surge of the explosion of pleasure, to be able to bring the altruist into his cockpit. Otherwise, he will explode alone and his rocket will remain on the ground. His altruist lover must be able to find the very sensitive spot from where the explosion will take place and know how to caress it properly.

– And what if one of them can not take off?

I think that for each to go up to heaven one at a time is impossible. However, it is possible to reach the end of the road as long as your partner encourages you. Here is a recipe that gave us satisfaction.

The lover has made use of all of this talents as an expert lover – he has tried everything and the beautiful girl has still not got off. It can no longer wait. The rocket will go off alone. Then, his love says:

– Go on, my darling. Continue without me. Today, I can't do it.

– Are you sure? What a shame!

– You can do me the favour another time. Besides, I will still enjoy your happiness.
I am with you. Go on! Do it!

Because she invites him to, he can take off. Even if her heart is with him, this exquisite journey does not have the same unrivalled taste of the great journey made together. But if he goes on alone without the prompting of his darling, it is not even really a handjob.

How can selfishness kill love?

Therefore, not a grand trip in the company of a totally selfish person: Mômmanh grants the last reward to the capable lovers, to enrich themselves, to go and draw elsewhere and not in their ego. By this means, she pushes us to enlarge our existential field.

Well done, Mômmanh.

And now, let's get back to the path of the stars.

We stretched ourselves naked, entwined on our bed. Our flesh was caressing ardently. We lay in the bed on the side, me behind her. That position offers plenty of advantages. She puts in contact the greater part of our body: our burning flesh, electrified, exchanging delightful messages. Now I know why women's bums undulate and invite us to follow them: they have something to offer.

When I am in contact with them I feel a sweet warmth which is not like that of the radiator, and exquisite surges of electricity take place that EDF (the French electricity company) could never provide.

This non commercial electricity accompanied by an exquisite warmth is what I call the real body language. An argument, another one, that ends with: “You filthy bastard. I never want to see you again. I must have had sh.. in my eyes when I loved you! You’re not only a little Hitler, you’re also a good for nothing.” When a quarrel has ended at the gates of despair, it is in bed that I know whether I need to take the words said by the mouth seriously or not.

If Jeanne’s buttocks are as cold as the rest of her body and if the power is off, then yes, it’s serious. But if the buttocks spread their sweet warmth along whilst the electric waves tickle me deliciously, if the buttocks say “YES, YES,” then all is well. These are words that Jeanne’s mouth is not allowed to pronounce, usually because she has to save face, show her independence and thus her strength. Fortunately, even when the mouth is shut, her buttocks still have something to say. The other areas of skin known as “erogenous” zones are in tune. But to help save face, to go from hell to heaven, it is the warm words of the buttocks that I prefer to listen to.

Yes, they play an important role in the merger of lovers’ bodies and souls. This large and soft skin surface offers an exquisite contact with the lover’s belly and thighs. Through burning caresses, he exchanges waves of pleasure with his darling’s body. He listens to the responses of her body which sometimes exhales with cries and sighs. He answers as best he can in the same language, mainly by moving his caresses to where demand is urgent.

These caresses of the buttocks, around the “beautiful ass,” are perhaps after all a survival instinct that is inscribed in human genes from the times of “animal” mating. It was done from behind by our distant animal ancestors! Perhaps such a large area of skin also promotes the production of a large amount of electricity, which merges the two beings. In this regard, do scientists ever take the appropriate

measuring devices such as voltmeters, ammeters and so on when they are in bed with their darlings? If so, what are the results?

Anyway, the conversation with Jeanne's ass is an almost essential step towards the act of carnal love. It leads our bodies to the exalted desire to go further, higher, better, much better.

In this position, I can also feel with my whole hands the breasts of my beloved one, kiss her mouth at the price of some wriggling, and caress her half open sex with mine.

The fusion of our bodies has started. I penetrate tenderly my dear Jeanne, the beautiful one in which I want to be lost and reborn, the good fairy who has at last agreed with me. Her welcome is so sweet, so warm, so quivering that I feared I could not wait for the signal to start.

In a technical language, that is called precocious ejaculation. How do you avoid that miserable failure?

Now, I know how. I practice a technique to fight addictions and other desires that are so compelling that they almost become basic needs and make us their slaves, like drugs. To begin, I use my willpower. Then I find a harmless substitute for these drugs. Finally, I focus my attention on a positive action which should give me a great deal of satisfaction.

Therefore, faced with the desire to ejaculate, I imagine that my impatience reflects a need: to release my seed. It is enough therefore that I have the strength to renounce to it. Then, I say to myself: "No man, you must not go alone. Don't do it! In order that it would not be too heroic, I said to myself that I could often, in case of necessity, evacuate my sperm "with my hand," later on surely. But the craving for ejaculation cannot be forgotten so easily. I need another ally. On the rubble of this frustrated need, I must quickly install a healthy desire. Easy: I just have to concentrate on the calls of my darling, by saying to myself: "Let her enjoy! Oh yes, let her go up

to heaven!” Thus relieved, I can continue to accompany Jeanne in her pleasure, until the moment when she will be ready to take off.

With my sex, with my hands, and with my whole body, I look for the caresses which spark off in her waves of pleasure and flood us too with exquisite warmth.

The longed for moment arrived. Thank God, I could wait for it.

We two explode for a long time, again and again. Our bodies are carried away in a whirlwind of mad embraces which lead us far away, far away...

Two have become one. This two in one is calm, serene, happy. Shall I dare say that it spreads out to the dimensions of the universe? This will be literally a pretension without boundaries. Ah well, I said all the same, because it is that which I feel again.

Time is abolished. Invulnerable, we sail two in One... both of us in a moment of triumphant eternity.

Is this what the Buddhists call nirvana?

This grand voyage succeeded after the reshaping of the souls until the fusion of the bodies, in all my life, I have never known anything better. But it could not be granted to us that evening. It was necessary first to clean ourselves well from the nasty quarrel which had separated us.

What are the differences between screwing up and making love?

Oh yes! Love is not a joke, because it is impossible to cheat. Admire, once more, the wisdom of nature. The old blind teacher wants to guide us well while feeling our way towards happiness and ecstasy, provided that our thought would be enough to accept the necessary minimum of humbleness, but it would be in vain to want to cheat in the pleasures of love... She will not grant that one except to those who have won it.

"What? What are you saying? How? Thinking of stealing the pleasures of love, it's really a funny idea. But why do it?" My poor friend, it however quite simple: one will make use of the act of carnal love like a drug. One will connect the complementary sexual organs like one plugs in an electrical appliance, the male plugs fitted together in the female plugs, and then one will experience the supreme happiness. One can do it, for example, after having in an inebriated state, crushed some bicycles and their drivers; one can do it after having lost his job through idleness, or still after having sold his house to pay the gambling debts; one can do it to forget, and let life carry on with its open wounds. What the lovers do will not be in the best of cases, anything but a fine champagne of excellent quality and one can buy it not at the grocer's, but in a hotel in the red district zone.

No! What they sell in brothels is a totally different thing. Here, in this regard, it reminds me of an old story that I was told in Ouagadougou by an old colonial folkloric colonel that liked to

drink a bit too much. Lovesick, he had gone to see a beautiful prostitute. He liked to believe that she was attracted to the man that he had become, an uninteresting man that was starting to get old. He always believed this whilst he "made love" to her. But the beautiful woman made some very strange sounds, such as chewing and sucking noises. Was this her way of expressing her pleasure? At the end of his story, the man said: "Well, you'll never guess what it was! The bitch was sucking on a mango!"

As I have said before - what does it matter if ramble on! - Love bursts out when two beings of complementary sexes enrich mutually their existence to such a point that they yearn to copulate. Those there, only will receive the supreme reward because, throughout the dark times, Mômmanh has known that it was good for her majestic desire of EXISTENCE: whoever overtakes in order to gain love will be like a crook, having done at least one step in that direction. So, to whoever cheats, his Mômmanh who knows him well is not going to give the ecstasy. At best, he will feel a bitter pleasure made up of regrets of what he has lost while cheating.

Moreover, the waves which irradiate the bodies of the lovers at the moment of the orgasm, and which transport us without a spaceship or a parachute across the stars, the waves unlike anything else are cries of joy which our Mother of the Remotest Ages keeps for us: Mômmanh in person. To one of them she asks:

"So, have you finally found the mother of your children?"

And he answers her sincerely

"Yes, my Mômmanh."

To the other, she says:

"And you, my pretty one, have you finally met the father of your children?"

So, like the burst of an echo a triumphant "yes!" Mômmanh opens her great heart of stars and of ferns.

"Little does it matter to what type of children you are going to dedicate your life: some small children full of promises, a farm of horses, the struggle against sickness, the restoration of the hungry bodies and of the tired souls, the creation of beauties which carry us away towards happy tomorrows, the tapestry, the cheese shop, the embroidery, the tripe shop... little does it matter to me! Granted that you have chosen them together and that, you love them, you have enough heart to love yourselves as well. Come, my children, so that I embrace you."

So, a breathtaking kiss brings to an end the discussion.

And if two lovers are interested strictly in themselves? Theoretically, such a case is impossible because we are tied to the six aspects of the existence; the three altruistic like the three selfish ones.

So be it. But people that only ever think of themselves should not fall in love with their mirror image. Instead, surely what they need is a generous partner that satisfies their desires? Ah well, no. This love partner should first of all share the same values: selfish values. Otherwise they will always be a potential enemy. Tell me: can a dedicated union activist and a rich drug trafficker love each other?

Well. So, if two lovers practice only the minimum of altruism and a maximum of selfishness, will they have the blessing of Mômmanh just the same?

We have seen that, this blessing does not come unless the two bodies have given themselves to each other. Therefore, even the most selfish person must seek the pleasure of their lover.

First of all, before getting there, they have to seduce them, i.e. give his "myself-here-now" to the other "myself-here-now," for example,

"my house, my garden, my servants, my sumptuously laid table, my prestige..." must be compatible with corresponding wishes of the partner.

And before seducing them, they must make themselves attractive by decorating their wedding presents with good bait: assets, a well paid and prestigious job, skills, relationships, health and physical strength. They must make themselves "good match." He has had to tear away from the "now" and work hard for the future.

In brief, even for the selfish person, the search for love imposes a certain renouncement to the "myself-here-now," a minimum dose of altruism.

<p>Why has the natural selection given to man selfishness and altruism?</p>

But the true question is not there. Why is it that Mômmanh will only bless altruistic love? Through us, it is necessary to say it again; she searches for the six forms of human existence and the three selfish ones form part of it.

Through man, on our little planet, Mômmanh reaches a field of the consciousness infinitely vast compared to those which she had known until then, that it was through the things or through

the human beings. And remember, my friend reader, the way in which she gets there: through the tunnel which constitutes each one amongst us, 6 billion human beings, 6 billion distinct and necessarily different liberated consciences, obeying each one to that little bit of Mômmanh. And each of these tiny plots carried the need for the existence of the whole, which is at work in all nature. Each "I" wants to exist throughout the whole of the universe. Nothing less than that.

I chose myself as example, myself, among the 6 billion, because it is the only one which I have in my hand.

The tiny bit of Mômmanh who commands me uses my liberated conscience to realise her wish for existence. She has brought me the memory of the tastes of all my ancestors as from the mineral age, the memory of all that pleased them. My existence consists in repeating those pleasures as much as possible and to invent others like them, even better, more close to the fulfilment, which is perhaps nothing but the control of the infinite in the space of time.

Locked up like this in the interior of my liberated conscience, the biggest of all the prisons, my Mômmanh appreciates above all the existence which she can feel through my senses, concrete therefore, sure, and which at the same time satisfy her own tastes. In one word, my Mômmanh prefers the selfish existence, so close to her. And you, what pleasures do you feel best?

Your own? Or those which perhaps your great-grand children will know?

So, do you think that Mômmanh is going to forbid the selfish from loving?

However, her old experience has taught her that selfishness is death. She will therefore grant the priority to altruism. The existence closest to her will be blessed as long as the existence will seem assured far away from her, in space and in time: preferably for the myself-here-now, priority to the other-elsewhere-always.

Therefore, that night, we had not been happy lovers. Frustration woke us up early the following day at the small hours. Our embraced bodies were rather cold when they should have warmed each other mutually. Since the air was very fresh, I lit the fire in the chimney. During that time, Jeanne made the coffee. I took out a round loaf of peasant bread, slices of smoked bacon and some Reinette apples, small and quite miserable but which stung strongly our mouth and forced it to appreciate them. There was also some quite creamy milk of the neighbouring farm and some salted butter. Jeanne had invited herself by surprise, and I could not buy her favourite food which eliminates the fat well before stifling the beauty. She therefore gave herself the exceptional pleasure to devour the same breakfast as myself. The good mood settled in.

You know the extraordinary glues of our time, magic potions which lead back to life the broken porcelains, and which render intact the broken objects, more solid at the glued places than they were before: could a love be patched up that way? I did not believe it. I asked Jeanne about our break up and she answered.

– Which break up?

– You have already forgotten all those painful never ending scenes and without

outcome, after our departure for Austria. And the decision we had to take to part?

– I do not know what you want to talk about. Is it truly important? Do you love me? Here is what matters. Say! Do you love me?

– If I love you? Oh by Jove!

– So, why don't you say it?

– Because I prefer to prove it.

– One does not prevent the other. I said it to you well, I! Michel, I will love you all my life.

– I love you, Jeanne! And I will always love you! Whatever happens.

– Ouch! Ouch! Ouch! It is not frequent but when it gets you, you become funnily strong!

And naturally, our two bodies met again, each one finding besides the other the spot he had often looked for. His spot! Since our bodies are made of temporarily alive matter, a wise combination of atoms and of molecules, I started to ask the following question: when some hydrogen atoms and those of oxygen precipitate in the arms of one and the other forming water, with such a violence that one hears a great “bang!” do they feel a happiness as big as ours?” Oh yes! My madness, my mad need to understand everything was capable of spoiling the best moments. I was leaning to push her out of the way; at the same time, Jeanne carried me away resolutely on the way to happiness. She had come back; she had always been there, my well-beloved witch.

A thousand times more sure than the words which came out of her mouth, her delightful body of a fairy, in its whole entity, was saying: “I love you! Ah! I love you so much!” Lightning thoughts were crossing my mind:

– In order that she will never cease to love me like this, I will go as far as to walk on all fours and bark like a dog.

– Hey there! Aren't you ashamed? If, as it has already happened, you must mutilate your dignity to nourish the hope of being loved, send your lovely one to the devil and without beating around the bush. There are thousands of others.

– But finally, blasted kill-joy, I realise: since her arrival, she has not insulted you even once! It is perhaps the Jeanne of the strolls in the Alps who has come back

for good. She has chased away the other, the virago of the holidays in Austria, like one drives away a nightmare after a painful awakening.

I had a violent yearning to believe that that last thought was expressing the truth: also without seeing that aspect of fairy tales which she had, I considered her as true.

Suddenly, the beginning of the worries which had aroused in me the curious forgetfulness of my exquisite promise was very easily forgotten. Her body had the taste of chestnuts and it evoked the opera which is played in the autumn sky.

So, we loved each other.

Is it quite reasonable?

The incident which followed our new nuptials should have made me suspicious, but it passed nearly unobserved.

I prepared myself to go to work. So, the virago, the one I had known in Austria, pointed again her wicked chin.

– Where are you going my love?

– To work.

– Well there you are! You have not wasted any time to take up your old grimy habits! Now that you have screwed up well, you let me fall like an old sock! What a bastard!

– But, my dear, let's see! What happened to you? I have not "screwed up": we have made love and it was marvellous. So why are you all so upset now? It is just as if we had constructed a beautiful house for us two, and that you destroyed it even before we have lived in it.

– Stop my dear. It is not worth tiring yourself. I don't know what has come over me suddenly. Perhaps the fear of being pregnant. Forget all that do you want to?

And the great strangeness was erased by a tender kiss.

I left Jeanne at the house, all busy taking hold of the situation, and I went to visit my young friends, for a school day.

The children, lined up in front of the entrance of the class, showed me their hands stretched forth, a face then another: I could conclude that they were properly washed. I felt they were devoured by curiosity, but they kept silent and disciplined and none of them would have dared ask me the slightest of questions which were burning their lips.

At that time, the peasants saw the teacher as a superior person, a “Mister” who came down from his coach to come amongst them in the middle of the dung of the cows and tried to teach them, if not them for whom it was too late, at least their children. Although the French Revolution had happened ages ago, sowing across all the countryside the belief that all men are by nature, at all cost, equal, in spite of the praiseworthy effort followed for two centuries, the majority of the peasants, themselves, remained convinced of being by nature inferior men to whom the lottery of inheritance had unluckily given a limited intelligence.

That idea held on to the wrong interpretation of a fact: if they had not “learned well at school,” according to them, it was inevitably because they were not “gifted.” In that logic, those who had shown themselves capable of studying in the colleges and in the secondary schools of the city, those about whom one said with respect that they had gone to “The Big Schools,” those were “intelligent.” And the peasants believed that the majority of their children had not received the gift of intelligence since, in spite of all their efforts combined with those of the teacher and the remonstrance of the parents, they did not learn much.

But they were keen on this practical knowledge, authenticated by the famous Certificate of Primary Studies because it contributed a great deal to the improvement of their life. Furthermore, the primary school was also a lottery from where a big hit

came out from time to time: an exceptional child, gifted for studies. One came to an arrangement then “to push” him into the “big schools.” Such had been my case.

Therefore, the teacher was supposed to have a superior intelligence. He gave the precious “primary instructions” which the peasants appreciated a great deal and, by doing so, he could from time to time, like a happy fisherman sometimes pull out of the water a legendary pike, arouse a beautiful thought of the great class, a Leonardo da Vinci who lay dormant, hidden behind the hedged bushes, at the end of the muddy road. I suppose that all these reasons had contributed to the setting up of the precious rule: one had to respect absolutely the “school teachers.” Happy times for the teachers... But this is another story.

To my young brothers, the peasants, my students, I was yearning to give this pleasure which would not have cost me anything: announce that Jeanne was my fiancée who had come from Paris especially to see us, me and my Landoriens, before our imminent marriage. But, after a good moment, my “guardian angel” pulled me by my sleeve into my blind consciousness. I listened finally to him because he is often a good adviser.

What is the purpose of dreams? Do we have a guardian angel?

But I have not yet introduced my guardian angel. It is no use envying me, because, you have one as well. Mine is called Dionysus.

When I am awake, my Mômmanh is very busy controlling what am I going to do; at the same time, she must supervise the surroundings. She gets important information that she has no time to

deal with: so, she stocks it up. At night, when I sleep, she "goes over" them and she integrates into my existence what she judges useful, the most frequent true dreams. The result is sent to my conscience which accepts only a part, the unacceptable is suppressed.

It is often when I awake that Dionysus talks to me, but he can do it even later. That was the case on that day. He called me with insistence like an irritating alarm clock.

"So? You see well that one must not disturb me now! But what do you want from me, at the end? - You are going to do a great stupidity. Besides, you have already started it. It is not the moment to speak to them about the girl who slept at your house. Certainly no! - Ah! And why then? - Because you are not married, hare-brained fellow! - That is a good one, I like that! - Are you mucking about with me? - Oh sorry what an imbecile I am! - Ah! You see: vanity makes you lose your head. - Yes, you have the right to show off. Without you, I will be in a mess. It is even possible that I would have lost my Jeanne. But no: by putting all those problems on my back I could see well if she was keen on me. - In order to know it, you definitely don't need to set her to trial... Life will continue to take care of her freely. In any case, one must not provoke a lynching by prolonging that impracticable situation. - Still once more, you are right. Thanks for having warned me. I will get even with you. - I ask myself well how! While waiting you

would do better to start the lessons: your students are beginning to fidget."

Dionysos, then, had just reminded me that, according to circumstances, Landory was sometimes an oasis of human warmth where one had better take up his strength, sometimes a hunting place for man.

By facing the brave Landoriens, Jeanne had placed us in a dangerous situation. And I, who should have known it, had committed us headlong in that trap which not going to take long to close. Does love render one stupid?

How an isolated village is a closed field of existence, an existential prison.

At that time, the country communes were still quite often bubbles where the existences of their inhabitants were shut up. The long epoch during which each village was an existential space completely closed, was not too far. The majority of the people, having nothing but their feet to move about, never went beyond the nearby villages. Apart from the dreams, the part of the existence linked to others could fulfil themselves only there, naked under the look of the villagers who knew each other and who saw everything. Therefore, it was dangerous to infringe the rules of the lives of the little existential local bubble.

The modern means of communication, the car especially, and the increase of free time makes it possible now to escape from that trap. But in those times, these two liberators produced very limited effects.

At the village of Landory, the unexpected arrival of Jeanne did not fail to set in motion the process of recognition of a foreign body, or the more so, since that body not only was young and beautiful, but seemed closely linked to that of a teacher, an important member of the tribe of the village.

Did I make believe that I was probably making love to my fiancée? At that time, the people of the countryside considered that that was not decent at all. On the contrary, it was allowed to go to a prostitute, on condition that one was discreet; in return for that reservation, it was also considered as a test of virility, therefore honourable. And this is how the villagers reconciled the puritan and the old religious convictions with the excessively pressing needs of sexual nature.

Furthermore, according to their definition, she who accepted to give herself before marriage was a whore. And if, unfortunately, a child was born then that poor child, would be a scum of the human community, a wretched “son of a bitch.” Besides, the people who grew up in the Islamic tradition still have, quite often, the same convictions, because their religious culture of the past has remained more enduring than ours: their moral rules entrenched have not yet undergone the powerful erosion which modern freedom provokes.

By passing the night at my house, Jeanne had put us in danger. Because what was not decent for a simple villager became intolerable when it was a “school teacher,” who had to show a good example to the children. Brought up in a city where one can do pretty much all that he wants, putting aside walking naked in the road, Jeanne could not guess the dangers of the situation. I should have warned her the day before her arrival, and we should have looked together for another shelter for her for the night.

I believed that Jeanne was going to criticise me quite justifiably. Not only did she not do anything, but she did not believe that the danger was real. How was I to convince her, that “stubborn” one ‘?

Now, the gossipers were on the verge of beating their brand tom-tom of the village.

– Do you know the news, Mrs Tabirou?

– How is that, Mrs Jordane?

– The young lady who arrived by bus, yesterday evening?

– The young lady, as you say, dressed up as they do in the cities, made up, with red lipstick on her lips, red on the nails and perhaps even elsewhere, which she shows to the chaps with whom she sleeps.

– Oh lady, I do not know if she has a lot of them. In any case, she has spent the night with Monsieur Dufour.

– Isn’t it possible? Well that is so!

– So true that I said it to you, my dear young mothers.

– And you, Reverend parish priest, what do you think of it? She is setting the example, what? What will they become, the young students in there, I ask you?

– My good ladies, how often have I said it? When there is no religion left, everything is allowed: there are no morals left. Didn’t I say it to you as well, that that school is the “School of the Devil”? There they are fornicating now, and in public! The Good God cannot allow that to happen: he will send us a terrible punishment, in other times he has destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah because they were living in sin.

– Look here, Reverend, not everybody can live like a saint.

– Listen, Monsieur Morvan, you must try just the same. Think of all the explanations that you must give on the Day of the Last Judgement!

– I think about it, Reverend, I think about it! But when you speak of the “School of the Devil,” you exaggerate a lot, just the same. I would call it rather the “School of Progress.” Our good peasants are sharper and they live much better since there has been this school. You will not tell me that it is the work of the devil?

– Oh! It is rather crafty! It is for this reason that we call him “the cunning one.”

- Personally, I find that that school teaches them well. And after that, they can go to the catechism and to church whenever they want: religion can find there its explanation... But, after all, the girl who has slept at Monsieur Dufour's, could she be perhaps his sister? Or his fiancée? And who can tell you that they slept in the same bed?
- At that age, one is hot blooded. I can bet on whatever you want that they slept together, saying to themselves to warm each other.
- Ah! Mother Christmas, how can you know those things? It has been such a long time... You have surely forgotten how it is done, and even what it tasted like.
- Say then, **Monsieur** Morvan, does it suit you to show off! I do not want to bother the Reverend, otherwise I will remind you of some recollections which will make you blush, old crook!
- Ah well? Good heavens! You must come to confess both of you. And then, Monsieur Morvan, I believe that your ideas about school are not too catholic. One cannot be a Christian on Sunday, and an unbeliever the rest of the week.

In what is the isolated village alienating itself? In what is the city a liberator? In what does the closed village favour the sclerosis and the city the progress?

The tom-tom of the village plays the same role as the national media: it dissects and spreads the news. Then, to incorporate that manna to the collective existence, one waits for the opinion of the wise men of the country known by the inhabitants. These teachers bring a judgement which conforms to that expected by the existential appetites born, brought up, and educated in that place, the "myself" of the village. It is over: no

more people can shy away from the standard news unless they face some pressures which can go as far as the unbearable.

Because, in order to assure the collective part of the existence, the one which is linked to the others, requires some common rules. Those which are imperative under the penalty of serious sanctions regard the dominant ideology. The others, linked to the activities, to traditions, to the fashion... constitute the local culture: here they love the fife and the bouillabaisse; elsewhere it is the accordion and the sausage pancake.

Therefore, in the village of the past where one found himself closed through the lack of transport, it was impossible to escape the eyes of the others, especially to those of the gossipers. In the cities, on the contrary, those of today like those of other times, one would have had to be mad to try to get to know each of the thousands and thousands of inhabitants. Outside his district, each one escapes the look of the others, and consequently, to their existential pressure. In return for some precautions, one can do what he likes.

So the city renders one free. This freedom has two faces: if it favours a crime, it allows also creativity to realise itself. It is a result of progress.

Like this, the process towards infamy had already started. If Jeanne spent one more night at my house, the whole village would have started to reject us. My beloved one did not take long to understand some allusions so much so that she believed to have misunderstood them: "Hold on! The whore has not woken up early this morning. The lady! One cannot work by day and by night." Soon, my students would cease to look at me in the face; whispering behind my back, always louder, they would stop to greet me, in the village streets, before starting to hurl insults or apple cores across my way, both of them anonymous. Anonymous even the stones which would break our window panes and certain letters which the postman would put, mockingly.

The day would come when one had to leave, hunted by that big family which I loved. I surely wanted to go away, but not in that manner. I wanted the village to accompany us with its wishes that we could come back one day, loaded with the indispensable novelties which we were going to fetch.

It was Mr Morvan who showed us how to make up for our false step.

Mr Morvan, the old watchmaker of Landory treated me like the son whom he had lost. The latter, after succeeding brilliantly in his studies, did not want to extend the reprieve which would have allowed him to wait for the end of the War in Algiers. He had left risking his life, like his comrades: he had come back in a coffin.

I do not know where Mr Morvan had learnt that wisdom not to take anything for granted, not even his life, neither that of his son or of his beloved one. It is what allowed him to continue to live in spite of everything, and to employ to the best the extra years which a robust health had given him. To make his sorrow flow back, instead of invoking death, he chose to fight her by giving strength to the living ones, by means of wise advice and the help he gave them. So if I was proud to receive the support that he would have given to his son, at the same time, I feared the responsibility that there was to carry the intentions of such a wonderful soul. And, do you know it? Not to deceive Mr Morvan: that duty that nothing ever imposed on me, which I still feel always.

It was a Wednesday. Now, at that time, the students were on holidays on Thursday, from where the expression which made millions dream between themselves: “A four Thursday week.” Since I had a holiday on the following day, I would have had ample time to prepare my lessons: I could then go back to my house early. As soon as, the class was over, my students were freed, scattered happily like loose horses in a meadow on a spring day, I went to join my beautiful one.

Hardly had I closed the door of my house that Mr Morvan asked to come in. I knew that he had watched out for my return and I also guessed the aim of his visit. I was happy to have his help: we two, we would have to convince Jeanne.

The “stubborn one” willingly accepted, and even with gratitude, the advice of Mr Morvan: she had perceived right away the painful wisdom of the old man.

To the leaders of the landorianne opinion, we would introduce her for what she was: my fiancée.

– She has spent a night at my house, without fear!

– Let us see! It was a case which couldn’t be helped.

Coming from Paris, she could not know that the country peasants still enforced some rather strict rules; as far as I am concerned I had learned them during my infancy, all the years spent in the city had nearly made me forget them; and then, our meeting had taken place quite late, on the threshold of my house, after a long working day for me and a tiring trip for Jeanne who, moreover, was convalescing. In those conditions, we decided to wait, till the following day to dispose of all the time which a good moving into a hotel required: this choice seemed reasonable to them, even more because they themselves were horrified of sudden actions.

“It may be, but during that unfortunate night that we had spent the two of us under the same roof, and without fear! Hasn’t my fiancée’s virtue suffered? – Oh! Come on! It is necessary that the Landoriens have confidence in their school teachers!

Without which, where will they go? So, one should have accused the Reverend Parish Priest of sleeping with his maid? Oh!”

The cart being nearly out of the ditch where we had emptied it, the three of us went to book a room at the Hôtel des Voyageurs where we had dinner.

Mrs Pigeon, the owner, was a superior woman with an opulent built, which did not prevent her from being lively and firmly planted on her solid legs. Her look was benevolent. She acted equally as the village newspaper and this out of pure generosity: the news which she spread in abundance were entirely free and, above all, they were never inspired by malice.

Naturally, we made use of that good press to diffuse the image which the villagers had to have of those through whom the scandal could arrive: a quite pleasant and promising engaged couple very much attached to Landory. An expert, Mrs Pigeon did her utmost to discover our secrets. Mr Morvan took the floor every time that we risked committing a blunder. Who was the manipulator? Who was the manipulated? Little does it matter, since the ones like the others, we had only good intentions.

So, like a skilful head of state diffuses on television the image that the people are going to have of him, we let the Landoriens know what they had to think. Mrs Pigeon approved that we had not gone on the eve to settle Jeanne in her hotel: at such a late hour, she could not have received my fiancée properly, even more because she was busy with the preparations of a wedding.

Jeanne was not only a Parisian, she was a school psychologist.

– Ah, really? And what does a school psychologist do? Does she cure the mad ones?

– But no, Madame Pigeon. Besides, Monsieur Dufour does not need that type of care.

– I hope so!

– No, I don’t take care of the mad. My work consists in searching how the brain of

the children works to try and make good students out of them. And also so that they prosper, surely...

– Oh well! Here is a sacred job! You are not close to see the end of it. And where are you going to perform that beautiful job, Miss Jeanne? Not amongst us, I honestly hope, in your interest. Here, the people are still a bit backwards, you know: it would terrify them if one would go rummaging about in their kids' head.

– You are right! Since we do not know big things about the human mind, it is dangerous to want to rummage about it. But quite correctly, because they have a scientific formation, the psychologists are well warned about that danger. It is because one can trust them. Whatever the case, I will not harm your children because I am here on holidays, for two weeks only. But to be quite at ease, one only has to say that I am a nurse.

– Oh no! Jeanne! One must not lie to them: I am a teacher, just the same! And they trust me!

– Monsieur Dufour is right, miss, one must not lie to them. Isn't it so, Madame Pigeon?

– Miss Jeanne was saying that for a just cause. Lies pay a high price, even when one pays only later for them: if you pass for a nurse, one would ask you to cure all the pains of Landory, real and imaginary, and that will only be the beginning of your troubles. No! Definitely not a nurse!

– So. What must one tell them?

– The truth, my dear. Is it so complicated to behave in a simple manner?

– Oh! My goodness!

– But yes, surely. You are a school psychologist who does not risk bewitching their children, nobody else, except me, because you do not act ruthlessly in this village...

And while continuing like this, we spread a story, in order to account, quite closely to the truth. After her operation, my fiancée had come to me for two weeks of convalescence. Without which the date was stopped, we had to marry in a very near future. Jeanne would spend her nights at the hotel. She would dedicate her days looking after my home, to do the shopping, to prepare our dinner: in brief, take care of me. The following day, a holiday, we would go together to the city where she would buy some books.

Afterwards, her activities would lead her naturally to meet again plenty of Landoriens: she would take up conversation with them all, even those whose head seemed turned away. Thanks to her talents of a psychologist, she would be so subtle as to shock nobody, whether it was by word or behaviour badly matched with the sweet countryside. Like this, everybody will say that the school teacher had a good chance of marrying such a good girl, “and a pretty one as well!”

Dinner was excellent: a wedding banquet had taken place in the big hall and the guests of the hotel benefited from it. Alas! Jeanne had to follow her slimming diet, if she did not want to find a kilo of fat which she had tried so hard to eliminate. But, could she upset our generous hostess?

– A diet? To make yourself ill? Ah! Believe me: if there had been many good things in my plate when I was young, I would have treated myself heartily.

– Surely! But...

– You don’t find that good, I bet? Accustomed as you must be to eat confetti salads, haven’t you surely lost your appetite?

– Oh! Madame Pigeon, but it is delicious! I would like to ask you even for the recipe, if it’s not a secret.

– Ah! You are not completely broken down. I will give you my recipe tomorrow. You could teach your starving Parisians to eat, because one could consider them as cases of tuberculosis.

Mrs Pigeon had found herself a vocation of a foster mother: it was like this that she gave her contribution to the blooming of humanity. The plump flesh and the red dye which her rich and mouth-watering food gave were according to her, sign of good health.

At our times, such a mistress would affectionately be called Eugénie, or “La Génie.” But, as a humble servant doing all sorts of jobs, she had worked hard to become a lady. Calling her “Madame,” was simply a question of rendering homage to her courage, her intelligence and her big hearth. It was therefore, with respect and affection: “Madame Pigeon.”

She took Jeanne under her wings and decided to mother her till her departure, so that she would go back to Paris in good shape. Unfortunately, she could not obtain the full success which her efforts deserved, because Jeanne dined, or rather fasted, nearly every evening at my house, in my company.

Those who offered the wedding party, the parents of the bride and the bridegroom invited us to have a “toast” with them and to dance.

It was the blacksmith who was giving in marriage his daughter Yvonne to the young boy Marcel, his chief-worker. He almost did not have any more horses to shoe since the new ones, vulgarly called tractors, were mounted on tyres. So, Marcel assured the re-conversion of the forge into a mechanical agricultural workshop. Marcel and Yvonne got married for life. But yes, it’s true! Authorised by the law, forbidden by the Church, divorce was still in every way a taboo in the hearts. If one had chosen wrongly his partner, it could happen, in the worst of cases that love changed into hatred. All during the lifetime, the hearth was a place of suffering, even for the children and madness would prowl around in the blasted house.

It is because the wedding was a big feast shaded in red. The guests were the parents, the friends who, later on, would remind the married couple: “I was at your wedding. Ah! Good grief! It was a beautiful wedding!” And perhaps that would be enough to make them leave the sorrowful path of hatred in order to take up again their painful path of love.

Jeanne did not need me to explain that to her. In the middle of the general happiness, she knew how to encourage the young married couple to love each other well. We danced, we sang, we were wild till the late hours of the night, until the moment when my convalescing fiancée said:

- Oh! I am exhausted. I am going to sleep.
- It is all right, my dear. What a party, eh?
- Oh yes! It suits us well! In Paris, one cannot afford that. Oh well, my dear! But where are you going?

- We’re going home, of course! Funny question.
- Are you drunk? You will come with me to the door of my room, and then you will wisely sleep in your cold bachelor’s bed. Do you want to cause a big scandal?
- Dear! Oh dear! Oh dear! It is true! Blast the devout Catholics! Blast the churchy old man!
- Aren’t you ashamed of insulting these good people, our friends? It is very honourable, besides, to sleep in separate rooms. Don’t the nobles sleep like this? Good night, my dear.
- So, good night! my beautiful girl...I will find you here for breakfast.

Jeanne was appreciated by the Landoriens. It is not surprising because she struggled hard to give them the image they made of an ideal fiancée for their young school teacher. She excels in that art.

She had to play then the role of a complex character, a sweet Parisian in love with an enlightened peasant ready for all the efforts to be worthy of him. According to me she pushed the traits a bit too far, by going as far as the uncertain limit where her interlocutor risked telling her: “Are you kidding? Do you want to take the piss out of me, or what? Do I look so stupid?” she didn’t play the following scene in the honour of the vainest of peasant teachers of Landory! That took place in the presence of a cow of which one will never know whether she was coughing or she was choking with laughter.

Jeanne dared ask how the precious animal managed to make out the commands which were given to her: milk, butter, cheese, fresh cream... and that, while breastfeeding her calf. The cock (or rather the dupe) of the village was over joyous and he answered her.

- A good well-trained cow does that easily. There where it hurts her most, is there to produce ice-cream in full summer.
- There you are, Mr Hubert, you are making fun of me. I can very well be a Parisian, but I am not as stupid as that no matter what!
- You mustn’t get me wrong, young lady. It is necessary to laugh a little as long as

one is alive, because, when one dies, it will be too late. That's it! Tell me, isn't it true? What, am I not right?

– Certainly, you are right, Mr Hubert.

So, Jeanne was adopted by the peasants of Landory. Many expressed their sincere regrets when she had to reach Paris. Shamelessly, she promised to come back in a matter of time and forever. She was soon, announcing, that we were getting married at Landory, would have a big wedding and we would settle there for good. Why did she do promises to them which we did not want to keep? She knew well, however, that I was toying with the idea of leaving to teach in Black Africa which, at that time, was an easy dream to realise. I was hoping to start my career abroad after the next return to school. That misunderstanding was the cause of a little cloud which came back from time to time to spur on our love.

You have seen her, to please our fellow friends; Jeanne does not hesitate to be funny and to invent pleasant stories. She excels in that game, but at the same time she contrasts strongly my obsessive desire of knowledge. You imagine how much that can irritate me. I am still happy that I am not quick tempered.

Therefore, I shared with her a part of my annoyance.

– Let us see, my dear, don't you see that we do this for laughing?

– Well? Not truly, no.

– Don't you have the sense of humour?

– Oh, I had it, a long time ago. But the demon which you know took it away from me. I would love to find it again, because it was strangely good. Moreover, I would know that I have found again a good mental health. But it will be long, you know.

– Ah well; to start with, try to appreciate my little explorations of mystifications.

– Well. Since it is just to laugh.

A little too easily, I let myself be persuaded that it was an innocent game: to laugh, like humour.

What is humour? What is the purpose of humour?

In fact, Mômmanh gave us the game and humour to relieve our existential anxiety, principally when she becomes uselessly unbearable.

When, through thought, through action, one does his best to reach an objective, if the result is in spite of everything all a flop while the existential consequences are not serious, one says to himself: "What was the point?" and we start laughing.

For example, the clown adjusts his costume, checks his knotted butterfly and introduces himself, all smiling, a magnificent bouquet in his hands; he says: "Happy birthday, my dear-dear, happy... birth...day!" And he receives a household bucket of water on his face. We have had the illusion, a moment, that it is useless to worry a lot in order to succeed his existence since, in every way the result risks escaping us. But it is not necessary that the consequences of the failure be tragic. In the example of the clown, the disappointment of the lovers are minor, even so because it is not I who has to put up with them.

Since it is not necessary that that means: "In all manners, there is nothing to do about it."

It will be desperate instead of being hilarious. Suppose that our clown, failing in an acrobatic number, instead of remaining hanging to the trapezium by the bottom of the trousers, misses truly his chance and crushes on the ring. The comedy which failed has changed to tragedy.

Anxiety encourages us to look for the best ways to reach our objectives. But there is a moment when that search must stop because it will give nothing else. At that stage, we have to accept the risk of failure. It is to help us get over that step that Mômmanh has given us humour. The failure of a well prepared action without seriousness tells me: "It is better not to demand to master the situation, since there is often the risk of failure."

Don't demand!

So, thanks to a little bit of humour, I do not demand to succeed, I do not demand anything else, which does not mean at all that I renounce: on the contrary, freed from the anxiety, my will is only stronger about it. I accept, laughingly, the risk of failure, and here I am relaxed, prepared for another efficient action.

And in what concerns me, the demon who lives in me had taken away the gift of Mômmanh that safeguard: I had lost the sense of humour. Faced with any stress, my reply was: "I demand! I

demand! I demand to master the situation." Well, I did not manage to "loosen up."

I remembered how good it was to laugh, but that pleasure had been denied to me. The possibility of laughing still existed, but it was contrasted by the barrier which held it back. When something funny happened that, despite everything, triggered the reflex which should have been a relief, I did laugh... but it wasn't pleasant: I had tears in my eyes, acute pains hurt my sides, I felt like I was suffocating and about to black out. The only laughter which I knew from then on, the laughter which forced my stiff resistance, was a torture, a fiery torrent that tore my oppressed chest.

Today I know that my ability to laugh when humour comes is the best barometer of my recovery. When I hear a good word, I often want to repeat what I'm doing here: to try to understand the humour in it. And, at once, the spell is broken, my laughter is choked and I am invaded by worries.

"O great simpleton, you are so stupid!" Humour tells you that it is futile to look further, yet you do exactly the opposite. So let laughter purge your sick mind!

Humour is in intimate contact with the struggle for existence. It has to show the failure of the attempts of existence, without necessarily discouraging the actors, by destroying the true or

the good. He has to cut to the bone of the existence without hurting it, like a gardener prunes the rose bush. The comic does not have the right to show himself stupid: he must, on the contrary, be a particularly subtle guide. This is why humour is doubtlessly the most difficult of the arts. The clown-acrobat is a good representative of it. He must realise some acrobatic numbers which go from one fiasco to the other, but he must not hurt himself in the slightest way: it is necessary that he is the best of acrobats.

Do not forget, either, the effect of surprise. It seems almost essential to me. And the bigger the surprise, the more the comic takes away your worries. Laughter takes you away and your soul is washed.

Therefore, it is good that he knows how to provoke laughter. Like this, to whoever seems so, the English humour will contribute to eliminate the panic and to prepare their victory, when the Germans were drinking to the health of their human brothers of the bombs. Once more it is necessary that it is truly humour.

To testify that deceased apprentice.

The workers of a garage pretended to amuse themselves by sending compressed air, which served ordinarily, to inflate the tyres, in the arse hole of an apprentice. They expected to transform him

in a Bibendum, that fat simple good natured bloke made up of tyres which is the emblem of the Michelin firm. Since the patient hardly had any sense of humour, he shouted cries of terror. The other apprentice had the sense of humour. "Look, fellows! I am Bibendum." laughing like a mad person, he lent his own buttocks for the hilarious experience. "Ah well? You would tell me. - He died of laughter."

What does a game serve for?

The game, which is a blank exercise, had the following in common with humour: it is "to laugh." Both of them, by eliminating the obligation of success, release us from the fear which inhibits us when the stress is too heavy. Besides its function as a relaxant, the game can be used to practice the existence by simulation. The children dedicate a lot of the time to it when they play firemen, Superman, mother and father...

Let us come back to Jeanne, the annoying one. In order not to lose the delights of the peace recently rediscovered, I wanted to admit that the lies which she related to the Landoriens were innocent jokes, "to laugh." Afterwards, I was obliged to see that it was neither a question of games nor a question of humour. I appreciated the comedy which she played to please our fellow friends for such a long time that it could pass for an amusing game. But it happened quite often that she exceeded the limits and that her lies were loaded with unfortunate risks.

In order to please our fellow friends, a lot and quickly, she had taken the habit of deceiving them. Since she had practised that art for such a long time, she succeeded in it quite well. She was capable of passing for a musician, a chess player, a philosopher, a horticulture expert... She let the people believe that they interested her immensely which generally pleased them a great deal; besides, she would have the pleasure to receive them frequently. "Yes, yes, yes! You must visit us." How many invitations did she distribute without any follow-up! She gave our fellow friends whatever could please them and led them to say: "Oh my my! What a wonderful girl!" That stratagem cost us, besides some invitations which Jeanne accepted willingly and which she forgot to return. But, besides the fact that it was dishonest, it compelled us to change often the relations, depriving ourselves also of true friends.

I wished that in the others' hearts, our existence was true. Those false purchases done in a fraudulent manner repelled me. Luckily, afterwards, Jeanne granted me a minimum of concessions in that domain.

Later on, I tried to understand that behaviour. I discovered that Jeanne had developed an excessive attachment to the "appearance" which overwhelmed the "being." With those results, I was hardly more advanced. Why? Why was my beloved acting like this?

She did not know anything about it herself. It was a made-up vice hidden in the subconscious. We had to advance as far as the irreparable so that we could accede to the secret drawer of her soul and evacuate the stench.

During those happy days at Landory, except for the misunderstanding that I am going to evoke, there were no quarrels between Jeanne and myself. Those two weeks passed like an enchantment.

During the day, while I was in class, she looked after the house, she washed our linen, and she prepared the evening meal. We would go together to do the shopping. Sometimes, I found that she had done much more than her share of the

work, even though she was convalescing, don't forget that. Like this, one evening, I observed that she had polished all my boots, cleaned my car from top to bottom, and even polished the car body, cleaned all the window panes of the house... She seemed quite tired, her hands were reddish, her hair in disorder and her make-up in a mess like the very old paint of certain kitchens. Therefore where had her beauty gone?

– You must not work so hard, my dear, look in what state you are. It is enough that you do your part.

– I do not ask for anything better, my dear. So what is my part?

– As you are not working at the moment...

– And what I do at home, what is that called?

– Work, surely, very much of it and too heavy. So I correct that error in our current language: because you stay at home, you must do more work there than normal but, since you are convalescing...

– Since I am convalescing, my share of housework will be the same as in ordinary times, when I go to work.

– Is that quite true? You speak as if we are going “to get married again.” Isn't it only a fable to deceive the Landoriens?

– I will tell you soon what it is. For the time being, let us do like... Do you mind?

– How do you know that I will accept to marry you?

– I know it: that's all. Am I not right?

– Yes, you are right. You have trapped me once again in your net.

– Ah! Men. If you knew how easy it is to deceive you? I have only to snap my fingers and there are fifty of them who follow me.

– Aren't you being a bit pretentious?

– Not in this field. But it's you I love, my little country bumpkin.

– Thank you for calling me a country bumpkin.

– You are my little piece of deep countryside: honest, calm and level-headed. I trust you. You come from a world where nature, houses and families last for centuries, whilst my suburb changes like the waves on the water. That permanence is worth at least a little bit of boredom...

– Is it true that you came to explore my country, before the accident happened?

– It is true: I came to spend a week in your area and I quite liked the natives, especially the Normaliens.

- So then, you have made some effort to choose me.
- Perhaps, but don't consider yourself indispensable. Well! I will tell you soon if I want to marry you. Whilst we're waiting, let's pretend we are married. Do you want to do that? If... if I were your wife and if I had to carry out my eight hours of work every day, what would my share of the housework be?
- If we were married, normally you would do the cooking, the housework, the washing up, the washing and the ironing...
- And you?
- We would share the shopping and I will help you sometimes with the housework. It is I who will assure the maintenance of the appliances...as well as the odd jobs. I would look after the car, alone. I will manage our budget and I will take care of all the paperwork. I will do all the work in the garden when we shall have one.
- I would love to do some gardening too, sometimes.
- Ah well, you can give me a helping hand when you feel like it.
- And can I plant what I like?
- Probably: we will discuss it and we will come to an agreement.
- And when I will be too tired, will you help me do my part?
- As far as it is possible, yes. There you are! Since you are quite weary this evening, rest. It is I who will do the crockery. Besides... I will do it often.
- Promise?
- Promise.
- Let us see! Will you not kiss me, ugly as I am?
- But yes. When you are worn out and black like a chimney sweeper, I love you just the same.
- I am ugly. Don't kiss me, I beg of you. Take me rather in your arms.

It seems, now, that those two weeks passed quickly. It is because there were not any outstanding events, before the big final decision. There were some rainy days during which I made the sun go down in the hearth under the form of happy blazing fire of beech. The sky granted us some baroque operas of autumn. Since it did not rain much, we could sometimes explore the wooded hedges and the hollow tracks in search of mushrooms or chestnuts. The Lake of the Roche Dure was inhabited by moving reflections, reddish and bluish, wavy under the stormy strokes of the comb: it

seemed to contain, quite some curious stories which one had to refrain from hearing before the winter fossilised itself completely in a shroud of ice.

In the evening, we read a little and we talked: we had so many projects! Virtual projects, because we continued to “act as if it were yes”: as if our deep disagreements had not been placed temporarily in parenthesis.

Like a butterfly after the metamorphosis, a third Jeanne was revealing itself.

The first, that of love at first sight in the mountain: she had captured me by making me believe that I was her god, and then she controlled my state of dependence by throwing me over the Olympus. The second had hardly anything in common with the first except for the name and the identity card: she had shown herself so odious that I did not suffer much to leave her. Finally, there was the third Jeanne who seemed to do with me the apprenticeship of life in common.

Was one of the three the true one? Not sure: a fourth could come out from the box of mischief.

There is near Landory, a modest and very old chapel where, it seems, that the pilgrims of the Middle Ages stopped to pray. Its granite stones having acquired a sheen throughout the years, welcomed throughout the long time the moss and the lichens. An enclosure of grass surrounds it, itself being belted by beech trees and oaks. One can see there an old one still green, a hawthorn so old that it has the same height as a tree: one could say that she saw the last Roman soldiers of our region. Below, in the meadows, the little streamlet murmurs and it hollows out here its bed for thousands and thousands of years, creating obstinately its green ribbon of nature in the armoricaine rocks.

It's there where Jeanne led me the day of her departure. When I knew why, I found out that her choice was good: in that place, Mômmanh has seen passing such a big number of human beings and of events that it was a place inhabited by wisdom, a good place for important decisions.

She had adorned herself with an exquisite simplicity which highlighted the expressions of her face. At that time, there I read the one who had released the love at first sight: the air of being at times surprised, amused, and ravished by enjoying life wholeheartedly. I was a captive. I then sat next to her. Her expression changed as she had done so often, to such a point that I had the impression that I had somebody else by my side. So, with excessive seriousness, which changed her beauty, she announced: “Michel, I feel well with you. Moreover, listen to me well, because I felt bad till I arrived there: let us cease to act “as if yes,” let us get married.”

Carried away by I don't know which stupid joy, I decided to marry Jeanne as soon as possible and to sow in her tummy my contribution to the little man who Mômmanh would have entrusted us with soon. The life which beforehand had appeared of a terrifying complexity, froth with hunting traps had become quite simple.

How the subconscious which sometimes governs us is not always bad.

What sort of faith encouraged me to charge along in the fog? You have not forgotten Dionysus, my very precious guardian angel, but who, all the same, is mistaken sometimes: ah well, it is perhaps him who led me in that road without return.

What an adventure!

Afterwards, everything proceeded quickly. In the heart of winter, we were married.

After we did what was necessary to do for that, our Mômmanh placed in my Loved One's tummy the unknown which would become our first child.

It wasn't a matter to boast about, because it was truly very easy, even for Jeanne who had to carry it. But, during two or three decades, helping that child to become a man of his times, that is to say, a man of the future, behold that it could be sometimes heavy to carry.

7-The Cost of the War

The Hundred Years War, our war: it would have lasted just the same about fifteen years and it was still lasting on, if the death of an infant hadn't brutally put an end to it. Of course, to detach ourselves from our ego inflated like a big stuffed belly, it took some vicious backwards kicking. But not that torture!

In spite of everything, I hope in your indulgence for the "absurdities" that we have done. Could we avoid them, or at least part of them? In what concerns us, the question is unwelcome: it is too late! Luckily, you are there, dear reader, and since you did us the pleasure to accompany us up till here, you can finally render yourself useful. No. Not by calling SAMU: our health is good, thanks.

That strong sorrow which from time to time haunted us, which, in the middle of a successful party makes us emit a sob, that blasted and holy sorrow which will accompany us till the last day is simply the reminder of a message from the other world which I must transmit to you: before taking the responsibility of having a child, be assured that your love is the type which authorises the continuation of life. Like this, you will perhaps have the chance to have children healthy in body and soul, beautiful children at the same time happy and impatient to continue the conquests of man. And living! Oh Good God!

Yes, I have invited you to the wedding and here I am leading you to the cemetery. You will abandon me there because you refuse to think about death, isn't it so? "It is too sad! You'd say in all ways, we cannot do anything about it." So, you will die. As far as we are concerned, my Love and I, after our daughter's death, we did not have the right to die: because there are three of us.

Yes, you have well understood: we two are three persons. Just a little bit of patience still, and you will understand everything.”

Very simply, at the bottom of our common distress, there appeared to us quite a feeble light at the beginning, but strong. Having followed it, here is what we saw: that road so fragile and so dear, broken by death and by our mistake, it was possible to extend it so that it would not have been in vain. Not only we could, but we had to. So, we took a triple commitment.

How can existence transcend death?

The first consists in keeping the promise made to our dear Estelle.

The other two came with the concern to surpass the form to get to that sacred promise.

The one orders us to relate that story to you without looking for our misplaced vanity, that to release our theory of the "Struggle for Existence" which Estelle liked so much. If it will happen that it is more of a fairy tale, so she can perhaps offer us all the hope to discover and to open up some promising pathways, other than those of eternity, at least some enduring gardens: perspectives of a more certain future than the thick contemporary fog which hides our horizon.

The third commitment imposes on us the association of the memories of Estelle to all the important events of our lives; in such a way that the best part of her should continue to live. And therefore why would one refuse to invite the dead ones to the banquet of the living? If, like us two, my Jeanne and I, you don't believe in heaven, neither in the resurrection of the souls, much less in that of the bodies, which best way do you know so that he who must not die continues to live? Besides, that carries a name which you know well now: it is THE EXISTENCE, which can extend itself indefinitely even if life has ceased. So?

This is our way of making our dear Estelle live beyond her death. You see: we are not afraid of this word any more.

Now, let's go find Estelle, and allow me to insist, since you don't seem convinced. No, there are not three place settings at our table, since we are two. No, we do not believe in ghosts. No, we never had the idea to communicate with the dead by means of an intermediary of one who calls himself medium. No, you have understood it, we are materialists: we have the conviction that it is matter which has given birth to thought. Like a computer, our body is made of matter and, in the same way the electronic intelligence dies with its material support, our soul is extinguished when life abandons the body which has generated it and nourished it. And don't make me say that the computers have a soul, so much so that they will not start to sigh, to suffer, to love and to experience orgasm. But then a totally new story would start.

So! Since the soul dies at the same time as the body, how can we, who are no witches, how can we hope to keep alive that of our deceased little girl? We cannot manage, evidently! If we have that pretension of reviving the dead ones, our place will not be any longer amongst you, but in an asylum for mad people.

“So? So? You would shout at me. – Some more patience still, please: I am coming to it.”

Effectively, at first, in order not to face the unacceptable which would have caused us despairing wailing, our thought bent, choosing not to see what appeared to us as the destruction of the world.

If it had been enough to vomit that, so that she would cease existing, our Estelle would come back from the inexistent place where the evil tongued considered her lost: a tomb! Do you realise that? She would have been there as usual, without us having noticed her arrival. The shine of her red hair would have attracted our look. With her hand, she would have spread the rotten stray lock of hair and she would have called us with her sweet eyes sometimes surprised, questioningly, smiling and worried. Life would have been simply normal, the way it should be, and the terrifying moments which I related to you would have found their only nature acceptable: that of a frightening nightmare as ephemeral as a text written with chalk on the class board, bitter reminder that a strong ray of sunshine will cancel easily.

But that death and that tomb of delirium occupied too well their place in reality.

However, they could not come into our consciousness. Every time that those burning facts started to impose themselves, our soul, disgusted, chased them away. So our look turned away from reality and we entered the region of the mad.

How far did we go in that way? For how long? I cannot tell you because our memories of that period are really too vague. It seemed that, both of us have continued to act in all respects as if our gentle Estelle, our little living fairy was always by our side. We have done her bed, prepared her breakfast, put her place setting, we have talked to her, we have even gone, it seems, as far as taking her to school and return to look for her, sometimes one, sometimes the other, as usual. And, often following what they told us, when the bothered teachers managed to stammer

“Estelle? No, I have not seen her...,” we answered: “Ah well. She has already gone home.”

It seemed also that in certain evenings, before going to sleep in our true bedroom out of reality, we had a conversation which must resemble this.

– Jeanne, are you asleep?

– You see well that I am not.

– It seems to me that Estelle did not come to kiss us. In any case, I do not remember it.

– But since it is us who did it! Come on Michel, are you losing your wits?

– Oh yes, I remember it. She was dragging on to delay the moment of sleep, and we had to help her a little. I narrated a story to her and she fell asleep. But from where is that drop coming? Jeanne, are you crying?

– Definitely, you are completely mad. Stop irritating me! My eye hurts me, quite simple.

There you are and you no longer believe me! You wear me out, my dear friend... Ah well, you are right, because you must believe me.

Which must be the role of truth in art?

Haven't I already spoken of that essential faculty which for us was chosen by Mômmanh: the power to make appear quite well the horrible as well as the beautiful, a power which manifests itself in the dream as in artistic creation. You have not forgotten the beautiful face of a

sensible manner which we desire and the horrible, which we fear.

My friend, make sure that you internalise these preliminary definitions well if you wish to understand later.

What nourishes human existence is the right and the good, as opposed to bad and evil. Their representations are partly beautiful, partly ugly and all of the varieties of horrible. They correspond to the aspirations and rejections of the need for existence. We can not see them in their pure state: only in the objects in which they are embodied. Sometimes an artist, inventing existence, discovers an unknown aspiration and, therefore, a new beauty. No computer can feel that, at least whilst they are free of the need to exist.

To avoid horror and to attain beauty: this lives in the state of dreams for such a long time that the artist (or more often an ordinary creator) does not show us how to make it real. These means are the elements chosen in our universe which will serve to build the objects that contain dream, suddenly making it real. Thus, the desire to move easily in space is achieved by the domestication of the horse and the invention of the bicycle, train, boat, car, plane etc. The desire for lasting love as it is expressed in Romeo and Juliet will be satisfied by the invention of the marriage of love, which is replacing the marriage of convenience.

Let's leave aside monsters and other ugliness because I know that you do not want to create it: long live beauty.

But let's get back to the work of the artist, which is not required to show us achievable dreams nor, even less, to realize them. It is still necessary to give them a body, looking in the real, or just in the imagination, for elements that contain these existential dreams, like a flower contains harmony. Of course, they must ensure that you can recognize these elements, whether beautiful or ugly, if you come across them in real life. Therefore they must be painted in a way that shows the likeness. However, this should not be an optical illusion, because you would risk confusing the imaginary and the real, and people would shout: "You're crazy!"

On the other hand, they are not part of the real objects that we can see around us: what would be the point of showing us what we already know, such as tables or cows, for example?

No, the artist is a visionary, he extracts specific objects from what does not yet exist, like the happiness of moving through the universe on an interstellar journey, for example. He can do what Picasso did and put a breast here and an eye there to evoke love. He may also prefer figurative art: a woman's portrait where Picasso's breast and eye are revealed.

Here is why I am constructing that story with real bricks as far as one can do so. If I ever lie to you, it is just "to have a laugh," and I will let you know.

But do not try to find out which character is real: none is. From the life that surrounded me, I chose a character trait over here, an action over there: only the elements I needed to imagine another life.

So? You do not believe that two mad people can be closed in a common delirium, even if they have been husband and wife for a long time, are their existences closely tangled up? Oh well, it is however true! And this is how it happened.

Unbearable for me, the catastrophe which had just happened lay hidden, buried in a thick fog of unreality. From that enormous cotton tampon sometimes came out a lightening hand which came out to dig my flesh: a pale face on which the lid of a coffin fell down. Had I yelled? In any case, the lightening hand stopped tapping my flesh and she retreated. During that flash of lucidity, I had had the time to think: "Jeanne cannot bear such a pain. Perhaps she will die of it. As long as she will carry that open wound, I must let her believe that everything is like before. Down there, I found it reasonable, even I, to send the unbearable event in the den, at the very bottom of the cotton fog.

Surely, I often happened to call death. Myself, I would have been delivered, and the world would have well continued its way without me. Wasn't I right? Then, a sweet voice I knew so well came back to murmur in my ear:

You're not a coward aren't you, dad? Will you tell me?

– But no, my dear, I am not a coward. Why do you say that? I am very, very tired: that is all.

– Tired, my foot! You let us fall down, yes. Courage, dad! Go there dad! Go there dad!

– I am all right, Estelle my dear. But do not say anymore that I am a coward.

So, since my little girl had opened her ways to immortality, and since she needed me to continue them, I sent throughout my whole body the will to live and I set off again for the assault of suffering.

Later on, Jeanne told me that she lived her torments like me, and like me, she had judged well not to impose the unbearable suffering on me. It is like this that both of us wandered in similar labyrinths on the verge of madness, neither dead nor alive, misled, for those who loved us, in that refuge which we had imagined: a false world, where the claws of reality only reach rarely to hollow out away as far as our violent soul. Perhaps then, slowly, slowly... the latter could succeed to heal up the gaping wound.

It was not necessary, however, that that virtual labyrinth became a trap where our roads ended uselessly. We had to find the strength to open our eyes on the vision of our Estelle who was decomposing herself in the cold ground of the cemetery. Only after, having accepted the unacceptable, we can turn our eyes towards the living and dedicate to them our strengths. But we risk letting ourselves be taken in like this on the verge of madness. Our guardian angel had taken charge of the memory of Estelle, and he kept an eye on us. Moreover, weren't there the two of us?

However, despite all the efforts given by Denise, Gaston, Pablo, Thomas, and in spite of all that our boys, the family and the friends did not refrain from undertaking to get us out of that isolating bubble where we risked being mummified, the madness was prolonging itself in a worrying manner.

It was a dream which pulled us out of that rut. Roughly at the same time, each one of us received a message from his guardian angel. Here is what Jeanne's was about.

Estelle in person came back to visit her in a dream. A great pain overwhelmed her. She told her only: “Like this, you have forgotten your promise... Do you therefore want me to die a second time? Farewell mum.” So, she vanished in the light and Jeanne never ever saw her again.

To suffer again the look of that terrible messenger? Never! Then we found the will to push back the sweet madness where we had looked for refuge. We let the promise made to our little daughter come out from the darkness where we had hidden it.

But where, so young and so naïve, could she find such a deep wisdom?

<p>Is it possible to conquer death?</p>
--

On her death bed, she had told us:

- Stop lying to me, both of you. I no longer have the time. Me, I know well that I would leave before the end of that night. I am cold. Nothing else but cold. Everything black! Everything cold! I am afraid! Leave me, ugly beast. I don't want to! Go away! Oh! How I hate death! Dad, Mum! You love me very much, don't you? Don't you?
- Come on Estelle! Where are you searching for those terrifying black ideas? The doctors will cure you...
- Oh no! No more now! You must not lie to me now! No, nasty beast, you will not carry me away because I am stronger than you. So, dear Dad, adorable Mum, listen to me well... Listen!
- We are listening, Estelle dear.
- Dad, did you say that the living carry the life of the dead? It is quite like a relay

race.

– Yes, but.

– Be quiet. He who refuses to pass the stick dies twice: is that good?

– But...

– Besides, I don't care. I want to pass the stick. Help me.

– But...

– Listen well.

– When I would have left, don't cry for me for a long time, and don't call me especially because I will not come anymore ever, never... The dead are truly completely dead; besides, you know well since it is you who said it to me.

– Oh no! No! Estelle, my dear...

– Please! Hurry up. Do you hear who is approaching? Oh no, I beg of you, listen well!

– We listen to you...

– Primarily, I want you to give everything! Everything! All my things to some children: you only have to start from my good friends; my violin will be for Geraldine: she plays well, you know.

– It is understood. Your brothers and also your great friend Geraldine will help us to do the division. OK. What else?

– So watch out, be careful! Watch out! And above all! Above all! I want you to have another baby. Do you understand well? A boy or a girl, it is the same, but it is necessary to have a baby. Please Mum! Please Dad! It is necessary. It is necessary! So, is it promised?

– I can never replace you, my dear Estelle, never...

– Me neither. We can never love another child in your place...

– No! But no, not in my place dear Dad, adorable Mother! Why are you being silly? Not in my place! Please! Promise me...

On the spot, we have not truly understood the necessity of her demand. But we could not refuse her anything and, both of us, we have promised, with quite solemn seriousness. However she was not at all satisfied. And we felt well that death had already taken her by the throat, and was on the verge of strangling her. Luckily, it seemed to us that our little good girl had managed to loosen up the horrible embrace.

But at what price those efforts! Let's go! It was necessary to understand what she wanted. And quickly!

– My dear Estelle, explain again.

– Liars! Terrible liars! It is not necessary to promise that! You promise, but you have not understood anything. It is however well that you have understood me! I am no longer a child: I see everything. So, listen!

Why is it necessary that the student surpasses the teacher?

In fact, it happens that the child understands better than the teacher. And that is good! The teacher's thought is often hindered by some old practices acquired in his infancy, so that nothing prevents the virgin thought of the infant to assimilate integrally the news given. As for our part, in what concerns the means of which we dispose to send our existence beyond death, we have learned in our youth to look for principally the individual survivor, whether it is by an entry ticket to heaven, or resurrection of the body, or still, by the conquest of the posthumous glory.

Much more lately, when those means lost all their reliability in my eyes, the meanders of my anguished thought, I had exhumed Mômmanh and I presented her to all my family. In spite of my will not to make a belief out of it – Above all! – Estelle had nested it in her heart as her good

fairy. Very soon she talked to Mômmanh like other children have a conversation with the "Virgin Mary" and the "Little Jesus" and Jeanne blamed me for having accomplished the work of a false guru on my own children.

It was, as you know, quite contrary to my intentions but, now, I understand that in our times when faith does not find any more branches to cling to, a child gave in to the temptation. In his soul impatient to blossom, the theory has become a fairy story. And then, she changed into a belief. Luckily, when Estelle was on the verge of leaving us, her juvenile faith did not prevent her from making some choices completely rational and generous.

If Estelle had lived, she would not have been prevented from probably becoming the apostle of a new ideology inspired by my theory of the "Struggle for Existence." This would have made me happy and however I would never have followed my dear young daughter in that way.

That would have rejoiced me because we needed an ideology and that would have pleased me, even more because it would have been open, therefore liable to perfection. The setting up of footbridges between our two worlds would have been facilitated: that of research and that of action.

But I could not follow my little dear in that way because the ideology and the scientific

research do not tally with each other. The apostle prevents one from calling into question the pillars of its faith, be it in the name of scientific truth. The researcher does not put up with the fact that some taboos can hinder its researches be it in the name of the sacred principles. Therefore, it is good that each one remains free to act in his domain.

And here is where the enchainment of ideas leads. Can you tell me where we had arrived? Ah! There we are: the student has surpassed his teacher.

Estelle had clearly understood the necessity of human freedom, as well as all its implications. When we die, the coming generations will do what they want of our memory, because they are free and it's a lucky thing. Therefore, it is useless to demand that they continue our personal memory, that they practice our values that they continue what we had started. They are free and they will not do it unless they judge it worthwhile.

In order to encourage them in spite of everything, to continue our job, I see only one way: leave them as heritage of beautiful and good things, those which will contribute to establish the existence, that of Mômmanh and even that of our derisory ego contained within its limits. Let us leave them some champagne, the Taj Mahal, "freedom-equality-fraternity," the Theory of Relativity... rather than ruins and debts. And let us trust them for the aptitude to appreciate the beautiful, the good and what is well: we have no choice.

Now, it is time to find Estelle again.

- Dad, Mum, it is necessary to understand before promising.
- We are listening.
- The child who will be coming, my little brother or little sister, it is important to tell him everything, but only when he is grown up...

- So! He will understand that he is replacing you...
- Oh! It is so difficult to explain: it is quite true that he will replace me, and it is true also that he does not replace me. He is free! He is free. Free! Do you understand well?
- Not so well, no.
- It is like you and I. Dad, Mum, you have given me life...
- And we have taken it...
- Listen to me, please, mum. You tell my child that he is replacing me. Well! He has to do everything like me: but he cannot, you know well. He cannot be me: it is like a straight jacket. So, he is unhappy, my child. Perhaps he will become mad. No! No! I want him to be free, my “baby.”

Estelle feared that, by the intervention of the child who was to be born, we would only try to realise what would be at the same time impossible and bad: to resuscitate our dear little girl, escaping like this from the unbearable sorrow. The poor child who is replacing her has to torture his being to incarnate the person of Estelle and has to commit himself to play that role throughout his whole life. Without going as far as that, there is a good number of children who are not loved for themselves, but above all for what their parents want them to become: a soldier like dad, or the brilliant lawyer that he would have liked to be, or the engineer which mum would have become if she hadn't been compelled to stop her studies... These children whom one has forced to fit into a role made for another, they have felt themselves in spite of everything, a little loved. And even if they still retain a strong and old sense of regret, they will be able to forgive. However, it is true that their existence is spoilt.

Selfishness being the best divided of all the virtues, there exists a plethora of adults, of good parents, who waste like this their precious lives which Mômmanh has entrusted to them and they are numerous in believing that they act like this for the good of their children. So, one more time, was I surprised that our little girl could guess what adults could not see in the mature thought? Very often it happens that the cause of life has been well forbidden by our young champion. The black monster which rushed to swallow a feeble child, a delicate flower hardly opened up in the

form of a promise of immortality, the nothingness black and frozen had to wait well and see its prey drawing out between his claws.

(Before continuing, I owe you a confession. I have never had a girl. I have never had the opportunity to observe a nine year old daughter. Whatever concerns Estelle's death is a creation of my thought, with all the risks of error which that entails. In the hope of doing it as true as possible, I went to look for some information in the works of a "psy" of a sound reputation, Ginette Raimbault. Ginette Raimbault has observed and accompanied some sick children at the end of their life in a hospital. I have consulted her book "The child and death" as well as the conference which she did about the subject at the University of Tous les Savoirs in 2000.

Her fears confirm what I suppose. The illness and its series of sufferings compel the child to die before his age. As regards that, Ginette Raimbault speaks of wisdom. Those who are no longer babies will discover that they are going to die. While the people surrounding them do everything to hide the truth, they have to struggle alone to face the test of their imminent death.

Of all the words reported, I will only quote these. A five year old child has said: "I know quite well that I am going to die. But one must not say it, because mum, who already goes to the cemetery twice weekly, would be there all the time and she would look more after my father"

Ginette Raimbault said as well: "... it is not unusual, that the young lonely adolescents, see associated, in the same way as the adult, the lucidity of the absence of a future and the desire of a creation which would be a gift to the world they are about to leave.")

- It is a promise, Estelle my dear, we will not tell him that he replaces you.
- Not so much when he is young, but when he grows up: yes.
- Explain to us, my dear.
- When he will grow up, my boy – or my girl – you will tell him that his first mother was a little girl... rather gentle...and who was called Estelle. You will tell him everything. Perhaps he will love me a little. But only if he likes it! When he has the feeling that he is going to do a great stupidity, and he will no longer have the courage... so... perhaps although he will say: "Oh no! I cannot do that to my little young mum Estelle." So there! That is when I will be happy, I!

How does the field of existence cover all the past and all the future.

Since man follows his conquest of eternal existence not only in the future, what Estelle tried so hard, but also in the past when, for example he looks for some models among the heroes of history. With them, in the same manner as with a line of noble ancestors, he forms an existential chain which came from the past and plunges in the future: it is like this that he stretches his existence in time.

If he betrays a hero of the past, he breaks the existential chain before it plunges in the future. He carries a heavy responsibility as regards some ancestors: the period of their existence risks stopping. He has not taken away life from them because they are already dead. He has perhaps done worse: to cut them back from their existence in the span of time.

If his existence does not offer to its descendants anything which they judge worthy to be continued, he risks depriving them of an existence in the past, of the roots, as one says.

– I see, dear Estelle. It is a promise.

– You also, dad?

– I am close by. I am going to reflect, and I will understand everything. It is a promise, dear Estelle.

– Sacred father, you are always reflecting. It is necessary to bring up my baby well so that he becomes great, great, very great like Victor Hugo, or Mrs Délude. Do you see? Mum?

(Mrs Délude is a neighbour, a retired farmer at whose house Estelle loved to go attracted not only by her numerous little kids, but above all by the warm and creative personality of the old lady.)

– Yes my precious treasure. I have understood. Rest, now.

– Dad?

– I am beginning to see, Estelle, it's coming. Your mother and I will discuss and will reflect until everything is clear.

– So, could it be that your promise is good? But no! Ah! No, no, no!

A mask of anxiety appeared on her waxen face.

– Don't be afraid, dear Estelle, dad and mum are there.

– You love me too much, too much!

– Yes, my darling, it's never too much.

– My baby will hate us. It will do him good if you don't love him. So, he will be evil. Ah but stop! Stop loving me that way!

In truth, without wanting it, she exaggerated a lot: I could hardly see anything but a child nourished by hatred who gives to the whole universe the evil with which one had welcomed him. In reply to his surges of love, those which awakened him up to life, his vile parents, brought him nothing but evil. Now, it is through his parents that the little man discovers the world: no? So, since he sees nothing but evil, he has no other choice but to bury his useless love in the deepest part of his being and to dedicate to that world which he believes desperately bad all the hatred that he owes it.

No: it is not that type of monster we risk giving birth to.

Nevertheless, Estelle's fears had solid foundations. It was necessary for us to love that child for himself, and we were not ready for it. Now, you know well that you can't command love. So, how can you make a feeble promise in those conditions? And one had to act quickly.

Hurry!

You are right, Estelle. We will bring forth that child only after having accepted your...

– Death. Say it, don't be afraid. Come on!

– We will have that child when we would have accepted your death.

– Dad, mum, I love you.

Our Estelle seemed exhausted. A frozen shroud fell on her. No! No! Not already! It is not fair! Her eyes were closed. Was she breathing? Neither Jeanne nor I dared to check it. Then her breathing became again perceptible. On that magnificent promise of life still not completely disowned, on that face so dear, so shiny, whose beauty was not yet frozen for eternity, on her white waxen face, a touch of red rushed again to her cheekbones.

And if life were to come back?

– Poor mad one! Let us let her rest.

Estelle had another burst of energy. Her voice was barely audible, and we had to look close to her lips to hear her. Our little girl was dying, it was unbearable. It made us want to scream. We somehow managed to deliver ourselves from despair and to listen to her last words.

– If my baby has something wrong – it happens, you know! – You will love it anyway, won't you?

– Yes. Oh yes, you have our word.

– So I give my life to the Good Genies, too.

– Yes, our dear Estelle.

– Goodbye. I will be with the Good Genies. And I will watch over you. Goodbye.
Goodbye mother, fa...

Our little girl had really paid attention to my lessons. Our individualistic and scientific society leaves us speechless when we face death. We have no way to overcome it. There is at least one, yet very simple way. Simply say: "I will die, of course. But, after I am gone, good people will continue for centuries and centuries to look for ways to preserve human existence and even universal existence. Through their efforts, they will surely advance further in this direction. They will find ways to conquer the stars and overcome entropy. "Having made this reflection, I entrust my life to these brave people who will live after us, those Estelle called the "Good Genies." And it doesn't matter that this is done anonymously. Do we know the artists that created the Taj Mahal? Yet they exist and they continue to live in our fascinated eyes.

We stayed for a long time motionless and silent, allowing the branding iron to impress itself on our disfigured souls the last portrait of our girl. Ordinarily, the memory does not keep, the funeral masks, of their beloved dead ones, doubtlessly, because it does not bring much to the living, if that is not the severe warning: "Don't forget that you will die. Don't forget that each one must die." We prefer to keep the memories of those who illustrate our life with shadows and lights, exemplary moments where the late lamented will make us laugh, surprise us, and at the same time frighten us.

But, it happened that our Estelle was surprised by a death which was not announced when her life was bubbling in the effervescence of her blossoming. Since

she did not want to accept her defeat, it was necessary to mobilise all her hidden strengths and to use them to throw an arch above the abyss of death. Like this, the last moments of our good child were exemplary. Like this the face which had been only until then a juvenile sketch, beautiful with rich promises, found itself transfigured by a generous beauty, triumphant, and implacable. Like this, that beautiful face of triumphant youth – Yes! Triumphant... – that beautiful face is still engraved for ever in our memories.

There flowed a certain amount of time which I would not know how to define with precision, since, for us, the time in question had stopped. Then Estelle opened her eyes and, again, she spoke.

“Where is Mistinguette? I want to play.”

Mistinguette was still a frivolous and carefree young lady, a young cat which our daughter had adopted. When we had placed her four legged friend on the bed, Estelle wanted to caress her, but her hands did not move accordingly. I approached the beautiful animal to her face, and Jeanne took her hands to put them on the sweet fur. Mistinguette, our distant cousin, started to purr while our child talked to her.

– You are still playing in the willow, isn't it so? Will teach me to climb, tell me? But you must not eat the little birds. Do you understand? You know, dad and mum are going to have a baby for me... Yes, it's true! She will be called Jeanne... And my baby boy, he will be called Jacques... You also will have kittens...

We were glued to our chairs, near Estelle's bed, two stubborn fools waiting for an impossible miracle. Our little girl seemed to slumber peacefully. Then she spoke again in a very, very weak voice that we had never heard before.

– Goodbye dad, goodbye mum, goodbye Pablo, goodbye Thomas, goodbye my dear Jacques, my dear... dear...

That was all. In the impossible silence that followed, we began to howl more wildly than dogs when they feel death.

– And leave me in peace, good God! Leave me alone! Leave me alone! Give me Estelle or I'll kill you, you bastard!

Yes, it is at that moment that we sank into madness, Jeanne and I. We remained there for some weeks, until the moment when our guardian angel, in a dream, sent us her messenger: Estelle in person.

I thank you, dear friend, for understanding our sorrow, but it is not that which will bring her back to us. Stop crying and listen to her message. No, I am not trying to make you believe that our children must be our teachers: that will be as stupid as to want the downstream river to flow towards its source. However it can happen, here and there, that a little boy or a little girl gives a lesson to an adult. That was the case.

Therefore, one morning, during breakfast, while madness still held a grip on us, Jeanne said to me:

– So remove that third place setting! You know very well that nobody is going to sit there.

– But?

– I had a dream last night. She came to see me.

– Wait then! Even I: she spoke to me.

– You as well, her “adorable father”? Of course! So? Are you going to decide? It is high time not to think about yourself, myself, about our misfortune of which we are survivors. It is about time to pull ourselves out of it. And what did she tell you?

– For a long time, she did not pronounce a word... Without making any noise or the slightest movement, she went forward along the streets of Fûtaie, and I followed her without being able to touch her or speak to her. Having arrived in front of her school, she suddenly turned and she spoke. But I did not hear anything. Then she started walking again. A strange mist, like black sprayed ink, invaded little by little the space, dissolving everything. I could still distinguish very

vaguely, what remained visible of Estelle, taking what should have been the street of our house. And, rapidly, everything melted in a black thickness of ink.

Only, then, I have heard the words which she had pronounced. She said, in her sweet voice...

– Please! What did she say?

– “Why do you let me die a second time?”

– Oh! And so, how did you understand that message?

– We have to keep our promise. We must have another baby.

– Have another baby! For you it’s very easy... Oh! Sorry! What am I thinking of?

It is not the time to let myself go. What did your dream say?

– It was another dream, but the message was the same.

You know, at my age, the risks of having a handicapped baby have increased. What shall we do if we have a downs baby?

– Even if the risks have increased, they remain minimal. We start taking risks when we come to this world, and we cease after our death...

– All of the world’s wisdom consists in choosing the best risks: I know! And if you must fall along the way, it is not serious, because some others will continue the way! I know! I know! After some time, I have learned the lesson well, dear Teacher. But that folly touches us too much so that I will not be satisfied with the dull grey theoretical statements, by way of a guarantee.

Michel, if, after having carried the baby for nine months, I delivered a downs baby, what shall we do?

– We will keep him, evidently. Why do you ask me that question?

– You know me. You know well that at a certain period of time, I will not be any longer able to bear him: you know very well, that in those moments, I will be odious... So?

– I will help you to overcome the hurdle, as I have learned to. Those horrible and stupid battles which we had led against each other will have been useful just the same. Well... If we had a downs baby and if, in spite of all our efforts, there are some moments when you cannot bear it any longer, we will trust him to some reliable people for short periods, enough time for us to go on a beautiful trip.

– There are lots of people who trust even their dogs my dear to a kennel, for the duration of the holidays.

– And so? In all respects, it is not to a dog kennel that our baby will be entrusted.

- And nothing can tell us that it will be a downs baby. It's good: I am ready... And then no! There is still something which I do not understand.
- What?
- I am not sure if I have understood well what Estelle is asking of us.
- She is asking us to succeed with a new baby what we have not damned done with her.
- I am not such a fool, just the same! It's the rest which seems confusing.
- You have certainly understood the essential. And then, faced with danger, there are two of us now.
- If we manage to stop that damned war.
- Jeanne, my dear, I don't want to be the head of the family.
- My dear Michel, it is a big sacrifice! Oh well, me too, I renounce to the stripes of a leader. You can put them away definitely in the loft, with the bad memories.
- Why not directly in the dustbin?
- Because one deserves to remember such a waste.
- If we keep that commitment, I believe that the most difficult part will be over. In the meantime, we have to invent the conjugal democracy.
- It is not so easy. With one vote against one, how can one establish a majority? Not by weight, I hope! Neither by seniority!
- Others have practiced it before us, the couple's republic. With Estelle's help and our will, we shall manage.
- Will you help me when I let myself be carried away by my demon? Will you help me, tell me my dear Michel?
- Yes, my dear, and you will pay me back with my own coin when my personal demon will grasp me by the head.
- Like this, we will be like two monkeys delousing each other mutually...

While taking up that discussion, day after day, we arrived at the third commitment of which I spoke to you at the beginning of the chapter: keep the promise made to Estelle, associate her memory to all the important events of our life, relate to you honestly the story.

How to defeat death?

For several months, we continued to reflect on this important question, which has haunted man since his expanded consciousness emerged from the faraway haze, revealing his implacable curse, the insatiable ogre that has taken away our beautiful Estelle, so full of life and promise: "Remember that you are dust and you shall return to dust."

After all of our cogitations, we have only consolidated what I've already said: there are two ways to overcome death. And so what if I repeat myself: there is more than considerations of style at stake.

The first way is to not turn your back on it, as is done in our time; nor to live with it: as this can not be done! No, it is simply to leave a legacy to those that will live after us.

This does not mean to leave them money, although this may be useful, but rather to contribute to a beautiful project that future men will want to continue: a scientific project, a physical project, a work of art, a project that helps us to advance along the path of EXISTENCE, following the example of Pasteur, Thomas Edison, Leonardo, etc., within our own means, of course,

as modest as they may be: the farmer who does his job with love and bequeathes to his descendants a farm that is more beautiful than he received has won his paradise amongst the generations to come. The miner that brings up coal from the bowels of the earth, both to feed his children and to supply industry - this soot covered person also helps to advance the project of life.

Thanks to our creative action, however modest it may be, we will be present in the life to come that we will have helped to create, invisible but present, like those anonymous artists who have given us the wonders of ancient Egypt: all of the sculptors, painters, scribes and, above all, armies of workers and slaves, their wives, their children and all of the small people of Egypt who have contributed something towards this great project are alive in the sphinx, in the frescoes of the tombs and in the eternal temples.

And the second?

It is less glorious and closer to the beloved ego. It is to be loved by largest number of people possible so that, after death, we are remembered for a long time: by our family, by our friends, in the city and throughout the world; we may be mentioned as an example or perhaps our name will be given to a street. And why not a statue, for that matter? Of course, again, to each according to his means.

It is the famous dead who have combined both ways to survive. How many scholars like Socrates, Darwin, and even Einstein, have generously contributed to the progress of science, whilst leading a life that serves as an example for future generations: their work is immortal and the memory of their person remains alive.

It is the humblest dead whose relatives try to perpetuate their memory, as illustrated by one of the Roman stelae erected alongside a road:

“In eternal memory of Clodia Euporia, 40 years and 28 days old, a modest and sober, talented woman of a happy nature, not envious of others, with balanced judgement, respectful of the bond of marriage and pious, caring for her daughter and servants and obedient to those who deserved it. All of her contemporaries loved her. She lives here, having left her country and ravished by a disastrous fate.”

But this second way of escaping death is rather futile. Could she succeed if her existence stopped due to a lack of craftsmen to continue it? It is just a small outgrowth of the ego, like a wart on the living body of the active generations.

But as the ego is so powerful in man, why not "make do" as in the capitalist economy. The tradition of the nobility, as we mentioned, may serve as an example, except that this time everyone can be a noble. Within the family, all those with honourable conduct will be recognized by their descendants, and the others, that are unworthy, will not be entitled to posterity. One can even envisage portrait galleries on the

artisans of Existence appear. Thus the command "noblesse oblige" would apply to everyone.

We have had that child: a boy, a third son, Jacques. In his fifteenth year, at the age when one calls into question seriously the familiar roles to choose himself and decide what to do with his own life, there's a storm beneath the skull and in the surroundings of the youth which one calls "crisis of adolescence." Right in the thick of that difficult period so, we spoke to him of his other mother not like the others. Now, he knows well Estelle. He cherishes her memory and, above all, he was grateful to her for making him a particular being. Not only we are not jealous of that attachment but, on the contrary, that pleases us. Having said that, he has preferred to call her "godmother" rather than "big sister" or "mum."

It is like this that the survivors of the shipwreck take back to the sea for a new world loaded with promises. But this is another story. Let us come back to the "Hundred Years War," at the right moment where we had left her, just when the first skirmishes were about to start, well before the tragedy.

8-The First Signs of the War

Jeanne was ravished to be pregnant. Her gracious silhouette of a dancer developed an excessive roundness which stretched the skin of the tummy which ended up resembling an enormous balloon. She became like a pumpkin with a small head attached and her sweet legs of a dancer seemed then too fragile to carry such a weight. You know how caring she is to render herself beautiful at any time: oh well, until the birth of our baby, she accepted without the slightest regret the temporary sacrifice of her beauty.

After some months of pregnancy, her tummy started getting round just right but, as usual, it was necessary to go ahead with the events.

– I am pregnant up to my eyes, she said. Do you realise that I chose you to be the father of my child?

– Surely! That I realise. The reciprocity is true, don't forget it: I have chosen you as the mother of my children.

– Are you quite sure that you have chosen? You are so much in a hurry to sow your half-seed that you would have placed it in any open flower. You are lucky that “Myself,” I chose you. Try to remain at the same level... Oh! He has kicked me with his feet, the little rascal. There you are my dear, feel it, my dear, put your hand there... Not here, no, there! Do you feel how he moves?

– Oh yes! I have felt it. But let us come to what you have just said. You have chosen me. I have chosen you. In order to avoid the repetition, why not admit that we have recognised each other mutually? Don't you think?

– Man begs for, the woman disposes. All the men, at least all those who are not ignoble and stupid brutes, nearly all men, therefore, beg for the permission to make love to all the women whom they meet, no matter how little they are “screwable.” They even go as far as paying for it! Women, no: they want to meet, among all

those thirsty ones, the one they love. And then, they invite him to make love seriously. This is what you are like, you men, slaves of your ridiculous tip of flesh which does not deserve not even the nickname of willy.

– How? To start with, I am not “the men”; I am Michel, your adorable spouse.

– My dear, let us not waste time to discuss the angels’ sex. We have a baby on the way. Oh! Provided he is normal!

– Again! One can say that that fear is obsessing you. But finally, why the devil would he be abnormal? I have never had such an idea.

– Ah! You are a man! If sometimes you thought of other things rather than yourself, you would have discovered a long time ago that abnormal babies, are born just the same here, there, and it is necessary to bring them up.

– If he is an abnormal child, we will bring him up as best as we can. And then, I will always be with you, whatever happens.

– Oh well! If you say so, you who are so prudent usually! At last will you be gentle with me, tell me? Even when the baby will be born, will you remain gentle? Oh! Yes, you will be. You are a kind man, you... I chose you because of that... And for other reasons, naturally.

– Ah! You have chosen me? Truly, you are keen! But! Surely that I will remain kind after the birth as I am now! Why must I change?

– Because a lot of men are like this. When their “Little Bird” is quite satisfied, they neglect the beautiful one who imprudently has given herself. She finds herself with a ghost of a lover, a memory, a child whom she must bring up on her own.

– You really have funny ideas... Besides, even I surely, I chose you. What a waste if it had been differently. These months of ember and ice which we have lived together, we have dedicated them, you and I, I and you, to transplant together our existences, like flesh which is too often torn up. Was that to make it seem better so that you fall in my plate, well done, like an exquisite lobster, my love?

And you remember how I drooled in Austria?

– Oh? And me, then?

– Well. Oh well, in spite of that, I chose you for life, and even beyond that. And if we have to drool again, I shall continue to fight so that we can finally manage to understand each other.

– You know, the dirty tricks played by men, there have been many and many that I feel very disgusted. And still, I fear that I am not enough. A man can quite well

marry a girl for the little comfort she gives him, he tells her he loves her, and once she is his domestic slave closed in the cage, courts the other beauties, his true loves, like in the good old times when the legitimate bride was called “Little housewife.”

– Even at the times when that caricature of married life was tolerated, she existed more often in the jokes than in reality. In any case, if you doubt me to that extent, why did you marry me?

– Because you are all the same: even if, on the big day, your appearance is angelic, in the shadow, your subconscious of dominating evil prepares his wicked attacks.

– Dear! Oh dear! Dear! If you negotiate directly with my subconscious, me, I am forcibly excluded from the discussion. You cannot come to an agreement to lead it in full light, so that I can finally settle my explanation with that cheating.

– Difficult! You know it. But I will do whatever possible.

– Thank you, my dear. Tell me, even women have a subconscious! The faults which you see in mine are perhaps concealed in yours. It is perhaps you who are playing the comedy of love “to exploit me better, my child.”

– Impossible!

– How is that?

– Because a woman is not made like a man.

– Because you are no longer our equal?

– Equality does not mean identity: did I marry an idiot?

– I hope not! Well, I agree: I have made a mistake. So, can you explain?

– She can make love without love, and if in that game she does not risk a pregnancy, it will only be a deception without importance. In that case, she puts her body at the disposition of a lover like whores do, and she simulates, more or less, the pleasure. In reality, she does not feel anything, if it is not a certain boredom or rather some disgust.

If she were a man, she would find pleasure just the same. Only, she is a woman, and that gift is denied to her.

– Here is a good moment which I learned, thanks to you. And then?

Which are the specificities of the feminine sexuality?
--

Here, I must make you swallow a little theory. "Come on! A spoon for dad. A spoon for mum. A spoon for Little Jesus."

Consider what follows.

Rapists are almost always men. The clients of prostitution are practically always men. The old rich men who marry a "young girl" are mostly always men.

How do you explain these facts? I think that I know.

We must first consider that there are two kinds of orgasm. One is mechanical, resulting from the excitement of the clitoris or the vagina, or the penis. It can be obtained through masturbation. It is just a drug which gives the illusion of pleasure, not the real pleasure that is given to those that have climbed the mountain.

Most women do not experience true orgasm in the absence of shared love. So they cannot therefore steal or buy the pleasures of love.

There are degrees of this love, and generally the pleasure grows the more the steps are climbed. Higher, ever higher, up to the sky!

The first degree is that of mutual attraction. Then comes fleeting love. And so on, up to the great love of Romeo and Juliet. The illusion of love that the woman has when she tells herself a beautiful story whilst masturbating or paying a gigolo is different. This is an illusion, the equivalent of a drug. Now, you can not replace real life with drugs: Mômmanh does not let us do it. However, these illusions make it possible to have rather pitiful orgasms that leave a disappointing taste.

Most men do not need to love in order to "fuck." They just need the woman to be "fuckable," i.e. that she is not disgusting and she has at least some sex appeal. Whether they masturbate or they pay a prostitute, they do not need to create the illusion of love. They temporarily relieve themselves and that's that.

I once heard an experienced and disappointed woman stating this truth. Instead of saying that a man makes love to his lover, she always said: "He uses her."

Do you understand that there are different grades of orgasms, from the "mechanical orgasm" that reduces the sexual tension for a while whilst leaving a bitter taste and the feeling of being robbed, to the supreme orgasm that gives you the feeling of finally having arrived, to have expanded to the size of the universe, to the positive nirvana which concludes the conquest of a great love.

Women can not have a real orgasm without at least some love. Men, however, can. What is the origin of these strange sexual abilities?

Let's assume that very, very long ago, perhaps even before Modern Man made his appearance about 200,000 years ago, these behaviours provided existential benefits to the human race..

For this new naked monkey, the risk of death was almost daily. The man who spreads his seed as widely as possible increases his chances of reproducing. Therefore he will survive.

As for a woman, someone must provide her protection and assistance so that she can feed herself throughout the period of pregnancy and lactation. Under these conditions, a man must not only inspire love by promising a beautiful, strong, brave, intelligent child like his father. He must also prove that he can help the mother if necessary.

But this was not enough because, until very recently, as there was no effective means of birth control such as the "pill," there was a great risk of the woman becoming pregnant without wanting to. These unwanted pregnancies often ended in disasters worse than death.

Modern sexuality has to be invented.

Times have changed, but the behaviours from our past remain, inscribed in red letters in our genes, as Mômmanh intended. They will have to prove their unhealthy effects time and time again until she finally decides to replace them with new practices, inspired by love.

That probably helps to explain the strange sexual behaviour common in our time, especially amongst males. The basic man usually wants to fuck, even if they have to pay for it and, in extreme cases, without the consent of his partner. Love, in this quest, is often secondary or superfluous if not simply annoying.

In this regard, it is a seduction tool used by many women that can have perverse and even dangerous effects. Knowing men's appetite for sex, they use it as bait. They wear miniskirts that show the upper thighs and the path to the cave of Venus, both in front and behind. The route is signposted. A sign announces: "Come this way for good soup."

Who can believe that this is the true path of love?

But, getting back to the topic.

It is important to understand that love is not always for life. And besides, how do you know

how long it will last when it starts? There are other loves, both for the man and for the woman.

The important thing is this: the man must conquer his woman and the woman must seduce her man. To do this, they must both excel on the path of human existence and be applauded by Mômmanh with both hands.

So, along the course of her obstinate walk towards existence, a conquest which we call evolution, Mômmanh has selected four gifts of the woman: to be able to recognise men of a certain standing, show them the way with her beauty, give them children and, finally, being unable to taste the supreme reward unless love appears to be to them present.

And now, let us find our lovers.

– When we make love you are very attentive to my pleasure, and it is because we have had the right, very often, to the grand trip. But if we happen to remain systematically on the border, for a long period, you will ask me what happened to me. So? If I were no longer loving, you will not fail to notice it: my body will not answer any longer to yours, neither to the warmth nor to the shuddering waves of happiness which we confuse, and much less through the final fusion in the form of fireworks. My body will be nearly as lifeless as an inflatable doll. Here is the reason why my love cannot be a deception.

– How can you be certain that I will be aware of it?

– I am sure because that has already happened. It has happened to me that I gave

- myself to you without being loving and you have asked me why I was elsewhere.
- Maybe... And is the reciprocity not true?
 - Since you are a man, you can take your pleasure with me without loving me. So, by which signs can I know if you love me?
 - It is more difficult, I admit. But do you show yourself so suspicious that you hardly risk deceiving yourself? But tell me, I have not understood well in what consists that feminine particularity...
 - Don't be even more stupid than usual. After all, perhaps do you want a demonstration?
 - Oh yes! With pleasure.
 - With pleasure: at least, I hope... So? You must well admit that men are pigs!
 - If you want, but it is necessary to believe in my love because I am at a loss what to say.
 - Is it quite true? Horrible liar whom I adore. Oh well, I believe you... Hold on! Here you are for the pain that I have inflicted upon you!

Why did Mômmanh entrust the key to paradise to women?

Men have the desire to inject their seed into any female receptacle provided that its owner agrees. If she says "yes," they will have a small chance of entering heaven.

Only a small chance. For it is not enough that the woman is in love enough to say "Yes" to the man. To ascend to heaven, she must see in her partner more than: "Oh, that guy, I wouldn't mind doing it with him!" She must feel "in love." What if she doesn't? Well, if she doesn't, the pleasure

will be mechanical and frustrating, the same as the false pleasure of masturbation when one has only succeeded in loving oneself.

And can a man, in this case, experience a real orgasm? That depends on his generosity. If, feeling that his partner is elsewhere, he can not enjoy himself selfishly, any orgasm will be mechanical. This will, temporarily perhaps, be an act of frustrated love.

Oh yes: Mômmanh has entrusted to women the key to paradise. Perhaps she had some good reasons for that.

That said, when we believe that women can not enjoy themselves if they do not feel a shared love, we are mistaken. At the very least, we are exaggerating. There was often an inability to experience pleasure when they made love without feeling intensely loved, but it was the conditions of our time as much as their female nature that prohibited orgasms.

Firstly, there were some deeply ingrained old-fashioned beliefs, especially amongst men. Girls that gave themselves away without being very romantic, just because they liked a guy, were considered "sluts." If they changed lovers often, if they were "easy" without really being debauched, then people thought they were nymphomaniacs: poor sick creatures haunted by a craving to have sex with any man that presented

himself. Nymphomaniacs were a man's wet dream. It was a good business: they offered an opportunity to inject his seed into a suitable receptacle. And for free, on top of that! Needless to say I have never met a nymphomaniac.

But above all, women were afraid of getting pregnant, of carrying a little bastard in their belly, a cursed child that would make their lives a nightmare. Because "single mothers" were despised, persecuted and exploited. Life was often hell for them and their little "bastard." How many pregnant girls suffered mutilation or died from having an abortion carried out with a knitting needle or some other dangerous procedure?

Since that time, women got the pill and many other ways of preventing unwanted pregnancies. And then there was 1968, which swept away achaisms hidden in routine. It brought new freedoms to women and in the area of sexuality in general. Freed from the fear of catastrophic pregnancies and from reproach, lovers were able to experiment with pleasures that were hitherto prohibited. And those who didn't know it discovered that women can also have orgasms in fleeting encounters, making love without a lifetime commitment. They just have to like their lover enough, i.e. a lot: his beauty, his youth, his humour, his prestige, his power, his intelligence, his talent as a taxidermist... And what else? Who knows? And, what's more, if they are disfigured by an unbearable arrogance, extreme stupidity, bad taste, vulgarity or a terrifying ideology... well who cares?: for one

night, he will at least provide some pleasure. There is a limit, however: the temporary lover must not even suggest that the woman is just useful to him for "emptying his balls" but rather that he has a very strong desire for her and he wants to make her happy. In short, the woman has to feel loved, even if it is only for one night.

And for most men, it is completely different. For a man, there are millions and millions of "fuckable" women, which in no way means that he is likely to fall in love with them. They are like prostitutes that those that are "frustrated" go to see: they are useful just for "getting laid." Would any of these many "fuckable" women drop their knickers and offer themselves to the male... (you know the rest). On the other hand, would the male drop his pants and offer his erect penis to any of these "fuckable" women... (you know the rest).

And if one day, helped by a sexual revolution, all fuckable women become available to all of the fuckable men that they come across, would humanity spend all of its time "fucking"? Who would look after the cows? Who would knead bread? Who would run the factories? And would there still be love in this immense "fuckodrome"?

In fact, it is time to get back to that subject, which is another matter completely. Let's not forget that in order to be loved, we must move forward earnestly along the path of life. This is worth repeating: love lifts us up.

And yet, a fleeting love can still be hot and leave an unforgettable memory.

One thing is certain: apart from the love of your life, there may also be other short-lived loves. The problem is that at the beginning of a new love, no one knows for certain what it will become. A good memory? Or everlasting love? The fear of seeing his woman or her man taken away by a competitor is therefore valid. But it must not turn into jealousy. You must simply remember that love is a battle that continues every day, that you must constantly grow and grow again to win your share of paradise. And, as at the casino, you must be able to deal with your losses.

The new woman was born along with contraception and the liberation of '68. She has existed for just forty years, which is nothing compared to the millions of years that have gone before. Throughout human evolution, the woman, so vulnerable throughout these millions of years, this obstinate woman on which ours are modelled, must have been haunted by two concerns:

- to find protection against her weakness;
- to bear and raise children that are beautiful, intelligent, strong, and so on.

She therefore had to find a man (or several) that were capable of meeting these needs. She could not let herself be impregnated by just

anyone, and she did her best to avoid men whose only concern was to spread their seed. Thus Mômmanh had to inscribe this, in letters of fire, in the DNA of a great many women: "You shall not see sexual paradise until you are sure that your lover loves you."

And why then did our wise Mômmanh give men the need to spread their seed everywhere, with or without love? Probably because at the time it was a good way of promoting the survival of humanity. Now, with the huge crowds of humans that trample and plunder and devastate the planet, it is time to invent a new sexuality.

The pleasures of liberated love are on trial right now. Time will tell which ones are best. This is beyond us, Jeanne and I. We are too old. However, I think that we have experienced the basics: when an orgasm is shared by two lovers, sealing the declaration of a great love, it is divine. Alleluia! This is what the youth of today say: making love when you are really in love is much better.

Thank you, Mômmanh! So I think, knowing you, what you're going to do is to give men the characteristic that women have: they can not achieve the ultimate climax when a minimum of shared love is not there. You will gradually select this quality because it favours human existence.

But it is time to go back to Jeanne in the 60s, because you know that she has no patience.

So it is up to you to find the present she gave me. Weren't there the nectar and that ambrosia on which the gods of the Olympus delighted themselves, and which fed their immortality? I don't know, because since the end of ancient times, those products have become absolutely impossible to find. But, my frustration was not wasted and I was not in the frame of mind to taste the authentic pleasure of love. That image of a man who sent back the beloved mirror, I judged it detestable and so false, in the same way as it applied itself to me. I continued therefore to hunt down the misunderstanding which was separating us one from the other. And, since the washing had started, I went to put in all our dirty linen.

You know that, if I had been less naive, if I could have seen the future road in which we were committed, I would have run away on all fours. And I would have returned sheepishly, because our baby was due in some months time: it was too late to retreat. And now, in spite of the horror of what happened, "if I had to do it, I would go that way again." So, it was better that the future was hidden from us.

I revived the discussion, by saying a silent prayer so that it would not lead to a violent dispute, as this had happened too often.

"You make an afflicting image out of me. How is it possible, so, that you love me? And besides, do you really love me?"

How can I pose such a question? Every time that her body, melted in mine, it had sent me certain waves of warmth, which filled me, I had known, by means of evidence, that she loved me. So?

Exactly: it is not every time the fourteenth of July. Sometimes, the feast was classified as lamentable: we had only copulated and that act had taken a nasty aspect. In my younger days I could follow more or less such a disgusting meal. At last, and

above all, there was worse than the holidays in Austria: there were some periods where she seemed to hate me.

You are not surprised, therefore, while seeing me put in doubt Jeanne's love and that even more because she had already lied to me plenty of times.

Now, I see and I am surprised. Now, I know that she said the truth.

I am not imagining that love, that construction made of living materials, is a perpetual building site where part of the work is set up while another one shattered. For whoever knows, it is already a difficult conquest: so imagine what it was like for us, naïve pioneers of the new love, who bloomed in the twentieth century.

Besides my ignorance of that time, my distrust was nourished by the memory of the Austrian nightmare which I had not stomached. Jeanne struggled just the same to convince me.

“Shall we see, Michel? My word! But you have not understood anything from what I have just explained to you. That ultimate ecstasy which the sex technicians call “orgasm,” that supreme happiness, ah well, we women, we cannot experience it if two conditions are not fulfilled: the first is that we love our lover, the second that we believe to be loved. For us, women, that pleasure without equal can only be the fruit of complete love, that which it takes two to construct! And which gives birth to the irresistible yearning of fusion.

You understand that it is very important for us to know if our man is truly loving! Tell me “man,” how many men, how many seducers disguised as suitors try to deceive a poor lover, by making her believe that she is the woman of their life, “to screw her up better, my child”! Do they know what evil they do, those thieves of paradise?”

When that happens, the deceived woman has the feeling of having failed in her mission: she has taken a fake for a diamond. Suddenly, she loses confidence in

her aptitude to judge men, a trust which she will find very painful to gain again. As expected, the price that she had to pay is the deprivation of the pleasure of love.”

Jeanne moved on.

– So? You who boast of having your thought open to the slightest current of air, how can you doubt my sincerity?

– That is true. I am quite compelled to believe you; if however, what you have explained to me is entirely true. No! Oh no! Don’t get upset!

But why the devil are you so stubborn in fearing that I am one of those thieves of pleasure? It is quite true that I am only a man, dirt therefore, compared to a woman, and therefore, shame and sadness overwhelm me if I wreck like this the beautiful love which will make me move mountains...

– There you are! If you believe you are amazing me! It is no use hurting your back by lifting too heavy a mountain: I have already told you that I believe you.

– And you have realised that I am gentle... Well... Oh... Oh well...

– What else! Ah! Refrain from beating about the bush, it makes me nervous.

– By the way, you yourself you have not always been, gentle! Words which are even much stronger came to my thoughts, sometimes. What happened to us in Austria? Can you say it to me now?

– Oh no! Poor idiot, you want me truly to get angry! Ah well. So much the worse! It is necessary that I say it to you some day...

So, anger set in as suddenly as it had come along and Jeanne tried to explain to me what I had not yet succeeded to understand: some of the elements of her behaviour which I consider bizarre or unbearable. At the outcome of the conversation, I believed that finally I knew of her all that from time to time, was demolishing our love and, surely, I believed also in having the means to eliminate that poison.

How far I was from the explanation!

She feared and hated men as much as she was ready to love them. Not everything, surely, above all after having validated for her life love at first sight,

which implied a mutual trust. That she loved men so much in spite of the repulsive image which she had of the greatest number amongst them: that should have surprised me. Ah well, no. I made the best of that inclination promising delightful things and, contrary to my habits, I did not even try to understand.

While I reflected upon it, it seemed to me that in her head she had enough beautiful images of men without a blemish to hope to find someone to love and that, on the other hand, nature as well as the human family had made her a woman. She therefore had a great need for men. Yes, she was entirely feminine!

Can we infringe a natural law?

What do I understand by that? Our human intelligence, thus performing, allows us to invent all sorts of answers for the desire of existence: works, constructions, habits, ideologies, social organisations, arts, studies... Each one of us is the liberated consciousness of his Mômmanh, and she trusts us blindly as long as our work will not contradict one of her rules which her experience has taught her, a natural rule. For example, if a man discovered that from now on he has all the possibility to walk on his hands, he will embark in a way against nature and Mômmanh will contest violently his decision.

*"Man who is so intelligent cannot be at the same time so stupid, you say to me.
- He has tried hard obstinately to shackle love."*

Having said that, it is probable that Mômmanh has chosen some behaviour which was of a certain quality at their time and which, now, are perhaps faults. In this case, if we are aware of all the process, the replacement of the absolute characteristic by that modern one will be easy.

<p>Difference between the biological acquisitions and the cultural acquisitions.</p>
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Those means of existence invented by man are taught to children, passing like this from generation to generation. They constitute our cultural characters. It is like this that the femininity has numerous cultural aspects such as the rings in the nose, the giraffe's neck, the Islamic veil, the little Chinese feet, the excision...

Think of a learned behaviour that would prove beneficial for many generations to come: the valuing of shared love, for example. It would gradually imprint itself in Mômmanh's memory and, eventually, she would arrange for it to become an innate characteristic. A cultural characteristic would become a natural one. That may be what we call "atavism."

Which are the five gifts of the woman?

As regards my Jeanne, at first, I will not speak about that cultural femininity but about the other, primordial, that quasi-infinite experience which our Mômmanh has chosen for us: the natural femininity.

It is about, above all, the four gifts I have introduced to you. You can add a fifth which has its importance. It contains everything one needs for the success of the feminine loving sensuality: the grain and the sweetness of the skin, the firmness of the flesh, the sensibility of the breasts, the curve of the buttocks, without forgetting, of course, the holy of holies... We must call the English to the rescue to name that quality. It is sex appeal. A woman who possesses it is sexy.

Mômmanh continues to trust us in spite of all the bad tricks which we have played on her: it is that she is far from being infallible. Can't it be in the attribution of beauty to females, alongside with the masterpieces, you see the quantity of the flops, the unlucky ones which one calls "fatty," "dry haricots," "big horse" or "Normandy cow"!

She is even mistaken, sometimes, in the distribution of sexual attributes. At the will of her fantasy, she goes as far as gifting some unlucky ones with masculine traits: the shoulders of a docker, the voice of a howling bull, a pirate's beard and also the big teeth of a bear.

Ah well, what luck! With my Jeanne, Mômmanh made only coherent choices: my well-beloved was entirely a woman, feminine right to the bottom of her mother of pearl toenails.

The breasts, there you are! Nothing astonishing if it is the first example which comes to my mind. It will not take you long to know the reason why. Therefore, let us take the case of the breasts.

They have received from Mômmanh three missions: to breastfeed the babies, to embellish women, and contribute to the pleasure of love by increasing the pleasure of the lovers.

To start with, see the quantity of aberrations that they carry. How many men have received them by mistake, to say the least under the form of well advanced outlines? How many women don't have anything or have too little? How many others would like them to be in the normal place, situated better to cast a spell on men, and not rejected to isolation, near the armpits, or feigning to want to heave up on the shoulders of the unlucky ones?

Let us think of their erotic function: normally, they must contribute in a courageous manner to lead the lovers to the happy final harmony, when the trumpets of glory are blown.

Here is how that happens, most often, with experienced lovers. The eyes of the beautiful one contain some promises such that the lover plunges, all dressed, in their ocean. There follow some kisses and the first embrace. Then, the breasts take over.

The beautiful breast with generous curves, full and perfect, the beautiful breasts tender and exciting like innocent white doves, the two fawns, all surprised at seeing the hunter, invite him to lay down the arms. Man feels the need to touch, to caress, to envelope in his protective hands the two goblins: with that contact, a wave of beneficial heat covers the attentive bodies which, now, want to experience the follow up. The breasts stand out calling for caresses and kisses: then it is the whole female body which calls for burning caresses. Right from that instant, it is enough for the lover to be on the watch out for the calling of his beloved one in order to answer as best he can: she will lead him to the apotheosis.

When on top of the sweet hills where they had dozed off, the two breasts stand out as if to inspect the horizon, a signal resounds in the body of the lovers: “Let us love each other! Oh yes! There is nothing better!”

When you know that a woman cannot know the real wish if she is not convinced that love is not truly there, you understand the big importance of that signal. If the lover is not too uncouth, he realises then that he is loved, since she has invited him to make love and not to screw.

The swelling of the breasts: how should you call that phenomenon? Must we have to say that it is the first of the female erections? It is too technical. Perhaps, as a minimum, we could use that vocabulary when the machines will make love. In the meantime, let us look for another way to express ourselves.

The signal which those two strong little breasts give out, I understand them better by comparing them to what happened when my grandfather made the whistle of his steam engine roar.

My ancestor was a grain thrashing contractor in those heroic days when a steam engine turned a cereal thrashing machine. Every morning, with some wood and coal, he had to feed a blaze in the heart of the machine for a long time to produce steam under pressure: the result was not evident, because he often had some leakages or other technical misfortunes. Moreover, when the pressure was not sufficient, the sharp roaring of the steam whistle was a signal for all the peasants of the surroundings, accustomed to the hard work of thrashing, which was at the same time a celebration.

It was the signal that the day was truly going to start and my grand father, an old man of unusual enthusiasm, went about with his favourite oath: “Good Grief.” If he replaced “God” by “Grief,” it was not at all out of ignorance, but because he did not want to sin by violating that injunction of the Church: “You must not invoke the name of the Lord in vain! “Being a good Christian like he was, he exclaimed: “Good Grief of Good Grief! A hundred thousand carts of Good Griefs! Come on, boys! All hands on deck! We are going thrashing!”

Like this, as much as the strong breast stands out, that triumphant signal was saying: “Come along! The feast can start!”

But why the hell did I speak of the breasts? Is it a sexual obsession linked to the senescence? I would like to get on... Oh yes! I am there: it was to show you how feminine was my Jeanne. It seems that the breasts are not at all capable to play, that important erotic role. Ah well have you seen? She had really feminine breasts, very much alive, such as I could not ask for anything better. And, on that territory of femininity, she never failed in her promises: she was a woman: she revealed herself a woman afterwards, every time that she invented a new quality: she is still a woman, she will remain a woman until her last day and even in the other world which the future would graciously grant her.

“What? You find I did too much of it. May you know that for my Jeanne, there is never too much of it.”

Do you want other examples?

You will never come to rummage in the motor of her car by assuming an inspired air: besides she does not even know how to open the hood. If the chain of the bike has jumped, rather than pushing down her hands, she will prefer throwing the vehicle in the ditch. Her feminine beauty, which she studies and reinvents unceasingly with so much love, she does not want to be soiled with dirty oil.

In another life, would she like to drive a bus or a lorry? It is necessary to fulfil many conditions, and I believe that that will never happen. To start with, it is necessary that she will be exempted from the handling and the maintenance, activities which are a threat to beauty. Then, the rear view mirror must allow my Jeanne to see all of herself and clearly. The profile of the vehicle will be matching with the elegant silhouette of the mistress of the premises. The piloting cabin will be at the same time intimate and spacious: the décor, will conform to the good taste of the lady of the castle, and will be renewed as often as she desires. Evidently, the photos of her wonderful children will be there in a good place, as well as that of her beloved one and, perhaps of herself, and that of her good grandmother. An extremely reliable system of automatic piloting must assure the running of the vehicle. Like this, the driver can take care of the most important tasks: welcome in the piloting lounge the most interesting clients and discuss with them the best way to lead her life, her indispensable social activity which certain ignorant people, with a scornful tone, call chattering.

Therefore, for that time, and although she operates only by feeling, Mômmanh has well succeeded in her feminine ideal. I had every right to feel fulfilled, I who love women so much.

And the cultural femininity, which generates history, did it succeed equally? Ah well, no! Very often even, I have thought that she was irreparably spoilt. It is true that I was not capable of understanding the process which had led my well beloved into fearing men and, sometimes even hating them.

What cultural acquisitions of the child favour his studies?

The little man learns the existence in his family, principally besides god, his "Father," and his goddess, his "Mother." He learns a great deal at a tender age. It is there that the structures of his thought are formed, and it will be very difficult, nearly impossible to modify them afterwards. If the tastes and the necessary steps for the formation of a cultivated thought are not acquired yet so, the child cannot succeed in his long studies.

But, the failures in the education of my beautiful one were elsewhere.

It was in her family that Jeanne learned to distrust men as well as to love them.

Her grandparents were Spanish immigrants. They had come to France after the First World War, to escape the great poverty which they had in their country. (I cannot speak about the misery, because the great pride of that people forbids me from using that term.) They decided rapidly to found a line in our country, and France became their homeland. Following a tradition that they had not dreamt of questioning, they had many children of whom some died.

The will that they put into becoming French could not forbid them from keeping certain values and certain Spanish customs. It was their cultural heritage of which, very often, they were not aware, being to such an extent part and parcel of them, a little like their faith and their pituitary gland.

All that, in your childhood, you have integrated, whether good or bad, or even still like having a normal behaviour, do you believe you can do without it? Even if you make use of all your will power, it is impossible. In the first place, you will not manage to get rid of an accent! So, those precious know-how's and those deep attachments, acquired during youth, both during the moments of wonder as well as in those of fear, and which are like grafted in your being, all those veins of your soul, even if you accept to bleed to eliminate them, they are there for the whole life. As Maurice says, "One can never redo himself." whatever the learned pedagogues of our times say about it. (Maurice is a happy vagabond who sometimes came "for a drink" to our house, and whom Estelle loved to quote as an intellectual guide.)

All this to tell you that Jeanne's grandparents had Spanish roots which were still very strong, and fresh. Her mother, Paloma, pushed that way just as well by the will of her parents rather than by the necessity to integrate herself, discovered the French way of living at her neighbours, to start with, then in the street, and finally at school. In truth, she was quite often led to choose between the two cultures.

On the French side, she liked the status of the woman right away, so much so that her mother secretly praised her. Later on, the communist party had to strengthen that choice, because it needed to be a hundred times more equalitarian than our bourgeoisie republic.

If Paloma's mother, tied by her origins, was incapable of accompanying her daughter in that emancipation, she was aware of the benefits derived from it, certainly confused, but with sufficient force to encourage her daughter to take advantage of them. Such a point of view was in tolerable to her husband Mr Gomez: it is because she took advantage of his absence to indoctrinate Paloma: "Oh my girl, above all, don't have ten children like me: what a lot of suffering! And then, you know: to be free, you have to earn money. Like this, if your husband is unbearable, you can go away..." She said that in Spanish, the language of her heart.

As far as the good husband was concerned, the status of the woman in the Spanish tradition seemed like a sacred value to him. That his wife or his daughters could depart seriously from it was unacceptable for him.

Why is the foreigner attached to his cultural origins?
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However, his wife's sole and his were both originating from the same Spanish mould. But you know that our Mômmanh, the one who watches over our human nature, favours our ego every time that it is possible. Now, the status of the two sexes in France seemed, with regards to the Spaniards, advantageous for the women and de-spoilt for men. Therefore, by being equally attached to their values of origin, when they were faced by the problem of French feminine emancipation, father Gomez showed himself intransigent while his wife was rather more flexible.

What had to happen materialised itself.

The little Paloma had to help her mother in the housework, which was quite heavy at that time when linen was hand washed. Her brothers not only were exempted from those works which would have dishonoured them, but during mealtimes, they sat at table like little men, and their sister had to serve them. She did not have the right to hang about after school, neither to play in the road. Evidently, her brothers had all the freedom.

It was them who had to be good students in the French school, to integrate well in the new homeland and to have a good position later on, not to be manipulated in the building trade, like their father. They had to become gentlemen, in that beautiful country. Unfortunately, neither the daily begging of the mother, nor the grand theatrical scenes which the father sometimes made, in one of his outbursts of anger whose shouting and the terrifying oaths were the joy of all the district, neither the severe thrashing which was followed by a series of terrible warnings, nothing had the lasting effect which everybody was waiting for besides the wounds, bumps and rarely sometimes the torn clothes, the brothers brought from school mediocre grading and the reproaches of the teachers.

Paloma was the eldest of the Gomez children. If she had been a boy, being the father's deputy and on condition that he would assume the responsibilities linked to the right of the eldest, she would have had the right to particular attentions. But she was only a girl, and her place as the first born, besides the pride of helping her mother, cost her only a lot of ungrateful household tasks.

At the same time, little by little, she became aware of the walk of French women towards equality, she discovered in herself some qualities equivalent to those of her brothers. So she wanted, with all her strength, to realize herself fully. It was not only through a selfish desire to improve her personal situation. It was also out of generosity: since women had qualities hidden for many thousands of years, like buried treasures, it was necessary to release them so that humanity would benefit.

Paloma had inherited some of the great concern for being respected, the honour to which the Spanish are so tied; she called it dignity. She modified the conditions like this: "The woman worthy of that name has to prove that she too is as capable as a man and, consequently, demands the same rights for herself."

Like this, she set about studying whole heartedly and that even more because the public school was the best place to discover the new femininity which her mother should not teach her. At the same time, she learned what later on, would assure her a good position of an emancipated woman. And why couldn't she become a civil

servant? Perhaps even a head? In all respects, she could well show them what a determined girl was capable of.

All proud and happy, on returning to their poor house, she brought back her good scholastic grades. Her unjust parents would have seen, it would not take them long to discover, at last, that evidence: their daughter was as capable as her brothers. So, she would be their equal: like them, one could also sometimes ask her for advice. Like them, she would have had the freedom to go out in the streets of the district. She could even, in the near future, be considered by her adorable father, for what she truly was: the eldest of the family, conscious of her responsibilities and quite set on assuming them.

But irrespective of the good grades and the congratulations of the teachers, the compliments of the parents were late in arriving, with the exception, of her mother, who had a feeling of great pride fearfully hidden.

One summer evening, while the long holidays were approaching, the school headmistress, Mrs Lépagneul in person, paid a visit to the Gomez family. She roughly said the following to them: “Your Paloma is an excellent student. Not only is she gifted, but she is hard working, diligent, and lovable, to top it all, and there is no loss in that. It should not be allowed to let these qualities be lost. Allow her to continue her studies in the higher course of my school; she will prepare herself for the competitive exam of the entrance to the Ecole Normale d’Institutrices and she will become a teacher, then a school headmistress, like me. Rest assured that her studies will not cost you anything.”

In front of that loving and nevertheless energetic woman, Paloma’s grandfather behaved like a peasant in front of a queen: because he respected humbly in her a notable person, an authority of the country which had welcomed him. But, after she left the house, he became again the head of the family, intransigent, and unwilling to share his power.

And, to everybody's surprise, the lightning struck on the Gomez family: the father, who had remained too Spanish, cursed his favourite child because she had become too French and was not suitable for a respectable girl.

He started by finding that he was too poor to allow his children to continue their studies, even though the costs were not high; if one of the boys showed good dispositions, on condition that each and everybody in the family did an effort to help him, perhaps one could pay sufficient years of schooling so that he would become a "Gentleman"; but it was not a question that one would do so many efforts to educate a girl. Not only, would it be like casting pearls in front of swine, but, surely, she would then become like the French, if not worse, those French who, nearly all of them, are bad mannered, they don't keep to their place, and dishonouring their family, they are nothing but whores, those women who sleep with anyone like the dogs, and who do not know not even the fathers of their bastards.

No! A Gomez will never tolerate such an abominable thing. Besides, to avoid all the danger of that sort, on the way to school, Paloma will be from now on accompanied by her brothers, on her way there and back. And it was necessary that everybody should keep an eye on her so that she would not escape from her house to go and linger on in the streets infested by louts.

In Paloma the anger increased and started to erupt like a Mediterranean river reduced to a trickle of water hidden under the stones under the effect of a sudden storm, transforms itself brutally in a furious devastating torrent. And her much beloved father was changed into an enemy she wanted to trample on. While swallowing her sobbing, she shouted that "Yes, she will continue her studies!" that "Surely yes! She would become a school teacher!" that "She would go out in the street all alone, whenever she wanted!" that "No! She did not want above all her stupid brothers to protect her, because she would be ashamed of such a company..."

A couple of bitter slaps on the face interrupted her before she buried herself in the small garden howling to all the neighbourhood that her father was only an old idiot, the most stupid and the most nasty of all France, that "None of her friends had

such a bloody fool of a father like him, luckily enough for them!” that “She would prefer to loiter about the streets rather than continue to live in such a family”...

Jeanne’s terrible grandfather became as pale as death before the reddish hue of an uncontrollable rage lit up his cheeks. All the family rushed to calm him. When he could finally talk, it was the most terrifying oaths which came out first. I cannot repeat it to you because I will hurt uselessly some pious Christians; whatever is possible for me to say, is that he pretended to defecate on a holy character, extremely venerated and implored by the believers; I suppose that such an odious treatment with regards to a highly venerated one in Heavens was given to him out of vengeance, which he had well deserved for not having spared the head of the Gomez family the misfortune of having such a creature as a daughter.

Everybody awaited the verdict. It did not take long to come. Since Paloma was bringing shame on the family, she herself would be humiliated. Like this, she would never yearn to start again to become an unworthy young girl whom nobody would want to marry, not even an old hunchbacked gangster. Because, if one let her be, she would not take long to be wretched like a bitch on heat which drags behind her all the dogs of the district.

Paloma was only twelve years old and she did not bother at all to find a lover; however, the young girl’s shape started to stand out through all the childish clothes which were too tight. Above all, she had magnificent jet black shiny hair, fine hair, flexible and long which rippled like the waves of the sea always on the move, big sombre eyes bordering on intelligent curiosity, already intrepid, the outline of an adult face which would not take long to reveal itself serious, friendly, mocking and, above all energetic: such were the principles making up a beauty still free in the garden of childhood...

(“How do I know it, since I was not there? – Because somebody has related it to me, by Jove!”)

This is what Jeanne’s grandfather did to save the honour of his family.

He announced that he was going, on the field, to shave Paloma's hair and that she would go like that to school, exhibiting her shame. Neither the children's protests nor the begging of his wife changed his determination; on the contrary, they persuaded him that all the family was contaminated by the bad French influence and that it was necessary to act very quickly. Such was his power that each member of the family, whether he liked it or not, came to help him to shear poor Paloma. While biting her lips, she swallowed her sobbing. Her eyes, seemed, like blazes. Her hair was burnt.

Her mother gave her a scarf to cover her shaven skull and it is like this that she went to school. Luckily, the long holidays were near. Some wicked school mates took the opportunity to try and torment her.

Which are the two means of improving his social level? The good? And the bad?

Nothing surprising. You know that Mômmanh has chosen for us a wish for existence organised in six elements. One of the six is the bond with the others.

In that element, the place occupied by our "myself" in the heart of the others is very important. She has different names according to its positive aspects (esteem, notoriety, glory...) or negative (rejection, shame, opprobrium...). Just as, in a family, each child jealous of his brothers and sisters tries to occupy the first place in his parents' love, in society, everybody

wants to reach a high level in the heart of the others.

There are two ways in which to reach that high level. The most evident consists in raising oneself even by means of actions of a certain quality which please the others. The other is without nobility: instead of raising oneself, he wants to lower down the others, by tripping them for example.

The first means, generous, enriches existence: it is a vector of life. The second, strictly selfish, impoverishes the existence: it is a vector of death.

Therefore, those few selfish schoolmates whom we can call “pests” pretended that the “shorn” one was so dirty that she had caught lice, perhaps even scabies or some other disgusting infection. They wanted to “treat” her: “Dirty Spaniard! Paloma Lice-Lice! Spanish scabies,” but the side of the kind ones was very strong in silencing them.

During the holidays, her hair grew enough so that she did not need to hide it under the scarf. Therefore, she did not suffer much from what should have been a big humiliation. No, it is not there that she’s been hurt, marked for life!

She had just lost her father: such was at least the feeling that she had for a long time.

That man so strong, so generous, so handsome, such a rock, a family pillar, that model of a man without whom she did not know how to live, that adorable father – But at last! What am I saying? It was much more than that: the Unique Man, Dad...

the only man of the earth, had just exploded like a soap bubble, leaving in her heart only a sorrowful emptiness.

And he whom she had just discovered, the nasty man who took the place of her “Dear Father”... she hated him.

– I’m exaggerating, you say?

– It’s not me who is saying it, but Gomez. And the Gomez family, doubtlessly because of their Spanish roots, love exaggerating. They create legends like others make pearls.

After that memorable evening, the Gomez father did not miss one single opportunity to humiliate his daughter publicly, principally in front of her brothers. She had to serve them at table, stand beside them while they ate sitting, and wash the crockery all by herself. She was the idiot, the fool, the slob, the stupid, the debauched, the shame of the family. After the end of the compulsory schooling, at the age of thirteen, having obtained, in spite of the negative blows, the famous Certificate of the End of the Primary Studies, she went to work to help her family survive. At sixteen years of age, she had a lover and her father compelled her to marry quickly.

How could she love that evil father who was set about causing the unhappiness of his daughter? How, could she be so stupid, as to admire for such a long time that evil man?

Bad! Bad! Bad! And however, luckily enough, she could not forget the “Father” of her childhood. Here is why, all her life, her heart like a Norwegian omelette, all her life, Paloma was condemned to hate men as much as she loved them.

It is like this that from time to time and in an unjustified manner, Paloma started to pour a torrent of insults on her husband, Louis, that good man who is Jeanne’s step-father.

You see that great guy, wearing his eternal cap which served to dress his skull as well as to protect it from bad weather. He has left his overall at the factory, to put on more suitable clothes, nearly elegant. Since he has no meeting today, exceptionally he soon goes back home in his suburban house. It is Louis, Paloma's husband.

Louis is the head of a workshop in a big enterprise, shop-steward, and sympathiser of the "Party," which did not prevent him from having a vast culture as well as various competences, at the same time being a loving spouse and a responsible father of the family. I will speak to you of his faults another time: they are minor. Louis receives the respect and the sympathy of nearly everyone.

All those qualities did not prevent Paloma from pushing him down lower than the ground and to persevere on him by shuffling furiously on him like a doormat, in the figurative sense, of course, because he is rather strong to make her fall by a flick. Her voice marked by a deep contempt, she let her man know that he is a good for nothing, a "wet blanket," an idiot who does not know how to distinguish between an iron and a roasted chick, a wimp which flattens itself in front of all those who assume a commanding tone, a stupid who trips in his own feet while walking, and, to conclude all, a sack of shit with an appalling stench. Such sessions of humiliation, more frequently in public, take place brutally, like a summer storm, with that difference that there were no warning signs close by. In that case, the Grand Louis scratches a little bit his skull beneath the cap, the attitude of one taken aback, and then he seems to understand something and returns to his business, indifferent to the storm which is raging.

Ah well, that abnormality in behaviour, my Jeanne had inherited from her mother. The legacy had not been made in front of a notary, but in the complicity which, from time to time, united mother and daughter. Jeanne learned that as a ritual which seemed important to her although she did not know the reasons: perhaps her mother did not want to destroy the beautiful image, which Jeanne had of her grandfather. It is because even my well beloved spouse practised the sessions of public humiliation on her husband, your servant, but uniquely in mitigated versions.

Besides, she only did them in the presence of her family, at the time of reunions, like those Christians whose faith has faded, who forget the duty of assisting for mass every Sunday for such a long time that they remain distant from their parents.

With that element of her cultural heritage, Jeanne had already a good reason to mistrust the masculine sex. There was another, the fruit of a personal test which should have inspired her with a definite aversion in the meeting with her male complement. Luckily enough, she has known how to find the means of her cure. But, fearing probably to hurt our love, she has never dared to entrust me with what she went through that summer evening, of her eighteenth birthday. I incidentally learned it through the gossiping of Claire, one of her childhood friends.

Following in her mother's example, Jeanne wanted the same freedom like boys, and even more. One had tried however to put her on guard against the dangers which the defenceless young girls have to watch out for: she had only heard the nuisances to make her return amongst "the well behaved girls."

For some reasons which I will not tell you, because I feel you are impatient, she who still ignored the happiness of being my Jeanne, the poor one, had no wish to celebrate her eighteen years; eighteen years which seemed to her leading towards distress. After having shared in her family the birthday cake, she had gone out alone to the cinema.

She had seen Brigitte Bardot, the bold star of the time, who dared show the erotic beauties of her body as well as the rewards, promised to those who knew how to conquer her. She dared provoke the sexual desire in men to seduce them better. To those for whom the erotic games still seemed dirty and diabolic, those exquisite effronteries said that carnal love was a feast. But that was not a revelation for Jeanne: she had already loved, with her thought as well as with her flesh. Alas, her lover had left her for another, before leaving for the War of Algiers. Therefore, the film did not answer the worries of the moment.

Moreover the heroin, not only accepted to be considered like an idiot, but she believed that it was right; little did it matter, provided she attracted men at her feet, keeping them on the lead like Pekinese, and leading them to satisfy all her whims, very often ruinous. Jeanne did not want above all to play the role of the “Ravishing Idiot,” even with the compensations which a luxury doll receives.

Night was falling. The shortest way to go back home crossed the “zone,” those uninhabited lands of which I have already spoken. Jeanne had gone out like a boy of her age and also as free as a boy, she chose the shortest way. She was not going to let herself be accompanied like the retrograded girls! At the same time that night was falling, observing that half wild territory where she had played so often in her childhood, she remembered how it was full of beautiful hiding places where even the smartest parents would not discover you.

So, just a little later, she thought that a girl runs more risks than a boy when she ventures like this alone and far away from any help.

Suddenly she was overcome by fear and started to run.

She heard some quick, numerous, steps and a fit of panic overwhelmed her. But already three men surrounded her with their arms stretched forth. A big brutal hand fell on her lips before she uttered a sound. She tried hard to recall all her energies to try, in all ways, to escape from such brutes, they gagged her quickly then, amongst the three of them, they carried her easily, like a sack of potatoes, as far as the hollow covered with wild grass spread in the middle of an entanglement of bushes and brambles; it was there, formerly, one of her favourite hiding places, where she related the most beautiful stories.

And I, I will not relate the rape.

When that was over, one of the criminals, the one who seemed to be the leader removed the gag of the poor victim: “There you are. You are a big girl now,

for good. Say thank you to the gentlemen.” But Jeanne started to vomit. There followed a series of violent words which roughly meant:

- Hi boys, we came across a crazy girl, started the leader.
- On my word of honour, she is completely crazy, that woman, replied one of the accomplices.
- Completely mad, retorted the other. She has loved it however.

It is then that the leader of the criminals took things in hand.

- But it’s true that she loved it. Is it true that you liked it? That’s it! My slut. Are you going to answer? Good God!
- Dirty filth! replied Jeanne who was overtaken suddenly by a wave of anger. You are not a man. You are no longer a beast: no beast would do such things. You are a sack of excrements.
- Fortunately for you that you have done me some good: that renders me patient. Is it not true, perhaps, that you have looked for it, slut? Walking all alone in the zone, you were looking for trouble, hey! But say, Good God! that you loved it! You were horny, slut, and you were burning to such an extent that it took three like us to satisfy you! Isn’t it true, perhaps?
- How could you also be so stupid? You, a real bastard, doing me good? You have calf’s flab in your skull, to think such a thing!
- Be careful about your words, you slut! I am running short of patience. You did me some good, I tell you! See? Even if I had proposed to do that again, at my house, from time to time, but gently this time, and with great comfort. True! You could have become my darling, if you were not such a crazy girl.

<p>From where does the tendency to take our desires for reality come? How do you fight it back?</p>

As I have already told you, for the questions which the existential anxiety poses, we only find most frequently some approximate answers which we must believe: it is because we have a tendency to take our wishes for realities.

Another law leads us in the same direction. In the realisation of the existence, if the altruism commanded by the ideology is a priority, the selfishness, the "myself-here-now" is our "darling." Although it seems attainable to a slight extent, we grant it preference. When the altruist says: "No, you must not steal money from your grandmother." the selfish replies: "She does not need it." And our three rapists, when one tells them that they are criminals, they answer that they are, on the contrary, benefactors.

In order that the fault caused to somebody else does not appear evident, the selfish persuades himself that he is right. It is in this sense that he takes his desire for reality. The culture is a means to counter that fault: when one is well read in everything, it becomes difficult to hide the consequences of his acts.

"You did me no good! Do you understand, you big itinerant waste? Being three on a single girl, you have hurt me a good deal, little dirty beasts and great cowards which you are. Like some little queer depraved who ganged in three to beat up a kid at the corner of the wood.

– You do not want to say thanks to dad, impolite? I don't give a damn! In any case, I've had you, my slut! You saw how I stripped you off! I fucked you as best as I could, my pretty one. It is good, believe me: you have enough for your life! Ah yes, your little buttocks are mine, now: it has been so well lined with my impact that all

your life will remain like that! And all your life he will demand it of you. Ah yes, you can believe me, my little slut. There you are! Here is my number. You can call me when you are craving...”

One of the accomplices interrupted abruptly.

“Hey! Shut up! Bloody idiot! Do you want her to hand us to the police?”

Jeanne moved on.

– No? But it is not true. Do you believe in such idle talk? But that date of Cro-Magnon! You have never left your wood, poor retrograded child.

– Ah! Easy...

– Ah yes! I have screwed you well, so I have possessed you. You still believe that nonsense, poor half-witted one! You have not possessed anything at all, do you understand! Can an atom of truth go into your poor silly head? First of all, what you call my “my buttocks,” in fact, it is the proper place, luckily, to make love and to conceive babies. It is there where you have placed your filthy stick. It is there that you have fucked. You understand when I use that sort of word? As if you have shitted in a chapel. Particularly a filthy old man: you have seen it easily.

But, after all, that place can be washed just like any other. Since you don’t know what it is like “to make love,” since you are too much of a non-entity to understand, you would have done better to fuck on the basin of the boys’ toilets. You may be a wretch who found nothing to please girls, but not a criminal in this case.

How three false ideas on sexuality cause havoc. They have a historic origin.

Along the course of its strong struggle for existence, man has cogitated a lot to satisfy his important needs. He has nearly always found some answers, which were adapted to his times. But, of course, his contemporaries did not want to do again the steps which had led to those temporary solutions: they have been satisfied with the formulas. The latter, since they touch our continuation, have become articles of faith transmitted from generation to generation, more and more detached from reality, and strong in spite of everything.

They have had to perpetuate themselves in that way, the three false ideas which we have just seen in action: "coitus is dirty, the adulterous woman is definitely filthy, and masturbation is a shameful feebleness." Let us see the second.

There was a time, some thousands of years ago, where men understood like this the phenomenon of reproduction: "Woman is the earth, man buried his semen there." On that wrong basis, it was logic to suppose that the grains which had not yet blossomed could awake, be it by giving a baby, or be it by contributing to it. The husband who wanted to generate his own descendants had to therefore watch over rigidly that his spouse came to him still a virgin and had to be kept away from other men. Failing which, she risked giving him bastards instead of the proper descendance. It was in this case that she was filthy. And it is that last conviction, detached from its distant origins

but anchored in the heads, like a virus, which continued to cause damage.

"She has failed, therefore she is filthy, and so she is a whore."

The third virus, under its innocent air, does some damage as well. Man produces a superabundance of sperms and he feels the need to dispose of it. If the masturbation is forbidden, for a long time because he has not found a consenting lover, he has to suffer the ever increasing pressure of the unfulfilled need. Would there be less rapes? incest? degrading sexual trafficking?... if solitary relief was no longer considered a vice that destroyed virility and even health, if it was no longer considered shameful?

The real danger of masturbation

But, be careful! We risk antagonizing Mômmanh. In the tablets that matter to us, in the structures of human existence, did she not inscribe in golden letters the primordial value of love? If she made that choice, it was after finding out that amorous conquest requires us to excel. To win the love of his woman, a man must move forward on the path of existence, climb some

steps towards eternity; he must become a better person.

In this regard, I have an anecdote. Whilst trying to figure out how to resolve my conflicts with my beloved Jeanne, I discovered some tricks. Here is one of them.

If we are engaged in a quarrel and I see no end in sight, I just stop talking: the torrent of words and screams coming from the other party turn into a trickle that eventually dries up. But I have not yet found peace: Jeanne has been unbearable to me and I do not know what to do about it. I am stuck, unable to act, she walks all over me like a rug. So, since I learned that you should not be a slave to any need, I say to myself: "This virago is unbearable. Well then, look for another one!" And since, in order to seduce a woman, you must first be a good person, I slowly restart the process. And guess who I seduce? My Jeanne, of course! Did you think she was going to let "a good person" get away?

Well, that's the solution when everything goes wrong between us. There is another one for when everything is going well.

When, after a while, all is well between us, when there is a flat calm, boredom starts to set in; there isn't the slightest breeze to move our ship; I feel like I will soon let myself go and my energy will drain away and I will watch the time pass without me. Then, I said to myself: "Look for another one." And yes, it is the same remedy.

And it works just as well. My new conquest is still Jeanne! Do you see the many benefits that come from the practice of amorous conquest?

We must not, therefore, replace this harsh escalation of the stars with a handjob.

But in men, the need to evacuate his semen into a woman's body becomes obsessive to the point that it could lead to either rape or illness. Then, and only in this extreme case, masturbation becomes a safety valve.

Let us go back to Jeanne, still in the hands of the rapists. Anger leads her to take enormous risks: the leader of the wretched trio loses patience. He repeats to the poor girl.

- Have you finished saying stupid things?
- No, I have not started. But I can always try. All that I wish for now, you see...
- Yeah, right! You have been nice, I'll give you that. So, make a wish.
- All that is wish for now is to see you three die with your throat open in a ditch of shit.
- Hey pals! What does she want, the slut?
- She is asking for more.
- Do you think so? It may be that, but she is too much of a filthy swine. A good hiding is what she needs.”
- Come on guys, take it easy! I have a wonderful idea: we are going to have fun, you will see! Dédé, pass me your can of beer...

Jeanne did not wait to see what was going to happen. Escaping from her executioners, she jumped across the brambles and she started to shout, out of terror and anger. Then, behold a miracle! Some human voices made an echo and a party of revellers who was passing over there came to the rescue. I need not tell you that the three torturers, the ravagers of love, had already escaped.

– How? You might tell me, that particularly despicable rape has not traumatised her for life?

– Oh well, no. She found the means to come out of it.

How to look for their origin to get rid of the embarrassing beliefs.

Some beliefs have been born in the distant past, as an outcome of deep reflections which seemed quite completely pertinent. The law hardened them like rocks, then time fossilised them and now, they poison our existence. Ah well,

the fiction-theory which I call Mômmanh gives us the means to get to the bottom of them.

Like in psychoanalysis, it is enough to relive their history by means of thought. So, in the light of modern knowledge, their absurdities become evident. Then the fossils start to crumble before falling in dust.

But my Jeanne did not know Mômmanh yet. And then, luckily enough, to eliminate the after effects of a rape, she had other remedies.

First of all, she had studied passionately the process of male reproduction: the superstition concerning a supposed defilement was diminished however. Afterwards, her communist education had taught her this: rape is surely deplorable, but like the theory of “The Struggle of the Classes” cannot be explained, the lasting trauma that it causes often is only in the imagination. Finally, and above all, my Jeanne had already experienced love: carried away by her impulsive nature, she had felt more strongly than others the delights which Mômmanh lavishes on us on that occasion. She wanted to find that happiness again and the despicable dirt of those three brutes was not going to forbid her from doing so.

In any case, it was not the rape which traumatised her most, but the fact that she had been attacked by same beings like her. Her great trust in human beings found itself shattered even more, particularly in what concerns the category of the “adult male.” To start with, she decided not to venture alone in the dangerous places and a series of nightmares came back to remind her very often how that wise decision was imperative: like this, she instilled it deeply in her head.

During some months, the act which we poetry engineers, I want to say “the psychologists,” qualify as sexual, the “sexual act” therefore, seemed repulsive to her, linked as it was to the memory of the violence inflicted upon her by those three

criminals. Every time that she met a healthy man, – and there are plenty of them -, she saw the mask of the three brutes placing itself on her face. But she managed rather rapidly to remove it, that mask of a nightmare. Soon, she was capable again, when limited opportunities presented themselves, to experience a blossoming sexuality, as the sexologists well define it, quite useful to avoid myself the repetitions.

So, and even after a despicable rape, the still strong memories of the ancestral taboos can stop the formidable momentum which sweep it away. It is necessary to sweep aside those misleading troublemakers from loving in our times, and they were so: they vanished like the crust of an old wound finally turned into a scar eliminated, by the new and healthy flesh. As soon as the moment had arrived, my beloved gained the happiness of making love, better than before.

And now, my dear friend reader, do you want to do me a favour? Will you remind me what the aim of the long digression was? Ah! Yes! I remember: Jeanne had started to explain to me why, from time to time, she ill-treated me without apparent reasons.

– Our baby will soon be there, she said to me, he must find a peaceful hearth, to develop well.

– That is what I think. So, there must be no quarrels in the household.

– No more quarrels in the household. Otherwise, hardly has he arrived, he will have already an obsession: clearing off the camp! And finding other parents!

– What a horror! So, you will no longer look for me to humiliate me even in front of the family?

– No, I will do everything possible so that it will not happen any longer. Besides, you perhaps don't know it, but after a quarrel, I am sorry and I give you a little treat so that you will pardon me.

– Since you say it to me, I believe I remember now, those treats. If I did not mention them, first of all I am waiting for other things.

– And what then?

– Some excuses by Jove.

– Some excuses! That, never! Never! Do you understand me?

For that time, I had the wisdom not to push the discussion any further. I was hoping that, later on, the favourable moment for a resolution of the conflict would come. Luckily enough, I could not then appreciate the stretch of the events which we had to face before arriving there, because I could have lacked courage and it seemed to me that I would not have lived, passing on that land like a soap bubble, except that the last one, that vanity bubble, doubtlessly does not suffer, even at the moment as it bursts.

Besides, even if the way in which she made me know it was detestable, wasn't Jeanne right on the subject matter, by judging that I was not worth of the trust? Remember the way in which I conceived existence as a couple!

How do revolutionaries and their heirs struggle so long before applying the new principles integrally.
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1789: "Freedom, Equality, Fraternity." Two centuries later, it had not yet been integrally realised.

When a revolution takes place, that is to say a substitution of an ideology in power, it never happens that the people and the material means are entirely ready: to start with, one must satisfy himself with a demi-revolution. Equality, for example, which Jeanne and I had to contend with, like two dogs who wanted to fight over a bone, ah well, it was impossible to realise it right away. One had to wait for the lower class to be one over by the taste for studies, that he has

the means to go to school, that he picks up the habit of controlling his ediles rather than trusting them blindly, that women were freed from the multiple pregnancies and other subjections, and I stop there, because I can fill ten pages like this..

It is like this that in 1968, the gap between the revolutionary promises and the daily life was particularly striking. For whom? For the young ones evidently, at the age when they reject the security of the family life belts and they take the plunge on their own in the tumult of existence. Naturally they start by making an inventory of the fixtures. In that year, an important updating seemed necessary to them, a revision which their elders, engulfed in their traditions, could not understand.

In 1968 therefore, the young ones made the inventory of the promises which had not been kept, those of the eighty-nine as well as the revolutionary ideas adopted after: the sexual freedom, the emancipation of women, the existential freedom, the equality of opportunities, the equality in front of justice, the control of powers by the people... That made a sacred ramdam. De Gaulle never recovered from it.

Our generation has preceded that of the sixty-eight. It did not have the same worries. However, at least on the important project of the female emancipation, Jeanne had taken advantage.

All this to tell you that, my Jeanne so badly loved, as well as that too dear myself, we had a long way ahead of us before realising a crude attempt of the new love. But love, which, after all, is a fusion of two existences, isn't it always new, always to be invented, everyday, as one goes along governing our life and carried away on the river of "Time"? Yes, surely, but we ignore it: otherwise, the misfortune could perhaps have passed its way.

Africa had to participate in the following stage of our search while we proceeded tentatively and stumbled. The Ministry for Cooperation had proposed a post in Upper-Volta, a place which afterwards chose the name itself and which we now call "Burkina Faso." I ignored the existence of the Republic of Upper-Volta. After having consulted the atlas and an encyclopaedia, I informed Jeanne of the good news. She accepted right away.

However, I felt curious that she only prepared a simple suitcase, nothing else as if we were going on vacation for a few days. Taking my desires for realities, I attributed that fact to the proverbial inconsequences of women, incapable of elaborating a future plan and to hang on to it, because reflection is repulsive to them: they are like this without defence in front of the events which surprise and jostle them. Luckily enough, the men are there. Dear Jeanne, so fragile! I loved her twice as much for it. Ah yes, happy idiot, I was even more stupid than now.

9-The truce of the Discoverers

I had already taken the plane once: I had offered myself that luxury to come back home more quickly from Algiers, at the time of my “liberation.” As for Jeanne, it was her first trip by air and she hung on to my arm, forcing her nails in my skin, to elude her fear. I feel the same type of fear in the car when I am not at the wheel and I don’t trust the driver fully.

The plane was a DC 6, a plane with propellers which would soon end in a museum. We made a first stop at Bordeaux, and then darkness enveloped us. While we were flying, it appeared that, the Pyrenees, Spain, Morocco, the desert, were equally shrouded in the night, at first I was playing the role with pleasure, then with a growing irritation, my role of a magic protector. But I ended by giving up.

Since the “rumbling” of the engines, for which the hostess showed her gracious boredom, was obstinately regular, and since the air was bringing us a lot of attentions, without all those disrespectful shakings which other types of transport imposed upon us, the train, for example, since everything was so calm, I dosed off like a baby tired out by a tender lullaby. During that time, Jeanne struggled in an agony of fear.

But it was written that I would not have slept that night. In fact, the loudspeakers announced calmly: “You are asked to fasten your seat belts, because we are going to fly across a turbulent zone.” And the plane started to jolt on its air cushions, like a car hurtling down without brakes along the slope of a mountain. From the windows, we could see, from time to time, a furious white flash tearing up the night. Also we happened to drop like an elevator suddenly falling down. After a long time, too long, that stopped: we were saved for that time, but a new fall did not take long to arrive. It is probable that after that, we gained altitude, because we never bumped against anything solid. The commander on board had done well to have us fastened, because my Jeanne, so impulsive, would have rushed to the door to leave that place. She still huddled herself to me in her distress, but the raging elements were the indications of my imposture: no, I was not the good genius she expected. I looked to see how our human brothers were behaving, the other passengers who I presume to be old experienced colonials.

The majority seemed to feel no fear; some were reading, others chatted quietly. I was then half assured enough in any case to take up my role of male protector.

Then the air and the skies became calm again. Jeanne gripped tenderly to me and we felt that love was enwrapping us. “Stupid happy ones.” you would say? Oh no! Her hot coat seemed too solid to be woven only with illusions.

Jeanne told me that we stopped at Bamako, when it was still night time, but I don't have any recollections of it. While the passengers and the freight were moving, we stayed in the plane. It is there, always in advance therefore, that my better feminine half had her first taste of Africa: it was hot, acrid and rich, well lined with a quantity of strong scents, loose, which were wrangling vigorously. Curious of the slightest new sensation, my Jeanne was all excited. But already the plane had taken off heavily on the runway that she gripped with all her nails to my arms.

Soon, it was daytime, clearly and rapidly, as it does in the tropics. Then, a portion of Africa came to our sight. It was bizarre and disappointing. We saw a

reddish land filled with small green flashy bits which resembled vaguely the artichokes. The villages appeared like fragile toys placed anyhow on that desolate land. What I recognised later on as fields were like chicken spurs which must have scratched at random to look for grain. There were no men, since we could not see them at that distance. I asked myself besides, if they existed and, in the affirmative, where on earth could they find anything to survive on! Here, and there, rare clear stains. Vaguely shining, resembling puddles of water. The most frequent, the red vineyard of the laterite was the dominant tonality and that which was vaguely green had to be vegetation, appeared like messy stuff. However no, we had not arrived on the moon.

We landed at the airport of Ouagadougou. The tyres bounced once on the asphalt before rolling very steadily like those of a car.

We were alive and in good health. Hurray!

At the exit from the plane, we entered into a bath of heat rather clammy: the first kiss of Africa; it was up to us to accept or to go back. The director of my school was there. He was, and for some more years, still a Frenchman. He welcomed us in the same way as the exiles would welcome their own fellow countryman who brings them like a whiff of fresh air, some food of which their nation had given them the taste and who, owing to the absence, creates a pressing desire which one calls “home sickness.” Like this, abroad, one sees the French behaving themselves in a bizarre manner: an ambassador looking for the company of a bricklayer, for example, or a well driller learning bridge or tennis to please his friend the lawyer.

The colleague director made us get into his official Deudeuch.

To start with, we crossed a great town populated exclusively by blacks: a novelty, but not truly a surprise.

The extreme poverty and the misery no longer, were not really the reasons for surprise: the press of the “Party” had announced it many times to us. It was, it stated,

the consequence of “neo-colonialism.” Always the same story, in the background: a new episode of the “Struggle of the Classes,” that is to say the implacable combat which leads the rich to rob the poor. That war was the gangrene of humanity and it stretched, overcoming time, I mean “History,” and space, for the whole Earth to know. She would only end with the disappearance of the exploiting class, that of the rich, thanks to the collectivization of private enterprise. So, the human being will become naturally good and the false paradise of the next world, promised by all the religious, mystifies and swindlers, will be replaced by the true paradise installed in our good old World thanks to the Communists.

Why does the natural selection make of us beings of faith?
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Mômmanh made man in a way that he requires very solid pillars to rest his ideology on. They are first of all forged by a reflection as deep as possible. Afterwards, soaked in the acid of the faith, supposed to be from now on indestructible, they become dogmas.

Even faith is a gift of Mômmanh, not intentional, because she never makes a plan, but an empiric choice, because she resounds what she herself proves.

The dogma of the “Struggle of the Classes” was supposed to explain nearly integrally the faults of human nature and the misfortunes of history.

I was quite ready to admit that explanation, but first I had to understand it and, for that, question the fact until the moment when I would be convinced of its

justice. Like this my insatiable thirst to master everything by thought required it, the painful passion of which you know that it had its good side: very useful when I manage to control it, it became, alas, like all passions, too dangerous when she wrapped like a mad mare, leading me, clinging to her neck, deadly pale and speechless with fear.

It was not the first time that I tried to control the reliability of a dogma of the “Party.” Here you are that other example emerges from the marshes of my memory. It was some years earlier, during the War of Algiers and, of course, the “Party” explained that it was necessary to see there, simply an episode of the “struggle of the Classes.” So I had the possibility to follow my studies and to remain in reprieve, in the shelter until that vile business was over: instead of that, and in spite of the fact that I fear fire shots as well as stabbings, I “interrupted” my reprieve and I enrolled as a volunteer for my military service in Algiers; I wished to see with my own eyes that sinister ruling class on the verge of accomplishing its black outlines, but I never managed to distinguish it clearly. A new crack had formed itself in the shell of my faith which was all new.

But it took much more in order for it to be torn apart completely. Besides, she had been scratched after the beginning, when I had refused to admit that “Religion is the opium of the people”: I could not consider the good man who was my parish priest like a drug pusher, neither those who had died for their faith as dealers or drug addicts.

That time still, I was going to dedicate long years to strive to understand how the neo-colonialists caused the misery of one third of the world so that they indulged in it. The longed for moment of that revelation was never to come. I had to continue to search until the day, when having reached the intuition of a better explanation of history, I felt definitely in heresy. In the meantime, my faith continued to crack little by little.

The director was a pleasant man and a willing gossip. He interrupted his flow of words after we assailed him with our questions: on hearing how we were anxious to discover our new land, he did his very best to satisfy us.

In the mounting heat and the harsh, merciless, light of the tropics, we crossed the capital. Even the Deudeuch, which should have been familiar, seemed strange here: stained with red mud, the seats coated with doubtful material agglutinated with a fatty substance, truly based on abundant perspiration, the rims dented, the tyres gashed with worrying scars, the doors, the panes and the different components of the body taken apart, as if they had been put down and then mounted in a hurry, without any care. That means of transport seemed more terrifying to us than the plane but there was such anarchy in the circulation that it was impossible to drive fast: then, when we were within the limits of the capital which, decidedly I could not call city without degrading that word, I felt safe.

My Jeanne and I, we are untiringly curious of anything one can find on that land, and even beyond: that is one of the reasons for which we demand the right to live one thousand years. But it seems that that request, however modest, is senseless; so it is better if we leave it up to others, to those unknown of the future, the pleasure to discover other existential foods, on earth as well as over there in heaven. I wish that we can trust them! In all manners, we do not have the choice. So, may they know this?

No country is delivered entirely at first go.

Of all the aptitudes to be seen, to be heard, to be understood, to be tasted... of which Mômmanh has gifted man, we only developed one part: that which our cultural matrix of the Western France has worked. The rest, due to its rejection, has lost nearly all its vitality. However, some of the elements are still capable of being reborn, no matter how little they stimulate them, trying to adopt themselves to a new world, for example. But, to succeed in this metamorphosis it takes effort and time.

Think of a good wine, produced in a territory and of a culture: it is rare, isn't it so, that you can, after the first glass, taste all the other qualities; it often happens even, that the neophyte judges it badly and he prefers a sparkling "Coca Cola." It is necessary that you have tasted it many times, preferably in the company of good friends, so that you become sensible to his multiple components, inventions of the living nature offered to whoever has not lost the taste of life. Ah well, the discovery of a country necessitates, at least, an even patient initiation and, surely, at the end of those efforts to open for you new flavours, after those long engagements, he is not sure that the nuptials will take place.

The country where you step for the first time does not only offer qualities to discover: it will be too beautiful and even, probably, annoying. It is necessary also to become conscious of its faults and learn to live with them. Among the Frenchmen of Africa, the ancestors, our initiators, experimented this by means of a parable.

A Frenchman who had just arrived made his first round. He discovers a fly in his glass: by reaction, he throws the good whisky and has his glass washed. A few months later, there are two flies which are fighting in his whisky: he satisfies himself by removing them before drinking. At the end of some years, he has become an elder. It is like this that one begins to understand: when there are no flies in his glass, he catches at least one to put it there.

Finally, there are always, in a discovery of a country, some linked novelties which allow themselves to be appreciated soon: the flavour of a fruit like the mango, for example, or the passionate violence of a landscape, the sweetness of the light, the beauty of women, the surrounding cheerfulness...and what else still?

At first, that strange capital impressed us. And it was good! But how do I make it clear to you to feel the effects?

Everything was new, as if we had changed planet. Poor, most often, spy latched, destitute, but new! The trees, the streets, the houses, the clothes, the people, and even the birds... But yes!

There you are! As regards that, we discovered, how a note of welcome humour, those hideous volatiles with a featherless neck, with their head covered with repulsive rolls of fat evoking bad meat, those big birds unseemingly like resonant farts in a worldly gathering, those poor vultures badly loved whose plumage seemed dirty, as if they had fallen in the waste. Besides, without any surprise, we learned that they are big consumers of rubbish, voluntary dustmen nicknamed vultures, those unlucky benefactors of humanity who have drawn out unlucky numbers in the great lottery of evolution. The chauffeur-director informed us that the abattoirs of Ouagadougou were their general quarters.

A lot of women went about with their breasts showing, without provoking the slightest embarrassment, it seemed. Tied to their mother's back, some babies, even they black, nodded with their head in all directions, at the will of the maternal movements. There were old lorries that we had not seen elsewhere, except in the films about the 14-18 War, and which seemed to have survived a bombardment; they carried enormous and very high loads of wood, inclined to such a point that it seemed it was going to fall: at one moment I asked myself seriously if the laws of weight were, different, in this country.

The girls and the women carried boldly all sorts of things in equilibrium on their head: some paunchy jars, bundles of sticks, big basins full of lively colours, some small tables which they would have classified as made by some children and which served as stalls to the merchantmen and merchantwomen; loaded like this, they kept on straight, chest in front like the bow of a caravel, and they advanced while swaying their hips as much as necessary, but at the same time with a certain grace and a lot of ease.

It seemed that that daily exercise made them carry their head in a haughty manner. Still young, it was all that was left of their beauty: their conditions of life and their physical works were so hard that at the age of thirty they seemed more than sixty years of age.

The men, themselves did not carry anything on their head: their means of transport and locomotion was the bike, of which I learned later that they called it “iron horse,” heavy and solid bike whose rack would have had to bear the weight of a blacksmith’s anvil. They carried four things, sometimes packed in rags, or tied up by means of a rough creeper; it happened that their load had the appearance of a shaky grotesque scaffolding and made up of ill-assorted and very humble goods: clusters of fighting chicks, their heads bowed down, faggots, some armfuls of fair calabashes, – those curious recipients of all shapes which resembled the skin of a pumpkin hard as wood -, boxes of small goods, sacks of grains, boxes of vegetables, machetes or some other quite modest tool, narrow rollers of thick cotton cloth woven in the village by the owner of the bike...

The women, the bikes and the old lorries were not the only means of transport: there were also processions of little metal carts equipped with tyres, pulled by donkeys. Even if their assembly was done in that place, they represented well the industrial products of our western world, above all when one compared them to the local artisan crafts: some shapeless bows, some arrows in rough wood armed with a point of forged iron without symmetry, coarse potteries decorated with motifs which resembled designs made by children, white shapeless clothes called boubous and made of straight strips of country cotton sown ones to the others, small curved legged furniture which insulted the law of geometry and equilibrium, some sandals made of straps of old tyres cut by a knife, a derisory luxury of the citizens who did not want to walk barefoot in order not to be mistaken with the peasants who were still backwards...

All those items were made entirely by hand, without precise measurements and with techniques – I must say – primitive: how many times do we meet in everyday use, like the flat stone to crush the cereals, or still the rustic weaving job of the peasants, the same objects that one would see in museums about prehistory!

The use of the wheel – No! I do not exaggerate! – The use of the wheel, was therefore, very recent, and it limited itself to the imported items. After a century of colonisation, the Burkinabés had not yet decided to make some of them themselves:

perhaps it seemed derisory to want to make by hand and with great difficulty what the industry made so easily?

Which is the basis of human existence in Burkina Faso?
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In that country where about ten different races lived having each its own language and culture, the civilizations had not developed maths, neither science. Therefore technology was equally so: prehistoric. But their thought, following different ways from ours had certainly discovered other food to calm the insatiable hunger of existence which leads us all. Yes, what was then the contribution of those races to the patrimony of humanity?

At Burkina Faso like in any other country of the World, men carry on with their life with what nature proposes to them. Here like elsewhere, the gifts of Mômmanh are for many in the colours and in the tastes which the human existence will take up. Now, besides a very hot sun and a suitable lot of endemic tropical illnesses, nature has not offered big things to the Burkinabés, not many big consumable things, I mean.

When the peasants had earned enough to make a generous meal every day without meat they estimated that their business was not bad. Moreover, the country does not receive practically any profitable resource. No fuel, neither hydroelectricity,

nor any other energy source at a bargain price. No diamonds, neither copper, not even iron, no ore if not a pinch of gold which serves only to make one dream: one has not seen, I don't know in which year, a sparked-off rumour which I believed without foundation, or a fleeting rush for gold, in the north of the country, like a bite in the hollow of a hungry shark.

What is animism? How did animism, polytheism, monotheism, and atheism link themselves?
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So, Mômmanh did not show herself generous towards the Burkinabés. But didn't she show herself equally stingy, or quite so, with regards to the Japanese?

Let us see the other group of the existential resources: the culture. She is just as performing as the closest knowledge of the scientific rigour is understood. The culture of a nation is acquired thanks to the multiple exchanges between the races, associated with good conditions for the studies: the time and the material means. Ah well, those cultural ferments had been very smartly attributed to the dowry of black Africa.

The basic ideology is an endorsement. It is prehistoric: it is animism. First of all, let me give you a wakeup call regarding this important subject.

In fact, the ideology rests on the global explanation of the world which seems the most plausible. In the prehistoric age, the first men believed that all beings, and even everything, with the like of man, were governed by minds: they had just invented animism.

Later on, in the light of the new knowledge, some other men judged unlikely the existence of intellects. Then, what? And they invented polytheism, like the Greeks.

Every race having its own, the gods were millions and millions. Later on still, that immense crowd of divinities which contradicted and squabbled all over the world seemed too incoherent: one invented monotheism.

Then, mainly since the Enlightenment, the existence of God seemed increasingly improbable: atheism developed.

Those beliefs are our blind dog that explores the immensity of the real and gets out of it the best parts. He who served like this as guide to the Burkinabés was, there still, a living fossil, quite close to animism.

The animists believed that, everything like the man of flesh is inhabited by an immaterial soul: his intellect, the whole of nature has been created by some intellects, she is governed by some intellects, and she is inhabited by a

multitude of intellects. In the lion's flesh there is the intellect of a lion, in the water of the river there is the intellect of the river, and so on and so forth. In order to obtain what one wants out of nature, it is necessary to call the power of the intellects.

I discovered that belief by chance, one day when all my students refused to cut the long grass on the ground which would have been their garden. They were however very motivated for that work. They had all improvised, with more or less luck, some excuses the sum of which was incredible: weddings, funerals, collective work, market, administrative summoning... There was also a false bandage.

“What have I done to you, that you treat me like such an idiot? Why that insult?

And one of them dared to reveal the true reason of their attitude.

– It is the god, Mister. He is in the grass. If one cuts it, he is going to be angry.

– Very angry, indeed! Let's go one step forward. There is going to be a great misfortune.

– You see, sir, the grass is green: the god is there, for sure!

– Mister, wait for some days only. When the grass is quite dry, the god has left.

Then one cuts the grass... calmly.

Evidently, the scientific discoveries are hardly favourable to such beliefs: when one looks for the evil intellect which is responsible for an illness, the chances are reduced to discover the true guilty one, a germ, for example.

Having said that, and in spite of everything, when one follows a different way, and he is completely in the wrong, one must discover different things. Therefore, while following the roads traced by the animist's creed, the Burkinabés must have done some original discoveries. It is true, but I only manage to see the

most evident. I think first of all about the virtuosity of their drummers and their dancers for whom their art seemed so easy and essential like respiration for me. I think also of their broad smile which is not of politeness like it is for the Asians, but simple good mood, and which reigns like the sun in the middle of their extreme poverty. I cannot discover the secret of that smile.

I think also, and I should have started from there, of the quality of the Burkinabian welcome. My Jeanne, our children and myself, we have been very happy in that country and when we were not, our hosts were not happy at all. And however, their way of living and their mental universe were so distant from ours that only the really strange extraterrestrial could be like that.

As regards that, I cannot resist the temptation to relate an anecdote to you.

During an excursion in the bush with my friends, we had to spend the night in a remote village where the children had never seen any whites yet. And they were numerous; those little blacks with big eyes open wide who pressed around our modest encampment. The most daring touched us. They observed everything: cars, camp beds, cool boxes, luggages, all our things and even the slightest of our gestures, the slightest of our actions. We were like animals in a zoo.

The evening was advancing, and we would have loved to sleep, but the children were always there and there was no sign which indicated their intention to respect our sleep and our privacy. We could not speak to them because none of them understood French. That evening there, we felt far, far, very far away from home.

It is then that the “Holy Spirit” descended on our friend Roger. In his beautiful Italian voice, he started to sing “I am going to see my Normandy again” and he started to teach that song to the children. Even they started to sing:

“I am going to see my Normandy again,
It is the country
Which gave me the day.”

After which, Roger mimed a sleepy man and, with gestures showed the children that they had to leave.

We spent a good night under the stars.

Let us come back to the works of the multiple cultures of that country: I was not capable of knowing if the other Burkinabe inventions are worthwhile or not. They pretend to have discovered a quantity of good recipes, in many domains, discoveries which our scornful attitude leads us to ignore completely. They could have some efficient local medicine; they know how to treat, in their own way, stress and some other complaints of the soul; they might even have some interesting techniques which they invented in the fields of agriculture and craftsmanship.

It is true that we were ill-prepared to discover the soul of black Africa.

We have seen that a culture is a living architecture and a complex outcome of a sum of apprenticeships. It is nearly as difficult to change culture as to change body to be born to another life. But that is not the only limitation in our aptitude to discover: we were oriented towards another aim: to bring “Civilization” to the poor blacks.

There exists a western ideology which wants to govern the world. One can summarise it to this: materialist science, democracy and human rights. At the times of our youth, in all the cultures of the world, but above all in ours, the western intellectuals dug up what our ideology judged as good. The product of that harvest was called: “Civilisation.” And France, in her ex-colonies, sent “overseas development workers” in charge of spreading it.

We did not come to Burkina Faso to learn, but to teach “Civilisation.” That confinement in our ideology was a second obstacle in the discovery of the Burkinaby cultures.

As regards the animist thought, at the time of our arrival in black Africa, we considered it twice as scornful. To start with, we ignored its existence as a thought. Afterwards, the curious rites which the colonialists had reported in the media, the grotesque disguise, the diabolic dances, the practices of the so-called magic, the beliefs in the supernatural beings supposed to live or possess such an individual, all that colonial folklore appeared to us like a mixture of superstitions born out of ancestral ignorance. “Civilisation” recognised as good only the negro art, essentially the masks and the dancing: all the rest was to be discarded...

Besides, all the old fashioned things would not take long to vanish. You know why: we had just arrived, especially myself the teacher, twice as enlightened by the glorious secular French school as well as the infallible Marxist thought! Ah but! Some others and I, we were going to lead those people to the road of knowledge and prosperity. The whole of Black Africa was going to rise up, surprising the world by all its feats.

“Well! By the way, remind me where we had stopped. Speak more loudly because I am hard of hearing. How? Ah yes! Sure, it is up to me not to mislead myself, otherwise how can I guide you, my poor friend? Ah well, so be it! Sorry? – Who will come to do these digressions in a love story? – Ah well, it seems I have already said it to you. So, so much the worse if I repeat!”

How is the loving orgasm the firework of two successful existences?

Two people, generally of complementary sexes, do all they can to

succeed in their love, each one on his side until the moment of their meeting, the moment when they feel the desire to melt away their two existences. If they manage to grant themselves to each other, Mômmanh rewards them and fills them with a sense of joy unlike anything else.

Yes, I have already said it, but it is so good!

Ah well, it is still like this, for my Jeanne and myself, in spite of our advanced age and all the stupid things that we have done. Every night, when our bodies find themselves flesh against flesh, we feel warmth which has nothing in common with that of a radiator. No, even now, above all now, I will not exchange my well beloved for a steaming toddy and a hot water bottle. Because that warmth, which we feel, is a current of pleasure which erases all our wounds, it is, I believe, the benevolent caress of Mômmanh, the applause of Mômmanh who encourages us like that to continue.

So, you see! Since love is the triumph of existence, it is necessary that I relate to you our own. Without which, this novel will be a door on emptiness, like those kitsch postcards or two mannequins, doubtlessly naked in a shop, embracing in the middle of a heart of barley sugar, representing, it seems, the two lovers.

And all this does not tell me in which period of history we have arrived. Ah!
Here we are, I am here.

We had just arrived at Ouagadougou. Our love seemed solid and however the game was far from won. But we ignored them.

In the meantime, we were surprised, intrigued, excited by all the novelties which that strange capital was offering us. Its call was literally aspiring us.

The pleasures revealed by experience and the pleasures still to be discovered.

For the little man who arrives at the light of the world, the call for pleasures as well as for life is still virgin of answers. So, everything is new, everything is full of emotions: the first time that a baby assists to the flight of a bird, the surprise is so good that he bursts out in laughter. Then our existential space is decorated at the same time that it is building itself up.

From now on, our look is attracted towards that which we have already had the opportunity to appreciate. Let us suppose that the first pear which I have tasted has been delicious: now, each time that the fruit appears in my surroundings, it captures my attention. Therefore, the discoveries become rarer and their emotional force diminishes.

However, if he has done even the slightest bit of safeguarding to his soul a big door open to novelties - And long live the currents of air! - since the existential domain is so vast that we don't know the limits, life will bring us just the same and often some good surprises.

Here you are, that reminds me of that evening of my youth when I used to do the hitch-hiking on the route to Caen. A beautiful car stopped and I was very happy. The inside was very comfortable, the engine powerful and silent, the driver also master of his driving like a bouncing antelope is of its body. The route wormed its way into the green countryside towards the altitude of one side. It is just at the summit that the triumphant music exploded in my eyes, in my head, in my whole being, and I heard something telling me, internally: "Thanks, my God."

What was happening then? Oh, nothing extraordinary; besides, the driver of the car did not see anything. All commonplace, there was a magnificent spectacle in the sky, orchestrated by the setting sun, a spectacle which was only given, it seems, only to me.

After that sumptuous evening, a couple of decades passed during which I have had from time to time the luck of winning at the tombola of existence some beautiful revelations: a song, a promenade in Provence, an explanation of a mystery of life... and I know that others will come to add themselves even if that extends my reprieve to the slightest extent. But none of my discoveries, also important, could give me the immense pleasure which was granted to me that evening there: I was so hungry! And I was fulfilled.

Ah well, my Jeanne and I, we cultivate that same care to safeguard in our soul a big door open on the world and all that which could be found beyond. We are therefore very curious of all that which could be in the universe and it is joyful, because what use will it be to keep the door open if we do not invite anyone to come in.

Is our link the strongest? How come? In any case, nosing around everywhere in the world, not only in the country, but in the books, the spectacles, in the people's head, wherever we have the chance to discover something interesting: behold our common passion. And there is still that: the persons who right away seem the most unpleasant to us, they are those who believe they know everything, otherwise known, as those whose intellect is closed, blocked, we consider them public menace.

Here you are: it happens, and it is not rare happily enough, that the beauty of a woman tears me out from my speculations very often pointless. That beauty calls me, saying: "Refrain therefore from arriving at my level, stupid! Rather than wasting the time granted to you." So, I look at it more attentively. If I see, as is frequently the case, that she has not got those big questioning eyes which always, without letting themselves go, will call the discoveries, so I have the feeling that that beauty is not alive, and she does not interest me anymore. If on the contrary, on sounding those big eyes, the look reflects a feminine's soul, I find an avid curiosity that she may be accompanied by that generous momentum which demands only to be filled with enthusiasm for all the beauties of the world, if I see a beautiful soul which will greet with a clear burst of laughter any motif of surprise, then I feel strongly attracted.

Therefore, my Jeanne and I, at any moment, we are anxious to receive a new flavour, an unknown melody, a previously unpublished architecture, a promising thought... For that joy of enriching existence, we are ready in the possible measure, to upset our routine.

And we only want those false ideas to make a screen between the reality and us, even if they are sacred. Because above all we look for a real world and, if possible, which lasts a long time. After our garden of discoveries, behold a second one which we cultivate together: that of knowledge.

When we have done the gardening well, Mômmanh offers love as a bonus.

All this to tell you, at the time of our arrival at Ouagadougou, since we were young conscious adults that they will never be at all mature, and that we share that

beneficial gift of insatiable curiosity, our capability of amazement was still very strong. She was no longer as lively as a baby who tries to catch a pigeon: discovering with surprise that the animal flies, he shouts his pleasure and applauds that exploit of the bird. No! In the Deudeuch which was travelling along the roads of that bizarre capital of a new world, we did not clap our hands while uttering cries of surprise and our colleague director did not have to worry about our behaviours.

We at first crossed the poor quarters: enclosure which down there they call “concessions,” surrounded by earthen walls more or less destroyed by the rains; rectangular huts, equally earthen, with the undulated roof more or less rusty, resembling the roofs of our hangars and which, like the latter, evoked the crusts of the bad wounds on the face of the earth, round huts also, with thatched roofs, a little more worth; heaps of rubbish here, there; some big trees like lime trees, with abundant foliage of a very healthy green, touches of optimism about which they told us that they were mangoes which came from India and which produced delicious fruit; there were children everywhere some of whom were completely naked, the bodies sometimes covered in ash; raw-boned dogs, some chicks, some goats, some pigs, and even, it seemed to me, at the turning of some dusty road of red clay, a horse so thin that it seemed to be waiting for the end of the world, or still a strange animal called “zébu” and which resembled a cow, with big horns, with a ridiculous hump attached to his back, which hump jolted in such a grotesque manner like the breast of an old lady.

I was asking myself what could one do in those familiar enclosures called “concessions.”

Besides our healthy curiosity about which I have spoken, youth obliges, I was led by the desire to impress our acquaintances, which could not fail to be more and more numerous, at the time of our return to France. I imagined them, pampering at my approach: “Here you are. Have you seen who is there? It is Michel. But yes, one has surely spoken about him, Michel the African, he who knows Africa like his pocket. It is important to listen to what he relates: it is fascinating. He has seen everything, understood everything! With him you know everything about Africa and

the black people. Unbeatable! And then, he does a sacred job, down there! Extraordinary!

With him, it is the whole continent which is going to change. Wait a couple of years... Oh! Leave some decades and you will see: Black Africa will impress us... There will be beautiful black women on the Champs-Élysées, statuesque bodies of course, but supple, sensual, mysterious... Do you see? And then, you will see African products everywhere: it will be like for the Japanese products, now. What's more as regards black dancing and music, there will be the fashion, the cinema, the painting, the science, the literature... It will be all new and formidable, you will see. There will be a new Einstein, all black. And when you want to go on a trip to the moon, you will embark perhaps on an African spacecraft..."

So? Will you still say that my delirium was totally selfish? I agree: I had a sacred layer all the same. However, after having cleaned myself as best as I could from the frenzy of that glory, I continued in spite of everything to hope that the dream of a prosperous and creative Africa would materialise itself.

Discover the secrets of Africa which were spread out to the big sun in the familiar enclosures called "concessions"? It is not so easy to penetrate the intimacy of the black cultures, even if you are kindly invited. Bearing our way there, there were a good number of obstacles which we ignored, starting with the false ideas of which I have already spoken. Amongst our peoples, enormous differences in levels of life and culture constitute other barriers some of which are quite evident. Here are some samples.

In our western countries, we take great care of hygiene and different precautions which guarantee approximately our life until an advanced age, and we are keen not to die before we have received, a minimum, of our quota of years. Ah well, the extreme poverty of the Burkinabés does not allow them these demands and they live in the company of death. At least, it was like this for a quarter of a century and, keeping into account the extremely slow progress in Black Africa, I do not believe that that aspect of human condition has changed much.

They exposed themselves to all sorts of illnesses and, in the majority of cases, they did not have the means to pay for efficient cures. To start with, the villagers, as well as certain citizens, drank unhealthy water. However the latter could not be more natural since, generally it came directly from a sort of pond which filled itself in the rainy season and which one called “small lake.” That water is inhabited by colonies of parasites of all sorts, they themselves being absolutely natural, and it was not treated neither boiled, nor filtered, nor rendered drinkable by any procedure. By drinking it, with a little luck, one could catch many infections some of which were mortal.

If that means failed, there were plenty of others like them to invite death to one’s meal. Here is one of the most simple, reserved however to the inhabitants of the capital: tasting without precaution a tender lettuce which the gardener had regularly and with much care watered with water from an open sewer which our friends familiarly called it “Rio del Merdo.”

The climate seemed suitable for the rapid development of the viruses, germs, amoebas, worms and larvae of all sorts. A big number of microbes covet your body to cut beefsteaks and dig their caves there where their colonies will live. They attack by air, by land, by the way of water equally and they know very well how to use the flesh and other food full of parasites which got in the way like the Horse of Troy. Lovers of novelties, you have a lot of line ups of surprising exotic illnesses: the malaria which is well known, but also some amoebas, some bilharziasis, some filariasis, the worm of Guinea, the onchocercosis... if an excess of novelties give you the vertigo, the generous Africa keeps equally at your disposition a good assortment of familiar illnesses: measles, meningitis, hepatitis, typhoid fever...

Here is an insight of ordinary conditions of hygiene in the countryside, which no one calls the bush, down there. Know that in the city, where nearly all the citizens have come recently from the bush, health is not protected in a better way.

Ah well! In the house of the Burkinabé peasants, the table service was very simple. On the dusty floor one sometimes put a woven straw mat, but that wasn’t an

imperative rule. All the family sat around, on the ground, and the only plate was placed in the centre. Each dipped into it with his hands until everything was eaten. As regards the water, I have already spoken about it. Not only was it the standard drink, but it served also to wash the food, the pots, the calabash and all the other kitchen utensils. Taken for granted that all the invited had washed their hands, which did not take place, that same natural water bore their imprint.

You have understood: to accept to take part in a meal in one of those mysterious “concessions,” to accept would be only a mouthful of water or of that millet beer which they call “dolo,” it was as if you were going to receive the kiss of a plague victim.

Once I found no means which did not seem offensive to negotiate a refusal and I found myself sitting in a dusty place in the company of a peasant family. In the centre of the group in a big calabash, there was the plate of the day, which was supposed to be a delight: some “peas”! Like everybody else, without even washing my hands, I pick-axed in the common calabash something which resembled chick peas; when I crunched them under my teeth something screeched which I took for sand grains contained in the earth which remained attached to the famous peas. That interpretation is a little credible but I could not check it. To make the things slide along as far as my stomach panicking, I could drink from another common calabash, some brimful glasses of the good dolo, evoking vaguely certain ciders of my childhood, but nonetheless very, very dubious. In fact, I am not at all authorised to describe the taste of those foods because fear prevents me from paying attention.

As soon as decorum allowed me, I moved away in the ochre dust and I took refuge in the hut which they had given me. I remained there till I found a remedy for the panic which had invaded me. That experience was free: no colony of parasites had installed itself in my body. Afterwards I always knew how to find the means to refuse that type of invitation and it was, I hope, without upsetting anyone.

How can the cultures understand each other without destroying each other?

Wasn't there already, an insurmountable barrier between the peoples and us? Ah well, no! In fact, the majority of the obstacles which I evoked, if not all, could be got over. But practically every time, you must put patience and tenacity into it.

In the general way, I think that we ourselves have erected those barriers laboriously during the struggle to live indefinitely. And the moment has come to lower them, those damned barriers, now that the human existence can express itself on a mondial scale. Men have to be capable to compare their respective ways of existence and to get a profit out from them, in the way in which the women can present themselves mutually and comment about their outfits, enriching like this their arsenal of seducers, without however flying in their feathers.

The ideologies are difficult to present and to discuss. To start with, the interlocutors must admit that they are not keeping back forcibly the truth, but that they are obeying their beliefs. Facing those who believe in intellects teachers of the universe, even we, the westerners, we must recognise that we believe in another explanation: matter barred of all the intellect would have

generated the life which would have given birth to our mortal soul.

Admit, the times of discussion, that our beliefs are beliefs and not first truths.

If men manage like this to lower their ideological guard, the time to throw a curious look above the hatred of the neighbour, they will arrive less frequently to slit the throat of their fellow mate for a simple opinion offence.

Nonetheless, whichever the culture which has formed them might be, the majority of people would be happy to put into practice the beliefs of their ideology. They aren't capable either to justify them or to discuss them. There is the role of the theologians, or the ideologists, or the members of the committee of ethics of our sweet France. They are those people there, the big priests, who must organise themselves to compare and attempt to match their ideologies.

It is still more difficult to appreciate mutually the rules of life which lean on forgotten beliefs. You know that it is necessary to make the history of it, that, which quite often, necessitates the contribution of specialists. The historians will come to enlighten the debates.

But I ignored then all that...

Yes, I remember: I have abandoned you all; here is a good moment in the full tropical heat and without the slightest refreshment, in the middle of Ouagadougou, the unknown capital of an unknown country, in the Deudeuch of the colleague director whom we still call “Monsieur.” Rest assured that the trip is proceeding normally and we shall arrive at the planned hour.

There was an atmosphere which was pleasant to us: at times nonchalant attitudes, subtle and gracious, vigorous also. Smiling faces and even laughing, quite often: laughter and smiles under the rags. Easy and communicative laughter, grand convivial laughter of simple good humour, laughter without embarrassment and naughtiness which invade space and boost your morale.

In Paris, everybody is in a hurry. Could it be some mysterious illness which ravages the town of “modern” countries? In any case, the illness is very contagious: I, who like a lizard in the sun, would simply stroll on the quays of the Seine, I am carried away to rush to a goal which I ignore. At Ouagadougou, the only ones to push were the “Toubabous,” that is to say the Whites. The Blacks, themselves, took their time as if they had been installed in eternity.

I have just used two terms which were taboos: that which in spite of everything would have used them to call “cat” a cat could have risked being accused of racism. That is the weight of the affective charge accumulated on those simple words throughout the centuries. One therefore had to say: the Africans, the Europeans.

We passed by a wide avenue bordered with curious trees, at times twisted and knotted, powerful and fragile: the “cailcédrats,” we can say, a local variety of mahogany, with hard wood without much value. It was the avenue of the ministers and the great ambassadors, at the bottom of which there stood the presidential palace. It was the avenue of the international dignity and black Mercédès. The colleague director informed us that they called that avenue “the Champs-Élysées.” I do not know any longer if that was its real name or rather if one nicknamed it like this out of derision. On the central strip there grew a type of grass, strange like all the plants

here. It must be the real grass all the same, since some donkeys on liberty grazed daringly. There at least, there were no pigs or poultry, to the contrary of the popular quarters of the city.

We drove therefore along the most solemn and the richest avenue of the country. However, it is here, paradoxically, that in my being the concept of “poverty of one third of the world” took consistency, which, up till then, had only been a thought hollowed out, the wrapping of which I was going to discover at Burkina Faso. Some modern buildings of modest dimensions, the asphalt of the double avenue quite rectilinear, but not surpassing the kilometre, the electric street lamps, some trees, some ornamental plants, the whole combination rather out of tune more or less budding, more or less badly kept: there that poor luxury stopped. The earthen pavements were muddy, because it had rained; there were puddles of water along the streets; a number of constructions awaited, for a long time doubtlessly, urgent maintenance jobs; thin savage plants stubbornly lived in that difficult surrounding which the rags contributed to disfigure. It was nearly all the luxury which the Burkinabé people could offer to men supposed to represent them, to the leaders of the state, so that they could officiate in sumptuous surroundings, worthy to be shown to the look of the nations.

Was it necessary for them to be poor!

It is true that, in addition, they hardly had the sense of state, but I discovered that later on.

At the end and on the lower side of the “Champs-Élysées,” we entered into the modern commercial quarters, constructed around the Big Market. By “modern commerce,” I mean that of imported products, an incredible diversity of goods and of services which that nearly prehistoric economy couldn’t supply. Every time that the colleague director gave us a piece of information, we came out with some “Oh!” and some “Ah!”: we were much more surprised, when we heard that a good part of the merchants were Lebanese and the others were French.

“What are the Lebanese doing here? And why not the Burkinabés?

– One question at a time, please. The Lebanese are good merchants; they do business in all the French-speaking Africa. Second question: the Blacks practice above all business on a small scale, rarely import-export. With them, it is necessary to haggle over everything. You will see: at the beginning, it is amusing, but one does not always have two days to do his shopping.

– Ah, really?”

The Big Market was an immense hangar covered with iron sheets which were not yet rusty, planted in the middle of an asphalted space. It was already too small to contain that crowd of small merchants who were overflowing on all sides and invaded the entire place, stopping right at the beginning of the streets. In that place, where all sorts of meetings took place, there was a confused pilava of shouting, of laughter and of smells often strong, but not necessarily appetizing.

I learned later on, that that market the hub of activity was also a reserve of extras for a spectacle belonging to the local culture: when it required a popular and warm welcome to an eminent personality, the authorities sent some beaters to the Grand Market; their mission consisted in persuading the people to go spontaneously and in a crowd along the way of the official cortege to discover and acclaim the idol of the day.

Here still, in the heart of the city, poverty was evident: holes in the asphalt, papers and waste spread around, a little dust scattered or mud according to the weather, corrugated iron, a lot of badly kept buildings. One distinguished well an architectural project for that central square, but its realisation had been also botched up as well as unfinished. In that poor country with uncertain tomorrows, the foreign merchants wished to build only the precarious, so that they could withdraw easily if their business was threatened. At last, a third cause explained the destitution of the scenery: like numerous peoples whose way of living is still close to the prehistory, and they don't have yet the sense of the state, the Burkinabés did not have any longer the worry to look after the public framework of life.

How is the evolution of the material framework of human existence done: of the clan towards the world-state. Why is it that the Burkinabés don't even have the sense of state?

Yes, as we have seen, the human existential type, favours the overdeveloped ego, that which leads us to choose a social family, alias "a homeland," quite close to us. Along the course of the historic evolution, we have known the clan, the tribe, the state-nation, the multinational state, and we are probably on the way towards the state-world.

Ah well the Burkinabese state, ex-colony which gathers many tens of ethnic groups, was far from being a homeland in the heart of its inhabitants: they belonged to their clan and to their small nation. They were of such a clan, in such a village; there were some Mossis, or some Gourmantchés, some Bobos, some Dioulas, some Peuhls, some Dogons, some Lobis... They were not Burkinabés, or truly so few. They did not have therefore practically any duties towards what was not their homeland: the Burkina Faso, the country which did not exist yet.

A single example: the Burkinabé civil servant uses to the profit of his family and of his clan whatever he can take away from the state.

Is he dishonest? No, because he will never rob his family or his ethnic group. His conscience is at peace: he is an honest man. He is an ordinary civil servant. As far as the people are concerned, they do not condemn him: they would rather be in his place.

Imagine now his similar in an old state-nation which at the same time is a homeland, like France. That civil servant embezzles also the public state revenues, but not to the profit of his ethnic group: he has a bad conscience, his people curse him, finally, he is not an ordinary civil servant he is an exception.

That behaviour as regards to the state, we find it amongst all the peoples who quite often still live in clans or who have been installed in modern states which are not their homeland: artificial states cut out by surveyors, like slices of meat in the flesh of a living animal.

But there, still, it was impossible to understand all that. Nourished by the ideas we received, we were, I remind you, convinced that their country recently freed was entering an era of striking progress towards which we were going to participate.

At that time, the capital hardly had more than one hundred thousand inhabitants, whereas there would be more than seven hundred thousand about whom I asked myself what they lived on. In order that the countryside can nourish so many citizens, it is necessary that the peasants make real progress and the international aid as well. Therefore, the city was not extensive. After having crossed the centre, then a little zone of residences for the rich, we covered two or three kilometres in the suburbs, the same as those previously described, with their "concessions" covered

with the same culture and breeding according to the taste of the new citizens still attached to the peasant way of living; one must say that that agriculture in the city helps to survive when the work in the city is lacking, which is frequent.

Is it necessary to renounce the hope of finding paradise on earth?

I have hurried to start my work to help them to install their paradise on earth. Am I an idiot? I still believe in it, the nearly naïve paradise of my youth has been replaced by a perpetual building site of continuous creation which, I hope, will please Mômmanh.

On our exit from the city, we were nearly dazzled by that space long in the shape, and having approximately the same surface as twenty football grounds and which, like a gigantic mirror, reflected the blinding light of the sun. It was an artificial lake which the colleague director called “dam,” one of those which carried water to the capital. Some fishermen in a boat were throwing their cast net and their gestures were beautiful like those that we could see elsewhere in the world: I want to speak of the net which, when thrown carefully, opens like the corolla of a flower before closing itself in the water, keeping the fish prisoners in its netting.

There were also some fishermen with their fishing line, fish vendors, washer women and girls who came to draw out water, and also some passers by on foot, by bike, by cart... who paddled gaily in the water of the apron.

I was going to forget the clusters of children clinging, some to a trunk of a tree half immersed, some to a piece of land, some to a small boat. They were mostly

boys, nearly naked, not to say totally, and whose white teeth, still far from being carious, wrote down a big happy smile which lit up the young bodies to the sombre skin shining sweetly to the sun.

– The “Bigas” are paying for a slice. I quite believe that it is they who are right, said our conductor director.

– Excuse me?

– Oh! Excuse me. Here we call the children “Bigas.” It must be the Moorish term, the language of the Mossis, and the majority of the people in this country.

– There are therefore plenty of languages.

– Oh, rest assured. Everybody understands at least a little French. Yes, there are a good sixty languages or local dialects. I was therefore saying that the Bigas, or the kids if you prefer, are everywhere the same: they are mad about water.

– One can bathe here. In such a heat, that does good.

– Yes, but if you are keen on your life, do not do as those bigas. In the water of the dams, or that of the small lake which is even worse, one catches all sorts of filthy things, even serious.

– And those children, they don’t catch anything.

– Less than us: they are at home; their organism has built up its defences. Then, from time to time one dies of it: it is like this.

– Ah well!

It had rained on the eve and the overflow of the dam was flowing over the route towards a small dirty valley situated below. That type of dump which served at the same time as the ford of the users of that street, the director called it “dam.” The Deudeuch started boldly. The water reached nearly the lower part of the door. Hardly had I the time to fear that it did not reach the engine, leaving us stranded in the middle of the apron: we were already on the other side and we continued our way.

– Amusing, isn’t it? There is no danger. One arrives just the same (but rest assured that is quite rare), it happens that after an exceptional rain, the crossing is impossible: so, one spends the night at Ouaga.

– Are there many of those aprons?

- Some of them, but I love to see a hundred times more of them. The dams like this one here, are the life and the future of the country. Without the dam, the rain coming from the sea goes quickly back after having done a lot of damage and very little good. Thanks to the supports for the water that, we can keep it for a longer time, the time that she makes it possible for everybody to eat from it. But you come just at the right time: you don't want to understand everything the first day?
- No, surely.
- You will see: one gets on well here. The people are very kind.

We have already learned, but without truly realising in our minds, that that country had two seasons: the season of the rains and the dry season. The names for us so familiar, of spring, summer, autumn, winter, names which we believe universal and in that resentment of many geography lessons, oh well, those words however well civilized had no meaning here. Man can try hard to invent an Orient of dreams and a fantastic interglacial universe, what a lot of trouble he can come across only to come out of this hole!

Therefore, in the season of the rains, the water arrives from the sky, most often during violent storms which can uproot trees a hundred years old, big as the oaks, storms which one calls “tornadoes.” The heavy rainfall of enormous drops tumble down from the sky like a cascade: often, in less than an hour, the rain falls as much as it does in an ordinary month in Brittany. The streets and parts of the roads also, are transformed in torrents; temporarily, the aprons become impassable. The thirsty plants do not benefit from it as much as they want from those galloping downpours which, as soon as they arrive, tear along the roads, towards the sea, carrying with it all that its strength permits it to drag: pieces of good land, essentially.

After the season of the rains, during a period which lasts at least six months for that region of Ouagadougou, it is the dry season. Attention: thirst with extremely rare exceptions, not a drop falls and you can sleep under the stars. The grass of the savannah dries up quickly and the slightest spark is enough to set it on fire. Towards half of the season the harmattan blows which, endlessly, at the same time as the dust which rises in the blue sky, transports the meningitis and some other illnesses.

For the Burkinabés, the beautiful weather would have consisted in a sweet rain like we had at home, at night preferably, which would have refreshed the charred land, washed the sky and purified the atmosphere... Moreover, during that sick season, when the radio said: “Beautiful clear weather and sunny all over the territory.” one asked if the journalist was joking or if he recited by heart a formula learned during a course in France.

At our arrival, it was the month of August, the heart of the season of rains and farming. The tornado of the previous evening had left puddles of water in the holes of the street, and sharpened their colours.

Here, I must introduce to you the laterite. In a tropical climate, the joint action of the rain and the sun provoke the formation, in the soil, of a layer of red infertile land: it is the laterite. The extended drought hardens it until it forms an impenetrable crust for the roots, practically sterile. When the savage rain of the tornadoes has carried away the thin layer of the good vegetable earth, there only remains that red shell, like the laughter of a dragon. That is what happens when the cultivations and farming are badly conducted: great stretches of laterique desert are formed.

Ah well, even the laterite serves for something: one uses it to cover the streets. Some big holes are formed principally when the rain has rendered them fragile. During the dry season, the cars and the lorries move their trail of red dust, comparable to the trail of a comet.

Another phenomenon assaults the vehicles, their passengers and their freight: it is the plate of corrugated steel. In the scorching sun, the lateritique lining is dilated and forms thick transversal streaks so well that the way seems a strip of reddish corrugated iron. This phenomenon is mitigated during the season of the rains, but persists nevertheless.

“On the corrugated iron, our conductor announced, that it was necessary to drive either slowly, or at a minimum of 80. Between the two, the car falls in pieces and you will find yourself sitting on the road.”

While proceeding in this alarming manner, Deudeuch took up its momentum to cling to the speed of survival. We had to travel about fifteen kilometres before reaching Kardougou, the village where our school was built. We had just left the city to enter the territory of the peasants, and so, we were not in the countryside.

– Here, the peasants do not live in the countryside: they live in “undergrowth.”

– Ah well?

– Ah yes! It is like that here. You arrive in another world. In France all the land is cultivated; in the Upper-Volta, it is most often in its wild state. The peasants practice what is called the itinerant culture of the slash and burn technique. In other words, they clear by means of the fire, the corner of the undergrowth where they are going to make their field; they cultivate it for some years, without manure, until nothing suitable grows, because the land is exhausted; so they ask the chief of the land of the village for the permission to clear another corner of the undergrowth. And then, you must know, that here the land cannot be privately owned: it belongs to the village. It is because the land where the family constructs its huts is called a concession and not a property. Strange! Strange!... other places, other customs. You know, I sometimes have the impression of having fallen on another planet.

On that route, the undergrowth” had a particular character owing to the influence of the nearest city: nearly all the lands were cultivated. Under the striking blue of the sky, the two colours dominated the landscape: the red of the route and some plaques of the bare laterite, the greenery of the cultivations.

In the middle of all the plants that were strange to me, I recognised a familiar cultivation just the same: mais. There was also a plant which seemed similar and whose stem was taller still; in fact the director told us, that what I was seeing there was not always the same cereal but two similar species: sorghum or big millet, and another species called “little millet.” However, since their grains had approximately

the same flavours and above all the same function, that of basic food, the Africans had combined these two species in one single category: it was the millet, the nourishing cereal in tropical Africa. It made up nearly entirely the only daily meal of the Burkinabés peasants. Moreover, I was surprised when the director informed me that the average produce was inferior to 300 kilos/ha., twenty times less than that of blessed France!

In spite of the unbelievable deprivations, on seeing the green stretch of the cultivations, I kept on the impression of certain opulence. I did not know yet that in the dry season, the same landscape did not evoke any longer the prosperity, but rather the three fourths missing fur of a sick and hungry beast. In any case, on that day, I was keen on keeping my false impression, consequence of the illusions which I had with me and of which the greater part would not take long to dissolve because of the brutal reality.

In a global economy, do we need a world-state?
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And now? Now that my hair is white and that I have come back to my old self completely, I believe again that that country can become a splendid garden. Now, men should not take long to take that revolutionary decision: cease behaving like fools. I know: you have heard that a thousand times and it is always the announcing sign of a woolly utopia. Allow me just the same to introduce what Mômmanh has inspired me.

See the entire humanity like a colony of living beings particularly intelligent and

performing. The planet earth is their domain. They have the possibility of developing there the way and of producing there enough riches so that human existence commits itself resolutely on the ways of cosmos, towards the two infinities of time and space. Instead of that, what does one see? Some idiots who strike each other and kill each other.

"What are we to do? - It is up to you to find it. It is up to you and all the others. I will give you a lead just the same."

<p>Globalisation at the service of man. The world economy at the service of man.</p>
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The liberal economy, in the developing countries, produces enormous riches which are increasing. One knows now how to regulate that system, from the internal side of a state, in a way to avoid the serious crisis. Like this, our French government makes the economy's actors respect of a plethora of rules which guarantee the quality of products, salaries, the stability of the currency, working conditions, the protection of the unemployed.. For example, it is nearly impossible in France to cultivate poppy or to sell arms to someone in the same way one sells butter.

But the market has become global and on this scale it is impossible to control. We have gone far past that.

So?

So, the forbidden ways to earn money in a country, are practised in another, the cultivation of coca, poppies, cannabis, trafficking of arms, of organs, of children, of perverse sex... tax evasion, plundering of natural resources, degradation of the biosphere, child exploitation, exploitation of salaries, slavery, mafia practices, strangulation of the human future... Must one continue the list which will cover doubtlessly the whole volume?

Like this, when a state wants to regulate the economy in a way so that it gives work and riches to all and it serves for the better development of the existence, it finds often other countries to reduce to nothing its efforts only by rendering to an unfair competition. And moreover, because of that worldwide competition, all the countries live under the permanent threat of recession and unemployment, a threat which will end up by materialising itself.

All the wounds which ravage the world's economy, a state which will live in anarchy will know how to get to the bottom of it. If a world authority disposes, to the planetarian scale, the same powers as that state, even it can render

healthy the economy of our existential space of action: it would rule the world market.

Humanity possesses the natural resources, the scientific knowledge, the know-how and the machines to produce enough to provide and freedom to all men. Perhaps it is necessary to pay attention, however, to the risks of overpopulation, searching for the right balance between the number of humans and the overall quality of life. The worldwide market is a gigantic enterprise capable of satisfying the needs of the whole humanity. The direction of that precious ensemble is trusted to nearly two hundred states of which each takes care first of all of its own interests. Is man, the only conscious being on the planet, to whom Mômmanh has entrusted her destiny, crazy? To take humanity in a bus that is driven by two hundred drivers! When is he going to decide to give the world market an only direction, with means of action at least also efficient like those of a modern state?

As the Earth is a village, when will it have a mayor?

And shall we see man, his intelligence at last freed, managing better his planet, like a good farmer?

So? "When will it be?"

But, look. It's not just the economy that has been globalised, it is perhaps human existence as a whole. Let's see.

<p>As the Earth is a village, when will it have a mayor?</p>
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The territory and the men with whom we can act to realise our existence, I call it existential field of action, that is to say accessible to our will. At daybreak of humanity, that field was limited to the clan and to the territory which he can cover to find his subsistence. After the discovery of America, it stretched to the whole world but it was still possible, for a good number of peoples, to withdraw behind their borders as Japan and China did. And anyway, most existential activities take place within countries.

But, thanks to the "snowball" development of science and technology, man has extended his grip to the whole of the earth and beyond.

Now, the part of the existence affected by globalisation is bigger without being able to reverse the tendency. But this coin has another side: a positive one. A planetary empire would have the means to govern: the Internet, satellites, missiles, transport, and so on. The

president of the United States can order its troops anywhere in the world as easily as if they were just outside the White House.

Before, a threat to our existence could be situated outside of the existential scope of action: that inflicted on the West by the Huns and later the Mongols, or the European plague for the Native Americans after 1492. But this was exceptional, and the people threatened could not do much about it. Now, a state can deprive its neighbours of water, or poison the planet's air. Now, there are dozens of threats to our existence: pollution of all kinds, nuclear risks, overcrowding, fanaticism, epidemics, depletion of natural resources, drugs, arms trafficking.. Thanks to globalisation, these threats are now commonplace. But also thanks to the globalisation, we can give ourselves the means to combat them. They are within the reach of our collective will. If we create an international power, the whole of the earth will be within our existential scope of action.

"The earth is a village." Well, but then, where is its municipal council? Who is its mayor?

When will we have a planetarian government to better rule the earth's existence?

And the Earth will again become the Garden of Eden that man has described in his myths. And

the Earth will become our first port of embarkation for the stars.

Amongst the obstacles to this sacred union, there are all of the nationalisms and their selfish desire for domination, conflicts between ideologies, incompatibilities between traditional lifestyles, etc. But the first obstacle, which everyone now runs into is the omnipotence of big business lobbies and their main instrument of domination: the United States and its allies.

The United States has imposed a form of capitalism on the world for which they themselves set the rules: ultra-liberalism, whose main purpose is to allow these large lobbies to earn more and more money; it now has 30% of world production, whereas before these wild new rules it had just 20%. And anyone who wants to escape from this racket and these unhealthy rules can not, because they are entangled in the net of globalisation.

These rules make it possible, sometimes indirectly, to make children work, to engage in slavery, to destroy the industries of developed countries, to carry out tax evasion and money laundering on a large scale, to pollute the air and the water and to engage in unhealthy speculation. They bring down wages and destroy social protection. They make us desire economic growth at any cost, even if we have to look for it "with our teeth" and even if, in the current conditions, it contributes to the depletion of our

natural resources. It doesn't matter: the returns on capital will be higher and higher.

Is our selfishness that great? Yes it is.

But it is not the American people who want this: they often suffer the results themselves.

So?

The large lobbies direct the vote of American voters with their millions of dollars. This is how they manage to hold the government in their hands.

And as the United States impose their laws on the world!...

-1: Mômmanh is the little affectionate name that I have given to evolution.

At a great speed on the corrugated steel sheets – 80 km/h. for our brave Deudeuch – in resentment of trepidations and clouds of red dust which were accompanying us like a witch's train, we had the impression of sliding on the route. We had to learn later on, at our expense, how much that impression was right: some nervous handling of the steering wheel was enough to lose control of the vehicle which went across the road and in a frolic anywhere as far as a tree wrongly placed puts an end to its vague desires of independence. That sort of slip on the road lasted a good ten kilometres and our driver decreased the speed to engage himself slowly on a new apron trickling with water. We had arrived at the dam which nourishes the

village of Kardougou. All of a sudden, we turned to the right to take a laterite road, bordered with greenery: we were on the school territory.

The colleague director was taking us directly to our house.

“This is what the administration calls ‘villa’ and we familiarly call a ‘small house’. It is yours.”

It was a modest 2-bedroom apartment, nearly new, flanked by a terrace in cement sheltered under the porch roof with corrugated transparent plastic, an addition which we had to call “*véranda*,” to speak the same language as the autochthonous. Our small house had the electricity, two air conditioners without which the moments of great heat would have been borne with difficulty, and the running water; in brief, in that country of extreme poverty, the function of that lodging had the effect of a residence of great

luxury which one would be happy to call “*villa*,” since its small size forbid it from reaching the level of a castle. But, we had to discover the different aspects of our lodging later.

For the time being, we felt a delicious tickle of happiness at the sight of our house. A vigorous creeper with big leaves sheltered the veranda; its numerous branches resembling ropes intertwining themselves into a sort of net which enclosed the transparent porch. That plant down there, was the creeper of Madagascar, our director told us. Was it truly the time for blooming? Were its flowers really like this: big and gracious, fleshy, crammed with vigour, sensual which encouraged the caress of the look, to the colours now striking, playing boldly their devilish serenade, presently discrete, inviting timidly to discover in their peaceful contemplation their delicate intimacy? No, they are only like this in my memory. What does it matter, that a beautiful stranger of the tropics symbolises the new delights which our accommodation invited to discover, in that hot country populated by Blacks.

Yes, our lodging pleased us right away. Behind, closed by a hedge of acacia, was a big plot of land of which I was going to make our garden. If there were, amongst the small grass, some bougainvilleas, some pride of China, red jasmine, ornamental manioc, a banana tree... There still, our horizon opened itself on the promises of unknown pleasure.

That F3 planted in the laterite of a village of the African savannah, was an element of our daily life transplanted in that strange universe. At first, he played the same role as the colleague director and his Deudeuch: avoiding us preventing us from being too much out of our own element, deprived brutally of our existential foods tested without having the time to experiment others.

Afterwards, little by little, we discovered that we should not have adapted ourselves there, neither even survive, without some elements of our western comfort: in the first place, hospital and all its doctors, then an air conditioner, the refrigerator, electricity... which seemed to us as important as acquaintances of the French or the Western ones, be they Americans.

But I cannot all the same relate everything to you. Allow yourself the voyage, if you can. With only as much imagination, of hope, of faith, in the man which we shall have then, you cannot be deceived. And you will not be the only hare-brained Westerner immersed in a black population, because hundreds of NGOs lead some actions down here.

The time of the meal did not delay itself; for that first meal in that distant "down there," we were invited to the table of Mr Lajoie, at the time, director, compatriot, colleague, and already nearly a friend.

"It is quite a completely ordinary meal, he warned us. This evening, you will be better received, in the presence of all the colleagues and friends of Kardougou. Work starts again at three in the afternoon which, after eating, gives us a more sufficient time for a good little siesta, a refreshing shower, and even for some inside

activities, while, outside, the sunlight shoots down its rays on whatever moves. Of course, you will take up your work only tomorrow.”

On the inside of the “lodging” just a little bit bigger than ours, well closed to prevent the heat from coming in, Mrs Lajoie was waiting for us in the shade deliciously fresh, in the company of their two children, two boys nearly adolescents. We took place in the corner of the lounge. The malicious eye, sure of its little effect, Mrs Lajoie rang a little bronze bell. A big Black arrived soon: immaculate white shirt, each of his cheeks marked with two or three parallel scars, signs which showed the adults of his race; he displayed a good will, which seemed even more naïve because it was accompanied by a big smile.

– Madam?

– Grégoire, bring us the aperitif. Do as usual. And don’t forget the goody-goodies, said Mrs Lajoie who, in turning towards us, continued.

“Admit that that amazes you, huh? Ah well no, we are not colonialists, and however we all have some native servants here, sometimes two or even three, they even do all the housework, which gives us a lot of spare time; they earn ten times more at our house than they do cultivating their fields and they can buy a moped. The servants are happy, the masters are happy, everybody is happy. So, is there a problem? I know a good boy who has already worked with some Europeans. I will send him to you after tomorrow, Madame Dufour: he will be your first native servant. And I will explain to you how to deal with them: because if you are too gentle, they take you for an idiot; so not only don’t they bother anymore, but they empty your house and they make fun of you.

During the meal, nobody had the need to rise up for the service.

After one of us let his wish be guessed as “I could still do with a piece of lamb leg and some flageolets,” the lady of the house, very attentive, rang the bell, and the wish was granted.

The perspective of employing a native servant embarrassed me. We, the comrades who came to help the Blacks to break the last chains of colonialism, we who wanted the natural equality of men to express itself concretely in all the world, we all the same, slaves of our selfishness, were not going to betray the best element in communism!

But, living without a servant, meant depriving a young villager from a better way of life for him, his wife and children; it was taking away the happiness of possessing a moped. In the situation of that time, perhaps the walk towards freedom of the Blacks passed through the employment of the servant. I found that I had reasoned out things well and I informed the entire table. As usual Jeanne had concluded well ahead of me. Why look for noon at two in the afternoon? She wanted a boy like everybody even so because her pregnancy became evident.

At the end of the meal, while the boy was serving the coffees, Mr Lajoie said: “It is pleasant all the same not to have neither the table to clear nor the crockery to wash. The children take a bad habit here. They believe that it is normal to be served like lords and, on the return to France; they suffer in returning to ordinary citizens. While waiting, let us benefit from our temporary privileges and we shall have a little nap. Here, everybody takes a siesta. It is doubtlessly the great heat which creates this need. So, put into it as much as you can as from today. Be careful, one must not sleep for too long, not more than half an hour; otherwise, after awakening, you will have headaches and your mind will be confused. There you are: have a good siesta, my friends.”

It is like this that we discovered the pleasure of the tropical siesta in a well-closed bedroom where, thanks to the air conditioner, the temperature was sufficiently fresh so that one could rest serenely. The siesta gives you again the energy during which, outside, the sun perseveres in vain on desert spaces. When you awake, you are in good shape for the second stage of the day which contains a lot of time for free activities.

When evening came, all the “Europeans” of Kardougou met at Rémi, a colleague, and his wife Laure. In fact all those people were French like us. While waiting to be able to realise the universal fraternity, we, the comrades discoverers and liberators of the whole humanity, were quite happy to find ourselves among Frenchmen. We let ourselves be guided with instinct like some newly-born in that rather strange besides foreign world. Those new companions, seemed perfectly similar to us, like members of the family, they knew what was good for us. We were all dumbfounded, happy to discover to which point, in the land of exile, a portion of France can have the same taste like a glass of water for a thirsty person.

The evening started with a game of bowling and an informal meal, like all the rest. The atmosphere was nearly familiar. Although it was for us a discovery, we were suddenly seduced with that game in open air accessible to all. Boy or girl, from 7 to 97 years. I did not know anything better to favour the friendship of the neighbourhood.

The game of bowling was followed by an aperitif with a great variety of good things, some goody-goodies or throat delights, kebabs, fries, cheeses and some fruits: it was what our hosts called “dinner aperitif.” The evening ended gaily.

Nested like this in our little French bubble, we went to sleep without fear of the black, so deep in the heart of Black Africa. We were hasty to be on the following day, and not only to see the new colours of daybreak: we were impatient to start for our good new existence, myself in my class with my black African students, Jeanne with the management of our house and the initiation of our native servant.

The African episode started well. Who could warn us that our love was going to ruin itself till it became a daily punishment, and even! A tragic disaster. Would you believe it? I said a punishment. It is still a part of my Christian education: that religion doesn't explain that such mishaps of man can't be willed by God who is all goodness, they are necessarily punishments earned by our big sins.

We were not at all guilty.

Some strength that we were incapable of understanding, and much less to control, swept us away, like in the era of the Hundred Years War, the unhappy inhabitants of the kingdom of France were struck from all sides by the three inexplicable scourges of the war, of the plague and of famine. Our love had been a marvellous gift and we had arrived to a point to consider it like the air which we breathed, evident and indispensable. But it was little by little transforming itself into a nightmare.

To those who, amongst you, have entered in that history and sympathise with his heroes, I say in a brotherly way “Hang on: it is going to spin.”

10-The Hundred Years War

Imagine that you are an aeronautical pioneer and that your plane broke down in an unknown place in the desert about which you don't know anything. You have only one chance of surviving: walk in what you believe to be a good direction for a long time because you have not found any help, till the hypothetical. As long as that moment did not arrive, are you on the verge of crossing the desert? or rather to live your last days? How are you to know?

“Be silent and walk!”

Here is what type of universe we had to look for on our way, at the same time so close one to the other and so distant that the despair of never finding us was taking the upper hand. And above all, it was necessary that the land opened itself beneath us: then we realised at last that we were taking a false route.

If you have to, even you must undertake a crossing of the desert like the lovers do too frequently for life, get going and offer to your beloved that present fruit of your sorrow, more precious than the viaticum: some beacons to find your way.

If you have had them, our dear Estelle would continue to invent her existences, like the living do, instead of being already nothing else but a fossilised intellect, as brilliant as the precious flame which we carry with fervour before she is reduced, like all this, to an unchangeable being as much as tiny links of the future inventions of life, faint ghostly kisses of which the people of the future will ask perhaps from where could it come.

Oh yes, if only we had known. But the regrets are not very nourishing unless they generate good grains. Let us hope that you will be numerous to render that fruitful.

How nature and culture are sometimes conflicting.

*Ah yes, we do not know even what is love!
Those who are not keen on that! Since Mômmanh has
generously guided us with the dispositions for
that art, it should have been easy to arrive there
just only by following our instincts. But no! It
would have been too simple! Because you know well
that men have many times to struggle hard to
correct those natural inclinations. They have
persevered to such an extent to suffocate the love
which we tried so hard to discover. That which
Nature did, Culture has nearly succeeded in
destroying.*

In brief, like Romeo and Juliet, whatever we know about the subject of love, is that it can be marvellous: behold that it is not bad, already. But we have not learned neither why nor how. For Romeo and Juliet, the ignorance was without importance since society made them die soon after their love at first sight. Since we did not have that chance, it is necessary for us to continue the adventure till its conclusion.

It was like a beautiful mare which we know how to ride for some promenades of which each was an exploration in the rich region. We could mount the mare, yes, but when she fell ill, we were incapable of taking care of it. And that happened to us too often. We were also not capable of feeding her every day.

Why must lovers have the same values, but not necessarily the same tastes?

You know that love is the fusion of two complementary existences. It needs the two lovers to have common values and, whenever possible, to be more likely to achieve these precious values together.

Assuming they do not share the same passions, they must at least agree in this explosive area. If one is a motorcycle enthusiast, the other must not look at him sighing contemptuously.

Tastes, needs and abilities must fit together better than the pieces of a puzzle. If one likes chicken wings and the other likes thighs, that works well. If one feels suffocated in bed when the window is closed whilst the other can not sleep when it is open, there is a big problem to solve.

Moral values are generated by ideology. So two lovers must share the same one.

I know that a Catholic and a Muslim can have a deep and everlasting love, but this requires their religious beliefs to hardly mean anything to

them and their personal ideologies to be something else. Therefore, if they care more about freedom and science than the vestiges of their religion, they can have a lasting relationship.

That is why we now need to refine the concept of ideology. We saw in Chapter 2 that ideology defines the main rules of existence, especially those who must guarantee posterity. However, it is not possible for two people to have exactly the same view of the world and what should be done to ensure a good quality of life for man. Just look at how we argue in churches and within political parties. The truth is that everyone forges his own ideology. Personal ideologies are like hands: they may look the same, but each has its own unique fingerprint. Those that we call ideologies are actually ideological families, churches or chapels depending on how many followers they have: Catholicism for example, or the French secular ideal, Zen Buddhism, communism, or any other of the multiple families not forgetting Jehovah's Witnesses, Scientologists and other Trotskyists.

Here is an example.

If a man is too attached to his "myself-here-now," all respecting the concern of perpetuity, his ideology will invent rules of life which evaluate the selfish pleasure. On the contrary, the man too attached to the existence distant from the ego will be too attached to the austere and altruistic rules of life. I believe

that those two opposite models will find it difficult to unite in love, even if they share the same basic convictions. Like this, two Catholics, one too pious and charitable, the other thinks of nothing but the feast and the selfish pleasure: those two there do not dispose of a common ideological stem sufficiently strong to build a love.

And those who belong to the adverse ideologies? Even less.

So, let's assume that our two lovers, although they do not necessarily belong to the same church, have sufficiently close personal ideologies, a common ideological core, a large basket of shared moral values.

What about their other values, then? Well yes, ideology is not everything. There are other values apart from morality. Apart from their ideology, there are other things that matter a lot in life of an individual: for example, love, or sports, or being true to oneself. And God knows what else.

It is good for lovers to also share other values apart from moral ones. Otherwise, how could a woman accept that her husband spends half of his time hunting and fishing?

Therefore, they need some common values: moral values and others.

But tell me, can it not be the case that a man is rich even though he despises money? That a woman is beautiful even though she is not interested in beauty? That an individual is a hard worker even though he hates his work? But if the characteristics of the beloved that seduce us are of no interest to them, but only accidental, they will lose them easily. And the love will disappear with it. If I only love someone for their fortune whereas money is of no interest to them, they are likely to go broke. So: "Bye bye My Love. Did you think I loved you for your beautiful eyes?" Whilst if they also love money, they will do everything they can to remain rich and therefore desirable.

So, this is the main reason for looking for common values: it's better to have a gold mine than a nugget.

On that basis, it is necessary that one can offer to the other the elements of existence of which he dreams, and reciprocally. To do that, it is sometimes necessary that they have the same tastes. It is not necessary that one does not like to sleep with the window open and the other with the window closed because all their money will go to the glazier.

Same tastes: here is what seems a contradiction with what we stated previously. So? Let us refine matters.

It is good sometimes that the tastes are different and some other times that they are identical, provided that they agree. It is good that one likes to cook, the other the cuisine, the other the potato peeling and the crockery, that one prefers the wing and the other the thigh. But it is wrong that one has cooked the thighs of the frogs when these cause the retches to the other, or still that both of them fight over the only little chick's brain.

Finally, it is necessary that their competences agree. To carry a too heavy table, they have to join forces. To prepare a trip, their know-hows must be complete: one will take care of the itinerary, the other one of the logistic, one will do the baggage while the other will prepare the car.

Let us suppose that they love music: one plays the violin, the other appreciates, criticises and applauds. And now they yearn to make a beautiful garden. It is very simple. They plan it together, without too much squabbling. Together they realise it: Oliver spades, to clear, reaps, refreshes his knowledge in horticulture...while Amelia studies the art of the gardens, plants, sows weeds, prunes... and the birds sing.

Ah! I was going to forget the methods.

If the existential aims agree but the means to get there are in contradiction, there is the risk of a split-up. Like this, Alice and Jacques love their children; they want both of them to succeed. But to reach that aim, Alice believes only in blind discipline while for Jacques, absolute freedom also blind is sacred. So?

What is the recipe of the great love?

To summarise all of this:

- Common values and existential methods.*
- Similar passions and tastes.*
- Complementary sexes and skills.*

This is the basic formula for a great love.

And if it does not work, despite the care that we have devoted to it? This would be a sign that we've missed out something important.

Two human beings are so complex that it is impossible to be perfectly matched to them, far from it. So? They can still build their love if

each of them is capable of putting up with what appears to them as a defect in the other.

And most of all... do not forget what we have already seen regarding the "love fair." Do not forget the main point: the greatest existential qualities are also the most popular. To be loved by a fairy that, in her basket, has beauty, intelligence, humour, health, energy, tenderness, and everything else... you must also bring a lot to the table and even more just to be sure. The more qualities you have, the better your chances are of being loved by a fairy.

So do not forget that love requires that, throughout your life and without flinching, that you stay on the pedestal of the coveted man, the man of value. This is another one of Mômmanh's cunning ruses to force us to grow.

Let's continue then:

- Complementary sexes and skills. These qualities must be developed to the highest level.

- Common values and existential methods.

- Similar passions and tastes.

- And, to put the icing on the cake, that each partner is able to withstand the faults of the other, the failures of this beautiful harmony.

This is the formula for a great love. But let me cover myself before you try it.

Ah! One last thing. If you want to put this famous recipe into practice, forget it. You can not drive your car whilst holding the manual in one hand and the rules of the road in the other!

Good luck.

It is in the sharing of roles that our disagreement was most irreducible: each one of us wanted absolutely the role of the leader.

Remember: Jeanne took after her mother the belief that she was never to trust any man. It was necessary even to humiliate him from time to time to avoid him having the upper hand and at the same time be unable to satisfy his likings. Jeanne's mother, Paloma, had meditated that matter for a long time: besides the cruelty and the injustice which her dear father had endured, the man had allowed himself to be destroyed easily by all sorts of vices such as alcoholism, sexual perversions, gambling, etc.

To the teachings of her mother, Jeanne added other reasons to want at all costs to direct the symphony of love. Firstly, her strong personality made her want to be the boss. Secondly, feminism had a large influence on her.

Why is that tendency of the freed oppressed to become oppressors?

There is, following I don't know which liberation, that tendency of the beings recently freed to want to taste first of all whatever has been denied to them up till then. Carried away by the momentum of their triumphant struggle, they go as far as wanting to re-establish to their benefit the oppression of which they were victims. Like this you see the old slaves become slave traders, bourgeois of the French Revolution playing in their own turn the role of the lords which they had eliminated, and what else still? Ah well, the ladies of our era, as soon as they have been freed, are tempted to do what had been prohibited: go to cafés, drive buses and order people about. A lot of them want to take the place of the male heads of the family that they have dethroned.

Is that all? By itself, would this revolutionary spirit not lead to one injustice being replaced with another? No, there is also something else.

There is also the inevitable mistrust against the old "masters," men. But this is not all.

When the citizens protest in the city streets to defend their beefsteaks or their ideal,

foreign bodies infiltrate in their cortege, amateur fighters, robbers, looters, agitators... It is like this that women whose first concern is to fill their heads with their selfishness have boarded the brain with the feminists. And since our young era is dominated by selfishness, they are more and more numerous in leading astray the "struggle of the just."

Finally - I almost forgot - there is the confusion that we feel when we let go of our old habits. We are free now, it's true, but what should we do with this new freedom? It takes trial and error, mistakes, obstinacy and imagination to invent new rules of conduct, good ones that will eventually improve our lives. In fact, we have not yet managed to get over the 1789 revolution! So please, be a little patient when you consider the errors of our liberated women.

Now, remember, my Jeanne had anticipated the feminist revolution at full speed as usual. She had there a supplementary reason to demand the command of our galley.

On my part, I also had some solid reasons to cling to power as if it had been vital.

To start with, it was perceived as a duty, in the best village from where I came. One used to think that it was dangerous, and therefore unworthy of a man, to let his wife "wear the trousers."

I wanted also to be able to do it, with all my strength, because the subconscious, in the wings, manipulated me like a puppet: you know well what the

mistress of everything demanded of me, similar to God. And I was far from having sorted out the bag of knots in my soul.

Therefore, if I consented out of despair and of extreme justice to trust my life to a pilot of a plane or to a medical corp, I was incapable of abandoning the conduct of my existence to anybody, not even my love. Since the present intimate coffee pause or a dreary awakening beneath a dug out hut, as far as the most distant times in the past as in the future, since the immediate surrounding of our dining room till the borders of all the space was possible for me to see in my imagination, I scrutinized the universe and I asked it endlessly so that I could lead our boat there in a safe harbour in full security. Only I was truly gifted for that vital art.

Therefore, when there were not even two members in our family, my family had already two leaders. That was the origin of many scenes the arrival of which we soon learned to recognise, like the peasants feel the arrival of the storm which risks ruining their corn. But the signs of warning were often useless: the war of the leaders went as far as the conclusion.

The bickering took place many times a day, in ordinary times, and they developed often in relentless fighting. Fortunately, some truces, more or less long, opened the passage to other aspects of life, comprising there the happiness. That came when our will to command allowed itself to be forgotten.

Certain household scenes took some strange aspects, which hardly toned down their difficulty.

For example, when a disagreement between us began to degenerate, a gesture similar to cutting off with my hand followed by an outburst from my love announced the imminent storm, we used different arms to impose our will. To reduce to mercy my love, I used the gladiator's net while my beloved tried hard to knock me out with a mass of arms. I pretended that for each problem there existed a rational answer that was enough for us to discover together. She answered that as for that game, I gained more if I let go and that it was necessary to shorten the discussion. Therefore, while

never endingly, I tried or believed to try to resolve the problem, she heaped her arguments on my head, as if she wanted to drive the message home by means of hammer blows. And it took me a long time to understand, it being so strange to my culture that she did not hesitate to lie cheekily.

Like this, when she wanted us to buy a new car, we had conversations of this type.

– Your car is quite wheezy. Will it be able to go up the coast?

– But come on, my dear, it proceeds as usual. Are you dreaming?

– It is you who are dreaming. In order not to wear it out, you will keep scrapheap until it falls to pieces on the way. Unless it throws us in the ravine. Have you seen the direction, how it rattles?

– It does not rattle at all! There you are, we are proceeding in a straight line, I let go off the steering wheel. So, you can see well!

– It zigzags on the way. Stop! But stop therefore! You are going to kill us! And then the engine is dead, the body is gobbled up by rust. There are some holes on the lower side of the doors.

– What holes? And the engine is in good shape.

– Besides, mother does not want to go up into your coffin. She says she is too young to die. And I am ashamed when we go to the Nourys. Have you seen their Mercédès? It is not a stingy man's car!

– I am not stingy! In which language must I explain things to you? I am thrifty.

– A type who dares take out his wife in a dustbin is stingy.

– It is a beautiful dustbin, as beautiful as a car. And it drives very well.

– Poor idiot! It must be truly that you have the sh... in your eyes not to see the speedometer which marks forty. I warn you if the engine stops, you will listen to me.

– Forty? But look! You read just as well as I do, 70, no?

– No, I do not read 70! And besides, that does not mean anything because we start going down.

– Going down but going down what, good god? We have not finished going up the coast.

- If you were less stingy, you will replace that scrapheap of which I am ashamed and which costs much more than a new one. Everybody tells you, but you, the great intellectual who is going to redo the world, you take all the others for ignorant.
- Everybody tells me that? With that what? Who, for example?
- Everybody, I tell you, isn't that enough? There you are, Bernard, for example. And then I don't want to talk to you any longer! You are too bloody stupid.

And we stayed for some time to ignore each other in the worst manner as if we had been strangers, or else, we “sulking.” It is a familiar duel and yet quite strange when one inflicts mutually the suffering of being cut back with love, while hoping that the other is going to give in and comes to ask for pardon on his knees.

Several and several times, we have played another game just as wicked: extend the discussion indefinitely without even knowing what we were discussing. At that stage, the aim is no longer to convince your dear opponent but only to be the last one to talk. To have the last word: for want of anything better, one will content himself with that poor result.

In order to win that miserable last word, Jeanne the rash did not beat about the bush: she put forward her truth and vanished soon afterwards. I followed her surely, but when she jumped in the car to go I don't know where, I had to give up. There was nothing else left but to sulk.

How is it necessary to surpass the struggle for power within the couple.

Wanting the last word, and sulking: I suppose that those two objectives answer the same wish inscribed in our genes by Mômmanh. That wish

will be set off by a deep disagreement and it will aim at obtaining the capitulation of the other.

Each one of us waited for the hated loved one to execute the ritual of submission of the dog in front of its owner: to lie down, the head stretched out on the ground, his look attentive and imploring facing his master, waving his tail and emitting a low groaning. When his master orders him: "Hector! Stand up!" he obeys immediately with joy. Well, renouncing the last word, it means: "You see, I give up. You can take whichever way you like. I am not your lord and master." And this renunciation can take so much effort that we can't do it.

*Because Mômmanh wrote down only the right answers in the genetic memory which directs our ego. If such was the case, our action will be all traced out and we will not need to look for our way in the fog. But she gave us liberated consciousness. It is therefore, up to us, to choose what will serve us better in our **EXISTENCE**.*

At the beginning, we were capable of sulking for more than a week. And when that torture finished, we had gained nothing, neither one nor the other. Fortunately enough, we had the good sense early enough not to prolong uselessly that absurd situation. On my part, it was enough to learn to repel that temptation strongly: try to renew the contact by using a new approach, rational or "reasonable" for sure, about discord. According to the sacred expression, one did not have to put it back on the carpet which here I must call "ring." One only had to abandon it hoping that, during some months as a minimum, it would no longer come to poison our love.

It was like this, that the topics of discord put aside were piling in the loft. We had to dispose of them one day because we were soon running out of space.

Besides the fact that at our house the barking is as exceptional as tactless, we have another difference with the dog: when that animal fails his master, he receives a good thrashing then he is submitted definitely. My beloved one like myself, no one wants to submit himself and we covered many places and many years, antlers entangled like some deer on the rut, breaking some crockery on the way and sowing consternation.

In that way, we also happened to do worse. Many times, without any necessity, with the sole aim to establish our power, we demanded from our love an annoying action for one in the same way as for the other.

It was on a grey winter Sunday. We were looking for a common activity for the afternoon: the cinema, a market in the discovery of nature, a game of scrabbles at our house, in the warmth, an art exhibition...

“A football match, I said laughing, Saint-Hilaire plays against Saint-Denis.”

I have said to you that, one like the other, we did not feel any attraction for the spectacle of sports competition. That common indifference that “lack of taste” shared is only the thin subject of understanding, but we could have put it to our benefit, just the same.

“Ah well, replied my love, it will be a Sunday unlike the others. Let us go and see it.”

And it is like this that for the first and last time in our married life a communal plot, at the bottom of a field opened to the four winds, we assisted for a

battle more or less friendly between two rural teams. But why therefore had she inflicted that punishment?

“Ah! You know, my dear, it is necessary that I bother you a bit, otherwise you will be bored very quickly with me.”

One of her preferred methods of attack was anger, which, like a long blade, which should have removed all my resistances and rendered me submissive to the wishes of my well beloved. I did not believe that that manoeuvre was premeditated because, when she did not slip on the shell of false indifference which I erected by pressing my teeth, she obtained the opposite result expected: I thundered in my turn, brandishing my will against hers. I believe rather that she was tied to two genetic characters of my Jeanne: a great inclination for anger herself, and a great impulsivity.

How dangerous is anger.

Anger is a present which Mômmanh gave us to follow from our resources in certain difficult situations. But it renders one blind and deaf: it is because it is necessary above all not to make an intensive culture of it. As regards the impulsivity of which I have spoken to you about previously, it is like anger a beautiful gift from Mômmanh for which we pay too dearly sometimes.

An angry consequence of those character traits was the curious aptitude of my Jeanne to get jammed, like a rusty bolt inserted across in the trowel, so that, for her, nearly the blocking seemed inexplicable. Do you want an example? Ah well, here we go.

We had entrusted our children to their grandparents and both of us were leaving for our holidays, for about ten days. Faced with such a heavy responsibility, Jeanne's parents inspired us with a sense of total confidence. Moreover, they were very happy, perhaps even more than the small children. Therefore, we left without worrying.

We were happy, even, to find ourselves on our own to rediscover and pacify our souls, hoping well that our love, well strengthened, would grant us exquisite moments. In the frame of our personal war, the war of the leaders, we had led a series of long combats, as hard as well vain. Out of silent understanding, we had concluded a cease-fire on which we watched over carefully, in the same way one looks after the feeble flame of a candle from the slightest air current.

It was owing to Jeanne's lack of aptitude to "coincide" in the most inadequate moments.

Having left Vieuvy, by car of course, we were going to discover a new region, probably the Cévennes. We would savour in advance the emotions which that country would not fail to give us. If, as I am sure of, each man is capable of bringing at least a personal contribution to the banquet of life, by a stronger reason, a region, no matter which, will bring more: landscapes, houses, costumes, traditions which have been elaborated for a long time and matured by the generations who have formed a chain throughout the centuries, traditions nourished by alchemy of the region all like the good wine... Yes, on the way to those holidays there, we went humming, taking the time even to dawdle a bit.

I do not know at all in which way it started. We were taking part, I believe, in a discussion on the different types of behaviour regarding money. I evoked that type of spendthrift who, after spending all his money in a jiffy, tries hard to obtain that of his neighbours in order to continue to squander it.

"You yourself, sometimes have this behaviour. You have exploited me, dear," I said while laughing and in a tone which meant that I was indifferent to it.

With regards to management of our revenue, we had reached an agreement which seemed satisfactory, and we did not have any quarrels on that matter for many months. Moreover, Jeanne's answer slammed in my head such a violent clap of thunder in a blue sky.

– Ah yes! I am exploiting you! You are making those detours to throw me that s... in my face. Dirty type! I hate you!

– But at the end, my dear, what is coming over you? I was discussing money in general and I believed that you did the same. I did not want to warm up an old conflict which has been settled for a long time.

– You did not want, eh? Dirty hypocrite! If you did not want war, you should not have tried to throw your dirt on me. Ah! There you are you pretentious wimp, now. Don't touch me! Poor bloody fool, I hate you!

– But at the end, Jeanne, we are acting like mad. We left on holidays, both of us, everything was all right: we were happy.

– You did not have to take advantage to throw your venom. Besides, I am no longer staying with you. There is surely a station in this city. I will go back by train! Leave me at the station, if it is not too much my asking, and go on holidays all on your own.

I had to leave Jeanne at the station. She snatched her bag from my hands and she advanced towards the entry hall with a quick step without turning back. Guess if I felt like leaving for my vacations.

I still believed, at that time, that she suffered much less than me when trouble arose in our couple. Otherwise, why would she have provoked such sorrow? That time I had to discover that it was nothing.

During more than an hour, I wandered in the streets of the city which I will not be able to indicate more clearly because I did not even try to know its name. I had a tough job to cogitate all my strength, trying to understand what had happened and, not getting anywhere, trying just the same to find good means to make it up with Jeanne, yes, I had tendered dangerously, one more time, my will of rationality, to

make my brain burst, and the only tangible sign was a headache. And my steps took me towards the station. A miracle perhaps was going to save me, once more.

Jeanne was there, sitting at table in the terrace of a nearby café. She seemed frustrated, not touching even her half shandy. She looked sad, even desperate, to such a point that I advanced to take her in my arms to console her. And the miracle took place: she started to cry.

We took up again the route of our holidays. Our reconciliation was marked by our flesh.

However, I asked Jeanne for some explanations about her strange behaviour: that was allowed. Why did she get “stuck” like this, in an unforeseen manner, provoking suffering which was useless? She answered that it was stronger than her and that we had to live with it. It was up to me to be very careful about what I said, to reduce the risks. It was up to me also, at the moment when she was stupidly stuck, to come and set her free.

You may ask me what relation is there between Jeanne’s curious handicap and her uncompromising will to be the leader of the family. Ah well, here you are. In her heart of hearts, Jeanne knew that she spent more than me and blamed herself for being unjust without being able to correct herself. Admitting that weakness was to endanger her stature as a leader, in the same way as a political leader who has stolen the public funds has to resign. Feeling her authority, on which she was keen above everything, threatened, Jeanne, impulsive, reacted immediately and violently. She used the heavy weapon which she had at hand: deprive me of love. And like a leader does not go back on his decision, she found herself “stuck” once more.

She thought: “That bloody macho, if I leave him in a suspicion of power, he would be at my throat. He can beat me, because he is stronger than I am.” Here is how a great impulsivity associated to that extreme suspicion leads her frequently to spark off measures of reprisals on the false alerts.

If she could differ her reaction, she would have had the time to see that I accepted that unequal sharing of our pocket-money and that her authority was not being undermined.

But Jeanne is impulsive: she pulls, she aims, and then she reflects. I have often asked her why she uselessly persevered to bring up the past: it is that in spite of everything she wants to avoid the blunders that she has committed by over speeding. Too late!

The impulsivity and the anger, those two presents which Mother Nature has put in her cradle provoking dangerous outbursts in the wars of leaders. When a conflict points his nasty muzzle, before we had the time to avoid it, they would have already led us in a whirlwind of rage and of hatred which reaches its peak soon bordering on a passionate drama or on rupture.

Yes, Jeanne is impulsive. Her response to stress is ten times more rapid than mine, granted that I have the opposite fault. The emotions which spark off the perception of her environment, I believe, not only do they come to her very quickly, but also that they are immediately more intense than with us, as if she has a filter lacking which we have. In any case, she cannot refrain from reacting quickly, before her ‘myself’ could have opened its mouth to tell her to reflect first. It is like an impetuous torrent which carries her, helplessly, even when she sees me on the bank, still more perplexed than usual.

For example, a spot on the floor which evokes vaguely an enormous spider, that makes her immediately howl and jump. That weakness caused formerly the joy of our kids. When, delighted with the anticipation of the reaction which his mother would offer him, one of them had organized a practical joke of that type, invariably, she never failed to start again telling him: “Play on me another dirty trick: I will have a heart attack and perhaps I’ll die of it!”

How the soul which is overcome by rationality looks for her
compliment: a soul overcome by emotion.

Those emotions which are strong as they are immediate escape therefore the control of reflection. On the scale of evolution, they make my Jeanne tumble down by millions and millions of years till the times immemorial when Mômmanh started to invent intelligence. When there are no painful consequences, I like that handicap: it is comic, it undermines the authority of my well beloved, and above all, above all! It carries all the savour of the natural urges since no reflection could have rendered them tasteless. The reactions which it leads are purely emotional.

Emotional! That was what I lacked most.

Oh yes! Remember, my friend reader, that unknown madness which I contracted that I wanted absolutely, by way of rationality, to become God. I fought sufficiently against that illness to contain it, and however, I still have not sorted it out. Shall I ever manage? No, doubtlessly it is my burden and my banner.

When it seizes me, I reflect so much before acting that I lose all the faculty of answering to stress, without feeling any longer neither disgust, nor love nor hatred, torn between the imperial desire to be God and that to be again capable of loving.

So, when I am in front of a comic situation, the laughter is suffocated in me. Because it is not rational, to laugh! Fortunate enough! Fortunate enough, the free and joyful laughter of Jeanne pushes itself down in my rusty throat and carries it away. Thanks love!

Yes Mômmanh made up in the horizon a picture to make you shout with joy, I do not feel anything. Because, you see, it is not rational, to shout with joy! And, what's more, without even knowing why! But Jeanne is there who exclaims while clapping her hands, and the warmth of life permeates itself again.

Here is how, without my Jeanne, very often I shall miss the aroma of a good coffee, the pleasure of living a film which carries us away, the rupture of flying like an arrow with the insolent sparrow which perches in the pear tree. I would love the charm of the conversations with the creative, inventive, imaginative, more or less liars and manufacturers of projects and dreams of all sorts...

Since the emotions express themselves savagely in Jeanne, I have chased them away with my excessive behaviour. In the best of cases, when my circuits are not yet overheated to the point that I cannot deliver the slight information, I find myself facing the sketch of a painting which is rational of reality, and I do not know what to do. I have exchanged my nature against a computer, but a special computer which suffers for having lost its soul which pounded in him in his childhood years, when he was still human.

Curiously enough, during those crises, all the same quite completely a robot... No, because it is forbidden for me to taste the pleasure, I can quite completely appreciate pain. There is therefore something in me linked to good living: the toothache, the migraines and the irresistible need to cough.

It is like this that our handicaps are corrected mutually, on condition however that we fight them energetically: as a consequence they will destroy us. Jeanne appreciates that my imperial needs for reflection curb her many fleeting momentums which could be dangerous: I drink her exclamations, her laughter, her shouts, her enthusiasm, like a baby drinks the maternal milk because they generate my suffocating sensibility. It seems to me, that in that quite particular domain, the chances of meeting our loving compliment were minimal. Ah well, it is when it arrives all the same. Thanks. Thanks who?

And behold that my chattering has not even led us astray since it has led us again to the deep cause of my determination to want to lead the family.

Like this, during that regrettable war of leaders, each one in his own way, was implacable. Did it take so much unhappiness that at the end we recognised that fact and accepted to find a solution for it? The carrot or the stick: it is true, alas, that quite often, it is the great kicking on the behind that make us advance rather than the perspective of a better existence.

Quite sure that we made great efforts to go out of that dead end: and more often, it was in vain. Did we need a human sacrifice to get out of it? Did it require our daughter's death she who had a promising future? Yes, in spite of the abolition of death sentences, that she died for sure!

Are the existential experiences of our life written in the
memory of our gametes?

*Is it you, Mômmanh, who have had that
cruelty?*

*I have already told you, that in our
science-fiction game, in the model which I
developed, Mômmanh is our old blind mother. The
tiny fraction of herself which realises itself
through me, I call it "my Mômmanh." To satisfy her
imperial appetite for existence, all along the
billions of years which pass after the origin, she
keeps in her memory the taste for that has done
her good and the disgust for he who has done her*

wrong. But, incapable of conceiving the universe, she cannot do any projects. For that, she appeals to the prodigious brain which she has elaborated patiently: ours.

She is our old blind grandmother sitting at the corner of the fire. We relate to her all that we have seen. She rummages in her immense memory and tells us: "My child that is good: you must look for it. But be very careful! That is bad: you must discard it."

Being so small, we drink all the wisdom of our Mômmanh. Afterwards, it is as one goes along that our own tastes and disgusts are formed, and we listen to her advice less and less.

Fortunately, death comes to take us away from this drifting. What, in our lives, has a great existential value will mark either the genetic code or the other heredity vectors of our reproductive cells. Therefore, any remarkable life will leave two tiny messages in the ocean of existence: one in our history (our cultural memory) and the other in our genetic code (our natural memory).

Well, in those billions of billions of memories, our Mômmanh has selected for us two tendencies which sometimes are opposite, risking paralysing us: in our actions, we grant priority to altruism, that is to say to the triumph of life in general, but we have a strong preference for

the pleasures of our own pile of flesh already rotten.

Priority for others, preference for our ego. In the case of a severe conflict between the two teachers, rather than giving up one's place, quite often, the satisfaction of the ego hides in the subconscious. So, one can bid farewell to the clear conscience!

<p>How does the purgation of our passions allow the fighting against our bad desires of the subconscious.</p>

Ah well, each one of us had a bad gene particularly harmful hidden in the subconscious. And that demon was, for each of us, the principal responsible for our will - What am I saying? - for our need to be head of the family.

And then? We only had to throw them out, those two bandits!

Easy to say.

That walk which we evaded both of us although it seemed easy, it consists very simply in reliving the history of the incriminating behaviours, in a way to obtain a clear conscience

of motivations which have inspired them. That operation is called the purgation of our passions.

It is not long and painful which if the selfish passion which one keeps a secret is truly very hard to overcome: for example, that of the murderer who cannot bear neither the contemptible look of his conscience nor the perspective of killing himself.

But our madness did not seem as tough.

In what concerns me, remember! I have already related how the vain pleasure of being always first at school had given birth to the monstrous demand which poisoned my existence: understanding everything to be a God. Since it was contrary to the generous morality instilled by my parents and by all my teachers, all I had to do was to conceal that monstrous swelling of my ego. When? In my subconscious, evidently, well hidden under a pile of virtuous principles.

And Jeanne? Head of the family, till death! Why did she attach herself to that function and with such perseverance? Apparently, she had nothing too shameful to conceal. In which case, she did not even need the purgation of her passion. A simple historian would have been enough, as I have already said, to explain the origin of her despicable behaviour.

Therefore, the only effort should have consisted in discovering the antecedents which I have already related: how in her youth her mother had learned that she must not trust men, that you must command them and humiliate them from time to time, because they have a contemptible side. So, in order to wind off, it would have been enough that she lived with the principles which her mother had instilled in her, for sure, but without giving her the true justifications, like this we do it well quite often because it is more simple to teach and to learn some proved principles without however loading our poor heads with the long theory of explanations.

It was a good occasion for Jeanne to appeal to my passion to understand all: we could have observed together that those convictions as regards men were no longer justified in our age, neither much less, in our couple. Afterwards, always together, we could have discovered that the best solutions for our family seemed to be a reasonable sharing of power: “Down with the leaders! Long live democracy! And long live freedom!”

Instead of that, every time that I tried to take on that step, we had a conflict and it even happened that Jeanne was “stuck.” I understood that the subject was a taboo and I gave up. But what could that refusal conceal?

Like me, Jeanne had been born just before the “War”: I mean “Our War,” the 2nd World War. Because of the absences of fathers, we had remained only children for a long time. Like me, Jeanne was the first child of the new generation and she brought the hope of her clan. Surely, she was nothing but a girl. And then? In the eyes of her mother as well as the other women of the Spanish branch, it was up to the women to take the future in their hands.

Like me, Jeanne was a flattered and even a spoiled child. She was the princess who was going to reign on the marvellous world following the misfortunes, a red princess, evidently. Nourished like this, her ego was inflated, all like mine. It was so good that she wanted... (No! “wanted” is too feeble.) She demanded that it was always like this, that all her life, she was treated like a princess.

By which means? Thanks to her beauty, to her spirit, to her good communicative, to the charm of the conversation, all her assets which were worth to her humour, she believed, that she was a pampered child.

As far as her husband is concerned, it was understood that he had to satisfy all her whims.

Those demands of a spoiled child contradicted and whipped the equalitarian and generous principles of the communist morality: therefore it was necessary to hide

them in the subconscious, under the oriflamme of the combats for the cause of the worker and that of women, afterwards, there was nothing else to do but forget them, free to act in the limits of their den.

Here is why Jeanne was strongly attracted as much as I at the demand of being leader of the family. We were both of us slaves of that evil plant which sprang during our childhood and, elsewhere, quite difficult to uproot. But, one more time, was the sacrifice of our child necessary to pull us out of there?

From hatred to excess of love, passing through the break-up of love: how does the parents' love condition the character and the existence of the child.

The sacrifice of a child does not go necessarily to death. It is enough that his life is spoilt to the point that it is painful and futile. It is quite often, alas, the price which the handicaps of our genre pays, not to recover, only as a price for their illness. Let me explain myself.

You have not forgotten the six elements, all indispensable, which make up the human existence. One of the first, at the base, I have called it "link with the others." Its most accomplished form is love.

When the child who arrives in this world received hatred by way of love, in return, he

hates the one who hurts him. That hatred hits not only his parents, but all those similar to them, the other fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters: how can the baby make the distinction? Therefore, he hates all humanity. Depending on whether he is dominated by fear or not, his aggressivity towards the human species will be evident or masked.

When the child who wakes up to the existence receives only indifference, all his life he begs for love which he evades, becoming cruelly a fault. He risks strongly being stupid because his parents never answered his search for learning, not even when he wanted to learn to walk.

When a child comes to this world and receives the love which he needs, he develops well. From his parents seconded by the social surroundings around them, he receives the nourishment for the body and soul. When he is finally fully fledged, adult, he leaves his family to start living on his own.

But if he breaks down because of love prematurely, what will happen?

If his parents cease loving him too soon, when he is not yet capable to lead his existence alone, he will have a tough time to recover from that open wound. It is however what happens too often.

The source of love dries up when the parents dedicate such a lot of energy to fight one against the other that they forget the existence of their children. Or well when father and mother decide brutally not to live together any more and leaving the children to believe that they are no longer loved, left to themselves all naked to the tortures of the world.

We will find one of those children who grew up abandoned. The love of which he has been deprived prematurely, for a long time he has not found the trust in those he loves, that lost love he would want more of the lost love than the others, in the same way like he who, having suffered hunger, fears to be lacking and watches over a useless storage of food. There you are! There is the threat of war, the people no longer trust the networks of supplies and they start stocking some foodstuffs: ah well, the child of whom I am talking acts in the same way, quite reasonably.

But while waiting to be loved again, he has to survive.

The young one, discovering with terror that he cannot count on his parents finds himself like an abandoned fledgling, when he is incapable of flying. And, since he has been betrayed by his mother and his father, those two perfect human beings who represent all the others, he does not trust anyone. Surely, there is not always the death of a child, but at least great suffering the

consequences of which can be heavy. At that age when he has not yet built up his defences, the worst can happen.

How a bad divorce can lead a child towards toxic mania.

Before he gets used to the weight of his punishment of chain and ball, and before he accepts to carry it all throughout his bloody days, he has to survive the pain of the first shock. Instead of the love which nourished his existence a living wound opens itself. An unbearable anxiety submerges it, such that he will not sort it out. The slightest aggressive impulses carry him away, and they leave him as desperate as before. The death, she assumes a soothing face, not to say friendly. She has however a too definite character and, nearly always, he avoids suicide.

While waiting for a better life which will never come perhaps, he mistakes his existential anxiety, the hunger which Mômmanh knows, with false answers, illusions of happiness: drugs. That starts by some sweet things which make him put on weight, or any orgy, be it of electronic games, be it fictions made to evade, on a video as well as on films. If a solid love does not come along to change tendency, with the passing of years, the

drugs will become harder and harder: cigarettes, alcohol, hashish, cocaine...

You know that not every couple is allowed to adopt a child. The would-be parents must in the first place convince the administration of our country that they will be good parents, and that is not easy. So, don't you find it curious that the motherland does not have the same demands for the multitude of natural parents? Why is that the latter have all the freedom to wreck the existence of human beings?

Ah well, in the thick of the One Hundred Years war, during the truces we became anxious that we were bad parents. We had consulted some "psy" of all sorts, which we respect since they practiced honestly their job. If they could detect the dangerous animal at his job in our subconscious, they could perhaps lead us to neutralize it before one committed the irreparable. But you know well that one could not defeat the tuberculosis before the discoveries of Pasteur and Koch.

How even, with the purgation of the passions, the bad desires of the subconscious are difficult to fight against.

I have discovered Mômmanh however after our return from Africa, many years before the plunge in hell. Didn't I have to put in practise that promising discovery to deliver ourselves from the bad teachers, if they were concealed in the subconscious under piles of virtuous principles?

Alas, no. That has been impossible for me.

To start with, Mômmanh has never been completely revealed to me, perfect and all dressed up. I had to bring her out little by little. And I have never finished. And now that we are going to work together, I do not believe that we shall ever finish.

On the other hand, if a wave of enthusiasm has surged in me at the moment of the first discovery, it has soon fallen down again. Around me, nobody has believed in it, not even Jeanne. Deeply disappointed, I have finished by finding that generalised scepticism legitimate and I have decided to doubt, even myself also, as much as I could.

"Around me, has anybody believed?" How could I leave such an immense thing? All close by me, so close, Estelle believed in it... Please, leave me some minutes so that I get back on my feet...

So, we cannot use my knowledge of Mômmanh to put an end to our war. Besides, those bad teachers carpeted in the subconscious do not let me be. There are certain elements of myself with the same title as the good ones, those who live the big day. And like them, they are ourselves. It is necessary to have something terrible to lead them to surrender.

Let us leave the fatality running towards that odious accident... And let life carry on.

There were at least two supplementary handicaps which prevented us from progressing towards peace and reconstruction. It was my existence of never break “the sacred ties of marriage,” whatever happened: I will speak to you later on. It was also the malign characteristic of another need which you already know: that of being the leader.

How men have always known how to find recipes not to be slaves of their desires.
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You know, that if the desire as well as the will can be beneficial, the need is always bad.

To start with, by nature, she is never satisfied, since perfection is not human. There follows that she makes slaves of us, obliging us to dedicate vainly a lot of energy instead of realising other aspects of existence. For example, let us suppose that I absolutely want to be a big star; I have to dedicate a lot of efforts, I will not obtain even the certainty that the crowds will not give me their backs to adulate somebody else. So, slave of that need, I will have no other choice but to dedicate to it all my time without being satisfied.

If we don't manage to uproot the needs, as one does to the weeds, they choke out life and render it sterile.

And during that time, our old Mômmanh, blind, paralysed and impotent, stays at the bottom of the house in an armchair. We, on the doorstep, we are at times her eyes and her hands open on the vast world. She needs us. Let us not leave a need, whichever it may be, bring us the living death.

For a long time men have found the means to deliver themselves from those needs. Humour is one of them. There is also the absence of desire of the Buddhists, the emptiness in oneself of many oriental philosophies, the acceptance of destiny of the Greeks and the Muslims... I also have my recipe, but I will not tell it to you: now that you know Mômmanh, you will know how to find yours.

Besides the slavery linked to all the need, that leadership war hindered us in another manner. She tended to reduce each one of us to his own limits which, in addition, are situated often close to the ego, when we should have made love yield its fruit by enriching us mutually. Let me explain myself.

Like a leader, each one of us asked sometimes for an advice to the other, but in the same way in which the king takes advice which does not oblige him at all to be aware of his mistakes. While now, having abolished the statute of leader in our family, it is necessary that we submit our wishes to the judgement of the other, whether that pleases us or not.

How love makes us better and stronger.
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Like this, we are compelled to discuss it all over again. When our behaviours are contrary, together we do the investigation of which I will give you an example. There are some chances when we find more rational answers to a problem of our life. The existence gains in quality.

She earns more than in another manner. By renouncing to be leaders, we try to make our objectives agree. By definition, that agreement can only be made to the benefit of the two "myself." Therefore, it was necessary to pull ourselves from selfishness and altruism which profited from it to gain ground.

Love makes us better.

We observe the consequences of our way of acting. If it is necessary, we will search for the origins. Together, we reflect in order to find something better. Most often, we manage to understand ourselves.

Love makes us stronger.

(Let me take a break here. Now that our hair has turned white, now that our deformed bodies need frequent repairs, now that "My Love" has been with me for a long time, the times when I do not need to reconquer her occur increasingly often. And then I feel that I am letting myself go and that I am slipping into decay, as if there was nothing that I could do about it.

To stop this living death from taking over me, I have found a solution. I tell myself: "Look for someone else!" And then again I become alert, sharp-eyed, animated by a flow of energy, my spirit on the lookout. Then I am creative again, straddling the steeds of existence, ready to face the dragons.

Of course, at my age and penniless, my chances of seducing a pretty shepherdess are almost nil. Moreover, they become totally nil if you consider that I cannot envisage, as in the 18th century, sending the shepherdess back to her sheep after she has given me pleasure. Well, I have no regrets because my rebirth had an effect on an unexpected shepherdess: my Jeanne herself, who finds her delightful impulses of yore.)

In the dark forest which stretches from the beginning, we look for our way. Are there any marshes? Some precipices? Where are our friends? Our enemies? Where do we step to reach our house in heaven? Our two intellects combined are two lamps probing in the darkness.

"Light here, Michel. Is it not a beautiful asphalted road? It will definitely lead us somewhere. - Surely no, dear. It is only a bad reflection on water. - And here? - Oh no, it is an abyss. - What abyss Jeanne? You are hallucinating. There is only a beautiful cherry tree, there. My cherry tree! Famous! The Cherries! Do you want to taste? - Surely not. Don't you know that the brambles conceal a great fault? You

go down there to pick the cherries and the abyss swallows you. Farewell, my dear... Let us go! Wake up, for Pete's sake! - You must be right Jeanne... They were however excellent, those beautiful cherries."

You know about the human tendency to favour his dear ego when the table of existence at the present finds itself abundantly decorated with juicy dishes. Hemm! Ah well, the temptation of serving his "Myself-Here-Now" in the first place is quite strong in the leader, because he has only his conscience to oppose to it. There are no reasons why the contrary powers are necessary.

Now that there is no longer any leader in our love, we are better armed to escape from that trap. If one of our two egos exaggerates, the other one says: "And myself? And myself?" In the silence which follows, one can then hear the distant voice of Mômmanh: "My children, my children, don't forget above all that first of all you have to watch over me, through lack of which you will die." And, from that transitory discord, we will go out even better than before.

A very tiny grain of dust laid astray in the infinite billions of billions of stars which fill the universe, the earth is our garden. Myself all alone, like every one of the six billions of human beings still alive, I feel the owner of all that. Death is a necessary evil which is going to take away all the good things of which I am capable of considering under various aspects, be it is only a

thought. Since I must fade out, it is necessary that I leave them as heritage. At least, take good care of them.

How the transition from selfishness to altruism works?

Have you calculated the cost of selfishness?

Ah well, no: it is worse than that. I wish that all that would be given to me, and for ever, instantly: "Myself-Here-Now-eternal and Infinite." And my Jeanne, do you think she is worth better? And you yourself, have you looked after yourself well?

I must give an important detail, and never mind if I repeat myself. To start, consider the "myself-here-now" as complete selfishness, existence reduced to a tiny dot engulfed in the infinity of space and time, the death rattle of being reduced to its immediate enjoyment. Well, the path that leads from "myself-here-now" to "others-elsewhere-in time," this path does not follow a regular slope. It goes up like an escalator, in stages. Every stage interrupts the escalation so that the "myself" is satisfied at the level of which the altruism suffered from.

For example, the search for posterity has an altruistic tendency since it distances the "now" to go towards other times. But since it interests itself only in personal celebrity, it remains on the selfish stage. If I associate my children to that celebrity, I go up only one step, because my children are still too close to the "myself." And so on and so forth.

My Jeanne and Myself, we look in our earthly garden for somewhere to construct our house. It happens that My Love says:

"It is my house and only mine and you are my slave dear.

- I do not like my role not at all: I am incapable of keeping it. Your own, on the contrary, tempts me a lot. Ah well! Let us invert it.

- Are you mad, dear? I would be too ashamed..."

There goes Mômmanh with her grain of salt.

"Oh no! You have recovered now, and the One Hundred Years War is over. Have you already forgotten everything?

- Oh! No!

- You have killed your child. The little existence you have left is in your hands.

- Oh no! Mômmanh! Stop! I beg of you, stop!

- Each of you dream of a love where the beloved one will be his slave: you wish that your children will be enslaved?

- Please, Mômmanh, stop!

- You! You, to whom I have given such beautiful eyes, look, look in that jumble which is the jungle of life; look for something with which to construct a quite solid house where one can always feel the beauty of it. Didn't you tell me that certain slaves are hardly suitable for that type of task?

- It is true, Mômmanh. But to construct that arch of eternal life over the billions of years and the billions of stars of the universe in expansion, shall we be all alone?

- It is your problem. I have made you so intelligent that you will end up by finding such a thing. In any case, I want all the family to have a place in my arch.

- Your arch? Your arch!

- Yes, surely...

- It is mine as well. It belongs to Jeanne just as much. Have you forgotten that each one of us is the liberated consciousness which is lacking in you cruelly? Not only your conscience has burst out between the billions of individuals, but it does not belong to you.

- Oh goodness me! Here it is again, and there it is again the man who built himself up on his own. Each of your billions of ego is a fraction of the myself-even. What a misfortune if you lose me: it will be your definite death.

- Excuse me, Mômmanh. It is my delirium to want to be God which is overwhelming me. Ah well, it is understood: we will make the entire world ascend in your arch, even the dirty ones, the ugly and the good for nothing.

- Your Estelle will have a good place there, with Mistinguette... In the company of her parents and her brothers, quite sure. And your house...

- It is a symbol!

- I know! Now that you finally have learned how to love, you will find on that earth materials of life which are suitable to you both. Besides, it is time to open widely to your friends that damned house to "Myself All Alone"

Therefore, besides the offence of common slavery for all the needs, that of being the leader had another vice: it favoured our selfishness. And then it had still another fault besides this one.

It was necessary above all, for the outcome of a confrontation that the other one may believe to be victorious. Therefore, the negotiations as well as the concessions were exceptional.

There was, remember, in your tastes, some undetermined incompatibility on which we made a dead end at the moment of marriage, thinking that our love will easily come to an end. It should have been possible at least to start to change them in harmony, those minor differences of opinion: we managed well, now. Instead of that, our need to be able with its big chain loaded with three balls and chains was enclosing us in war. At any moment, in any place, if we were not on the verge of confronting us like the deer on heat, we were always in danger of doing it.

The principle of the difference of opinion led to the money. It is true that who disposes of money keeps a big part of the power and of freedom. Jeanne had understood that lesson from her mother: “You must absolutely earn your living, my girl. And when you are married, above all! Above all! Take care of your job and don’t leave it as long as your retirement is not assured. Because, if your husband is unbearable you can always leave him. And if it is he who annoys you, you and your children, will never live in misery. In a household, a woman without revenue is a slave, kicked by man. While you, with your wage, you do not have to work so hard. You can always keep yourself straight, and say s... when it suits you...”

Yes! Jeanne had completely abided by her mother’s opinion. And like her mother kept severely the strings of her purse in her own hearth, Jeanne wanted also to manage our budget. She left me enough money in my pocket. But my firm intention was the exact opposite of hers: to her the pocket money, to me the responsibility of hoarding. We were both of us equally decided...

Fire! Fire from all batteries! The war was raging while the children hurried to empty their plate to get out of the battle field and to go about on their business. Were they hoping to see our disputes and the household scenes over one day? As much as I can remember, they never said anything about it. Perhaps they had tried to obtain the ceasing of hostilities, then they renounced. They seemed to accept that misfortune in the same way as the bad weather: they could not do anything about it, it was necessary that they had their own life. He prevents only the storms accompanied by hail or showers, in the same way as the long days of the frozen north wind were too frequent, to the point of upsetting dangerously the development of our dear little ones.

The warnings were not lacking however. Hold on, here is one which I remember. It took place a short time after our return from Africa, when we had just settled in our new house, at Futaie.

We were all seated in the kitchen, for the midday meal. It was a holiday, and we should have relaxed. Instead of that, a violent quarrel burst out because of a cupboard the price of which seemed very high. Their nose in their plate, our children were eating as quickly as possible. It is Pablo who came out first, to come quickly to announce to us calmly:

“The house is on fire.

– Eh? There is fire? Where?

– Here, by the side of the chimney. Are you going to put it off?”

An inflamed log had fallen from the chimney, setting on fire the canvas which covered the sitting room. The flame was going up joyfully along the wall and started to lick the leathered pine panel which covered the ceiling. Some more seconds yet and the fire would be out of control, devouring the whole house. Quickly, we brought some buckets of water, and that was enough to stop the fire.

So we realised.

- Ah well my dear, it was a near miss.
- In two seconds, we would not have had a house nor anything, not even a tent to camp in the garden. You see where that leads us, your bloody stupidity. But, what do I care still with a similar idiot!
- If, instead of taking the fly in the slightest current of air and if, instead of uttering cries of anger for the every other minute, like a crazy, you were to adopt a human behaviour which consists in discussing honestly and reflecting together, perhaps we will arrive somewhere...
- In order that you manipulate me still with your twisting about. You never listen to me! Your stinginess, I do not bear it any longer completely. You buy only rubbish...! The house is full of it. I have a hard time putting as much as I can in the dustbin, it keeps coming back. A factory for rubbish that is what you are! Besides, I am going to buy that cupboard, as soon as possible! Continue to masturbate your brain, you crazy one: you are not good for anything else.
And then, you can fuck the camp! I do not want to see you anymore.

Our two ways in managing the family budget were absolutely incompatible. I tried hard to save up the money I accumulated patiently when she did all that was possible to manage to waste them: one filled the barrel while the other emptied it. I wanted to invest the money to make it yield more to increase our wealth. Consequently, I accepted to buy only in cash. Jeanne, on the contrary, always impatient, wanted to borrow, even if it meant falling headlong in the first pot of a money lender without scruples.

In most cases, these behaviours at times antagonists and irrational had cultural origins. We had learned them during our childhood.

Formerly, in the green countryside of the past, it was strictly recommended to save, be it to acquire land, be it with the hope of finding a bigger farm to “make yourself worth something” and to buy the necessary equipment. My father did not liked to repeat , in our once despised language, the patois that is now called “Gallo”: “Penny by penny, one accumulates a whole bagful.” (Little by little, one accumulates a treasure). There was another saying about money: “You must always put something

aside for a rainy day.” In fact, the peasants of the past were not protected by any form of insurance, not even by a pension fund or Social Security. The consequence of all of that was the relationship between peasants and money which had been instilled in my soul as a child.

Because of this peasant atavism, I still have some completely aberrant behaviours, which are like warts on my personality. Here is an example, probably from the Middle Ages, when dead wood was valuable to poor farmers. To fill up my fireplace, besides beautiful beech logs, I waste time picking up the smallest twigs in my garden and I offer my harvest to the fire which makes short work of it.

Jeanne had grown up in the city, more precisely in the big city, which was managing to escape the influences of the countryside. The attempts to borrow, provided that it was within reasonable credit, were approved. One used to consider that practice as a sign of modern life, like an act of civilisation, since it was supposed to favour the business and the economic development: “that helped the flowing of business” one said.

Moreover, in her family they admired the beautiful good things which only the bourgeoisie could buy. They had the conviction that whatever was expensive was valuable while the bargains were good to throw away.

To those city and family wombs which expressed themselves in the behaviour of Jeanne vis-à-vis the money, one had to add other influences: the impulsivity with its emotional charge which pushes into action and, successfully and more cunning, lying in wait in the subconscious, a secret selfishness of a spoiled child who went out for some air from time to time and of which I will speak to you soon.

Starting with my peasant childhood, without being stingy, I had cultivated an excessive attachment to money. On one part, I was very keen on keeping permanently an important money-box and that was not for the pleasure of contemplating my gold, but to be able to face certain hazards of life, a catastrophe, unemployment... without which the bailiff would come to skin us before leaving us on straw. My Love and

Myself, sat our eyes on that box: Jeanne tried a means to empty it without much noise, and I asked myself how to protect it. That precaution is good. How many refugees, in our marvellous twentieth century world owe their life to them? But let us take into account the different assurances which protect us, even the negotiable value contained in jewels and family heirlooms; it is not desirable to make up a very important money box.

I suffered also a more perverse attachment to money, which would have led me to eat till the last mouthful of half rotten chicken, because I had paid for it. Fortunately, Jeanne did not let me be: she herself did not seem to feel any pain while getting rid of a new and an expensive dress and the only flaw of which was not to render her more beautiful.

That very failing led me to buy very often objects or services of very bad quality and this after several hesitations and endless regrets. Jeanne bought the highest quality at a higher price. Her fear was not to squander money, but to come across suddenly a more beautiful object. By buying the most expensive, she thought she was safeguarding herself against that risk, and also against that of seeing unfolding itself, but too late, a latent defect.

Jeanne was enchained to that imperative: it was absolutely necessary for her to buy the best and the most beautiful: so, she was never satisfied. How often did she throw away expensive objects because of the idea that there might be better, wake her up in the night! As far as I am concerned, I carried that ball and chain: wanting at all cost, provided it was free, to obtain an incredible quantity of richness with our modest salaries. And I was never happy. I too have thrown money from the window under the form of bargains which their bad quality rendered useless.

Our ration of life is quite short: however, running obstinately the impossible, we have squandered in that way a good part.

We have discovered those two needs which are poisoning our lives, after the accident. And we found still a lot of them. The worst of all, the deadly one, the

reciprocal need to be the head of the family was far from being the only one. There was also surely my mad need to understand everything and I had started to loosen the grip. There were still many others of them, more or less strong, often intermittent. And behold some in a jumble: needs of consideration, of youth, of beauty, of consideration, of security, of life... We had learned to contain them by saying: "So much the worse, what escapes me, the others will obtain." then to replace "I demand" by "I wish" every time that it is possible.

As you have seen, our two ways of managing money had their origin from a big number of different roots: we were not capable of pulling them out, then put some others of them on the ground. In spite of everything, love has succeeded its alchemy: the opposing and absurd behaviours, often pitiful, have been changed into bursts of happiness.

From now on, we did not have any conflicts any more as regards money, at the most disagreements which dwindled down very quickly. But we could not agree on a common management of our belongings. Besides, is it desirable?

Our way of managing things was very simple. We divided in two the overall resources. After the discussions, which could be passionate, came close to the storm, we agreed about mutual expenses which we also shared. There remains so to each of us about half of his part with which he did what he liked.

Now, at last! We know how to use our revenues to the best of our possibilities, not only without suffering, but with pleasure. And the worries tied to money do not weight any longer on our existences. Ah well, if each of us did not remain by his side, clinging to the will to be leader of the family, we could together come to the bottom of that difference like the majority of the others, before the tragedy.

But let us come back there where we had arrived, rightly, before the horror. While waiting for the stress of a real death to come to pull us out of our selfish passions which were only death in all its power, the fight of the leaders was going

towards a crisis. As soon as we had just seen it, all the questioning of our ways of living stopped and threatened to make the “War of a Hundred Years, last vainly for such a long time that we would not be able to bear it. Our house was the usual battlefield. Sometimes we broke objects, preferably fragile, generating noises, not too dear: some plates or some vases broken on the tiles doing the job well. Without bringing peace, they relieved us just the same from an excess of rage.

We would have wanted our children not to suffer from our war, but we never managed. We imagined naively the holidays, outside our times of constraint, like a moment of happiness when, all together would have tasted the fruit of our efforts and, our burdens laid down for two months, we could all go to discover leisure which is on the other side of hatred. Think therefore! Far from being a truce, our holidays were the moments of our worst confrontations.

Oh yes! Life in common was no longer in time partial, like in a period of work. And above all, we were free from the constraints of the job, free at last! Free to impose our own constraints to the love of our life, free to fight till the overthrow of our dear opponent.

We had all the time to finally settle our conflict once and for all, and we were proceeding strongly the first days. Like this we managed to ruin two weeks of our happy freedom.

The end of the fighting was not at all in sight. Besides, why should they have stopped? On the contrary, the confrontation was increasing, without other pause except for the tormented sleep. But, after about fifteen days, we were quite weary and the conflicts seemed to us temporarily without solution. We did not want, any more, to continue to make the children suffer knowing that it was in vain. By means of a tacit agreement, we decided therefore on a truce for the holidays.

It was only a ceasefire, a simple respite therefore, in the war which would achieve a result surely, one day or another, to the resolution of our conflict, an

improbable outcome about which we continued in spite of everything to dream. While waiting, to save the rest of the holidays, each one camped on his positions.

In the presence of one or the other, we had the approach of the people who advanced on mined land. A long and painful experience had revealed nearly all the sensitive points of the opponent. It was necessary to avoid brushing against the detonation, because of which the explosion would take place and start again the hostilities. We had become experts in that art to such a point that our walk was no longer affected. We had the appearance of a successful couple, without problems, with a dubious character. But in spite of everything, an explosion tore apart from time to time the fragile peace: at a price of a big effort, we managed to sheath our arms before the war set us on fire again.

I remember particularly a long holiday trip which started in that way. Estelle was perhaps eight or nine years old. With our three children, in the car, we were going to visit Greece. On the way, we had to visit plenty of places in Yugoslavia.

At that time, we were full of admiration for that country. It had pushed back by itself the Nazis. Its rebellious communism seemed promising; finally, and perhaps it was the most important, it managed to let one live in harmony, it seemed to us, a good ten races very different from the ancestral hatreds which had very often pushed to kill one another. Moreover, one could still find some beaches perfectly clear and some mountainous regions with enough asphalted roads to reach them and, as for the rest, a nature completely wild.

It was exactly in such a place that we were going to live for some days, before going to frolic with the Adriatic Sea from which we were expecting sharp and new pleasures. Our camping was at the centre of the country. Was it Croatia? Bosnia-Herzegovina? Or rather Serbia? It was hardly important at that time, because those "regions" were part of the same country: Yugoslavia. That was found in the wild country, hairy, on the edge of a wild river. Was it perhaps the Drina? Or rather Bosnia? Or quite that river whose name seemed wild: the Vrbas? We did not know

why such a place attracted us, except that it seemed good to us. Now, we know: we were yearning to go and chat a little with Mômmanh.

One used to say that in the rough mountains of Yugoslavia, there were still bears, true ones, not “reinstated.”

During the break crammed with a heterogeneous loading, the three children busy reading on the back seat, the war went on at a good pace between the parents. We had gone past Ljubljana a long time before. In our rage to win, we used all the missiles, without much being concerned for the laws of war. She sent me the cobblestones which should have knocked me out:

- Your family is full of crazy people. And aren’t the people surprised at seeing you delirious? But if I did not stop you, it will be ten times worse.
- What crazy people do you see in my family? Some original ones, yes! Some people who have personality.
- Yes, that’s it. And the stupid one, which is his personality?”

While I prepared the next attack, the kilometres passed.

Resigned, the children continued to read.

“The stupidity of Gerard is not of genetic origin. You know well that it is the opinion of all the specialists.

- The specialists! Ah yes! But what do the specialists know? Besides, nobody can live with you.
- And your Spanish ancestors, what does one know about them? Your gene of stupidity must come from somewhere, all the same!
- So there! The only time that you made me laugh you did not do it on purpose.
- Excuse me, Jeanne, I let myself be carried away. No! No and no I refuse to hit below the belt. I want to get to understand each other on a healthy basis.
- That is it, yes! The perfect man and I, the slut. But take care, sinister pain in the neck.

- Listen, Jeanne, I would like to explain an important thing. But you won't be angry, hey? For once, you will succeed in controlling yourself. It is the first step which matters.
- What are you simmering yet? Well! Send me your s... I will cling to it.
- I am not simmering anything: I am reflecting. There you are! There you are! If you have failed your studies, it is not for the reasons you are mentioning. I am not saying you lack intelligence: it is a rare defect, as far as I know, but your intellect works in a way which is totally fanciful. For sure, I can help you, but to understand that, you need a minimum of lucidity...
- Where have you seen that I have failed my studies?
- It was you who said so.
- Am I not a scholastic psychologist? When I say that I failed my studies, it is a way of speaking. Besides, I do not want to hear about it anymore. Let us stop there! Stop! I tell you! I want to get down!
- But we have not arrived yet. Where are we, besides?
- 150 kilometres away from Split...

Split is found close by the sea, very far from the wild mountain and on the river bank where we have to camp, so far that it was too late to make half a turn and go to join the good route. When we arrived at Split, the sun had set. Failing to succeed to find a camping site, we had to pass the night in the car. Split was at two or three hundred kilometres from our destination and we could not impose that long supplementary distance on the children.

Pushed by the distance, Ulysses could only reach his isle after ten years of uncertain wanderings. Would our personal tempest have similar consequences? Our wandering in Yugoslavian land led us to a shore with very clean pebbles.

There were no crowds. The children transformed an inflated mattress in a jumping platform. From that base, lying down on their tummies, they could observe the bottom of the sea, ten to fifteen metres below, because the waters were particularly clear. They could also fish. And for sure, they did not deprive themselves from diving. Sometimes, it was to go and look for the sea urchins, the shells and the

other treasures of the bottom, sometimes they practised underwater fishing, but, most of the times, it was simply for the pleasure which they felt by feeling themselves like fish in the sea. The children enjoyed themselves so much, that we remained there for more than fifteen days. We never reached Greece.

The Hundred Years War had developed and strengthened itself all along the ten years in Africa. Three children had been born during that period which had given us the strength to bear the long truces: Pablo, Estelle and Thomas. It is for them that we had decided to go back to France. To extend our golden exile, we thought, would seriously compromise their education.

At the primary school reserved for the children of overseas development workers and some superior executive Burkinabés, our dear little ones received a solid teaching. Afterwards, at the lyceum of Ouagadougou, the level was considerably lower not because of the teachers, but because of the students.

How is it very difficult to replace the cultural acquisitions of childhood? Which is the principal cause of scholastic failure?

When the children have not acquired in their family the tastes and the mental structures necessary for the success in their studies, they experience great difficulty.

You know well that the children of educated parents are quite often good students. You know as well that the children of Jewish culture or those of Chinese culture succeed nearly always in their

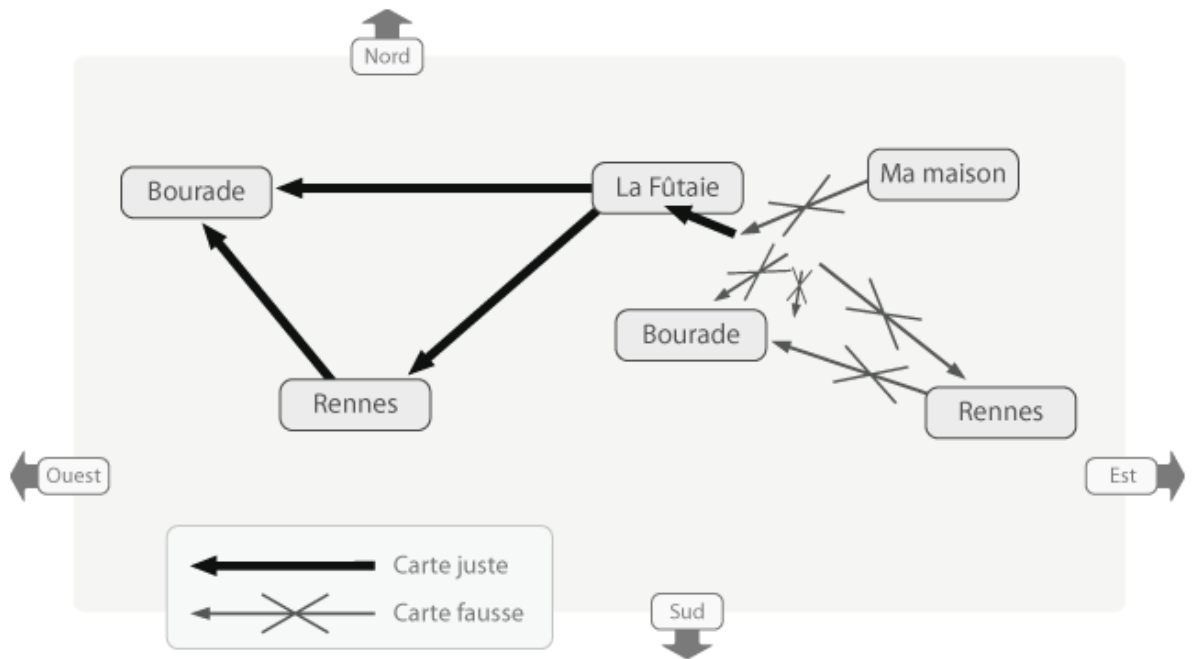
studies whereas those of animist culture, of Black Africa particularly, are often mediocre students. Everybody knows that.

So, why expect the school to lead all the students to the summit? How can they assume such an objective before having understood how the family culture acts on the studies?

The child learns existence in the family centre, especially from his parents. He learns a lot during the first years. He develops his tastes, some mental structures often too complex and some acquaintances. If that as a whole is compatible with the continuation of his studies, the child will have the chance to succeed in them. It is right the opposite, it will be a very difficult task, much more difficult than that experienced by a left handed who wants to become right-handed. An apparently irreparable fact increases the risks of failure: certain capacities of our neuronal ensemble - our intelligence- if they are not utilised in the infancy, are lost for ever: it is like this that some handicapped intellects approach the study of languages, of music, of mathematics...

How it is difficult to correct an apprenticeship which is badly done.

Here is a personal example to show you the importance of the cultural basis acquired in childhood. *Forty years ago when I came to live in my house, I inscribed in my head an orientation table of which I give you the important parts.*



To situate Mellé in relation to my house, I memorised the wrong orientations which are crossed on the diagram. Consequently, I used to see Rennes to the east of La Fûtaie while it was to the west. Note well that the only mistake which carries away all the others leads to a small part of the route, a street in La Fûtaie which I thought went south when really it heads towards the west.

I have tried to correct that error for fifteen years; to inscribe in my memory the right path that leads to the capital city of Brittany.

There was nothing I could do about it: the wrong diagram did not want to be wiped out.

So, a few years ago, I went to Bourade to buy some science fiction books. There are about twenty second-hand book dealers there, so I was sure that I would find what I wanted. Knowing that Bourade is situated to the north-west of Rennes, I thought I was very close, about 35 kilometres away. To my great surprise, I had to cover double the distance. So I understood that I had once more recalled my false mental map. Look at my little diagram and you will understand what I mean. Fortunately enough, along the way, I let myself be guided by the signs and the road map, so I arrived at the right destination just the same.

This time I was determined to overcome the problem, to delete the error imprinted into my brain and to replace it with a correctly aligned map. I thought I had succeeded until the day that I lost my way again: the bad record was resurrected, as strong as the first day.

All that to show that an error in learning leading to a small structure can be difficult to correct. So you understand it is impossible to redo certain learning extremely complex like language, the art of reasoning, the conception of the universe, the family structures, social clans, the existential priorities and their practices... In brief, it is impossible to redo the learning of childhood.

The experience of the wolf-child may make a stronger impression on you. The best known case is that of two girls that were found in India in 1920 by Reverend Singh. Amala and Kamala were two and seven years old. Dying of fright, they were hidden in a den in the company of two cubs. Reverend Singh took them out and after some adventures, put them into an orphanage that he ran. Raised by wolves and educated by wolves, the girls did everything just like wolves, to the extent that their human bodies allowed.

"They let their tongues hang out, imitating their panting, and they moved bent over leaning on their hands. They lapped up liquids and they ate with their faces down in a squatting position. They only wanted to eat meat and would chase chickens or dig up any carcasses that they found. They ate the entrails first, as wolves do, and showed marked photophobia (a fear of light) and nyctalopia (an ability to see well at night). They remained in a state of prostration during the whole day, going out at night to try to escape from their prison whilst howling. These little girls slept very little, about four hours a day. Amala and Kamala growled when they were approached and showed a great hostility towards humans. They were always alert, hyper vigilant and moved their heads back and forth continuously. They were indifferent towards children and somewhat interested in puppies and cats."

(Dr Charles Danten. AN ANGRY VETERINARIAN)

The youngest died after a year without having adapted to the human lifestyle. Kamala survived seven years longer, probably due to the kindness of Mrs Singh. It took three or four years for her to learn to stand up. By the time she died, after eight years held in captivity, she had learned about fifty words.

(I wrote this in the year 2000, and here I am in 2010. But in 2007, the world learned that the story was a hoax and that there was no known reliable testimony about children being raised by wild animals. Serge Aroles, a French surgeon, after several years of rigorous investigation, gave evidence about frauds of this kind which had previously been believed. He wrote about them in his book “The Enigma of the Wolf-Children,” which was published in 2007. My hypothesis will have to rely on other, real facts. You can also make your own contribution, dear reader.

Anyway, this banal misadventure shows us how important it is to be able to challenge any belief, as solid as it may appear.)

Therefore, it seems that it is impossible to fundamentally change what is learnt in early childhood. In this respect, two more examples come to mind.

The first is Zidane, our national glory. In the last minutes of his distinguished career, he deliberately ruined the chances of the French team by hitting an opponent that had insulted him. At the same time, he dirtied the beautiful image that he had offered to young people, the example that was followed by thousands and thousands of children. After that, he went off to the locker room crying. I would draw the following conclusions from this unfortunate gesture: Although Zidane knew that a French citizen should not behave in this way, the values that were implanted in him during his childhood amongst the poor of Marseille too strong; he had to give this absurd "head butt" to comply with a code of honour that no longer applies.

The second example concerns me. During my childhood in my peasant family, I learned to save, save and save. Every little thing that could be used one day, I put aside: for example a piece of string or a stick. I wrote the rough draft of my essays on waste paper which I then recycled. "Penny by penny, one accumulates a whole bagful" (you collect a treasure) my father said. And one day, perhaps, you will become rich enough to buy an "asset" (land). Times have changed, but I do not always find it easy to adapt. Thirty trees were cut down in my woods. I collected all of the branches, even the smallest ones, sometimes the size of my thumb. I turned them into heating wood to fuel my boiler. Doing this hard work earns me about one Euro per hour. Then, because I do not have the time to take care of my garden, I have to

hire a man who costs me twelve Euros per hour. I can count and I have done this calculation many times. If I were rational, I would just burn the branches and forget about the twigs. But my conditioning is too strong: I can not throw any piece of wood away. The same with string.

All of this supports my theory that the main cause of failure at school can be found in the cultural environment of young children.

If the education received in the early years is incompatible with the pursuit of the studies, the poor child suffers in class and will experience the scholastic failure. Among the sub products of that situation, there is the hatred for school and all that which follows.

By scholastic success, we understand the acquisition of the foundations of the western culture accomplished, that which wants to know the reality even remote that is possible to do at our era. The peasant who is content in putting to practice the traditional recipes inherited from his ancestors does not participate in that culture. Neither he who is happy of himself when he applies blindly the simple instructions diffused by the organisms of agricultural vulgarisation. But the peasant holder of a baccalaureate who has studied the agricultural sciences as well as the management of the agricultural exploitations and who cannot stop himself from developing what he has learned at school, yes, that man there is cultured.

However, it can happen that an individual from an underprivileged cultural environment succeeds in spite of everything brilliantly in his studies. Yes, but he is an exception. Perhaps he has extraordinary inborn qualities? Perhaps the circumstances of life have led him to develop his intelligence based on sources other than his parents? Perhaps they became examples of what not to do, giving him a desire to study in order to avoid ending up like them? Perhaps both of them?

So? When the family education condemns the child to fail his studies, what can we do? Must his parents renounce? Must they, as soon as possible, entrust the education of their children to strangers, the teachers of the day nursery and of the maternal schools for example? For that, it is necessary first of all that they accept the risk of seeing their offshoots bore themselves in their company when they grow up, and escape far away to live serenely their culture which is altogether new.

It is up to us to choose the answers.

<p>How does the traditional Burkinabe education generate the scholastic success and the technical progress.</p>

And the Burkinabés in that business?

The Burkinabés diffuse their animistic traditional cultures which refrain from succeeding in modern studies. The school, when it exists, is more often powerless. The scientific culture and its problems, the efficient modern techniques, do not manage to enter into such a country. Aids has developed practically without hindrance because the traditional culture opposes the scientific explanations and the use of condoms.

Barriers to the acquisition of a scientific culture begin to build in the child's family environment. They form the structure of an individual's personality throughout his life. And they are therefore transmitted from generation to generation, and there is nothing that the modern school can do to counter them effectively. Given that this is the case, why wouldn't the failure of Africa to achieve its economic development last for centuries? It took our French ancestors a thousand years just to get back to the scientific level of the Greco-Roman civilisations.

What is the principal cause of miseries in Africa?
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Finally, you know why our beautiful enthusiasm at the beginning had dissolved. We had arrived young and innocent, believing that we were going to bring Africa into the twentieth century,

with a touch of our magic wand. Having become aware of the barrage against science which was innocently perpetuated by the Burkinabés families, we were from now on convinced that our beautiful mission was, at least for the decades to come, doomed to failure: Africa is not the only continent where poverty is gaining ground, accompanied by terrifying wars, genocides, famine... The unfortunate Africans have found themselves in an existential planetarian area full of advanced scientific knowledge, and to manage this modern existence they are unable to free themselves from animist thought, which is so far removed from modern thought.

To take one example: look at what they do to prevent AIDS.

This is hardly surprising considering that at secondary school both academic level and motivation to study are incredibly low.

There was for our children another pressing reason to go back to our country.

Far from showing hostility in the meeting with us, white westerners, the Burkinabés consider us rather as geniuses from another world, Martians of some sort. That type of racism can be pleasant to endure, at a first time. But the Martians will be always perceived as people of another type, incapable of understanding what the Burkinabés feel. You know, since I have already said it, that mutual lack of understanding was due to a bad interpretation of our cultural differences.

How the Africans can jump into our era preserving the best of their cultures?

There quite exists a method to match two cultures which are very different. We have seen it in the theoretical chapter. "How the cultures can be understood and enriched without being destroyed?"

Maybe, but the method of which I have already spoken to you, about some deep cultural exchanges, was far from being practicable since Mômmanh had just taught it to me. And then it must be realised by the high cultural authorities of two nations present. So, despite the warm welcome, of the smiles and the good humour, we were bound to remain isolated on that land, in our Martian bubble.

(To fight a stubborn belief, I must say that this syncretism does not mean the death of African cultures. The Japanese, for example, have managed to combine their traditional culture based on animism, Buddhism and Confucian teachings with the most advanced scientific research.)

And then, supposing that they realised those agreements at the peak between the western cultures and the Burkinabés animism, one would have covered only half of the way. The hardest part would still remain: to teach this new

syncretic culture to children so that they can implement it as soon as possible. Perhaps it would require sending thousands of children to school from the age of two. Perhaps it would be necessary to send them to boarding schools so that they were temporarily away from their families' influence.

Would it be possible to find a large number of families that were altruistic enough to entrust the education of their babies to strangers and to allow their own children, who had made the leap into another world, to become strangers to them? I think it would. My mother has done this for me, prophesying: "When you become a "Sir," you will not recognise us any more."

It is because, in spite of the comfort of our exotic life, it does not cost us a lot to go back to our country in the beautiful house constructed with our savings as overseas development workers. I compared my life in Burkina Faso to the big holidays, distant from the daily cares, in an unreal world. Ah well, those long holidays had lasted a lot.

In that country where we were considered as strange Martians with advanced technology, our children were treated with a lot of affection. For whole days and even longer in case of illness, our servants watched over them, carried them in their solid arms, played with them, closer to the little ones than ourselves. But they looked at them also as young lords, and the other Burkinabés, the peasants, the vendors, the children did the same. For example, while fishing in any river, if Pablo stuck his hook to a root at the bottom, soon three or four "children" plunged to detach it. And, if it happened that these children, like all those in the world, struggle and fight sometimes, they did not dare jostle a little "toubabou."

A delay in their studies as such could be irreparable, a superiority feeling nourished by illusions, customs of an easy life, without struggle, to start with the current use of our similar fellows, the native “servants,” for all the “domestic” tasks: our children were going to depart pretty badly prepared in life, the only without possibility of increasing. To start with, they risk strongly being unable to assure correctly their existence in France: they would be like a pampered kitten in winter and which, on their first going out in spring, succumbs to the first scratch.

This is why, after ten years of Africa, a year before Pablo’s sixth birthday, we went back to France. For that important decision, we had well agreed. We started to drive in our new roots in a little city to the west which, for you, I will call Fûtaie. The children discovered that they were no longer lords and they experienced their first fights, even Estelle. Jeanne and myself, we both obtained a job at Fûtaie, at first go, which was lucky for us.

The War of the Hundred Years could start again, strengthened by the importance of the new stakes. We were no longer on a visit abroad, but at home, at our house; our children started the study marathon for good and, since we no longer had native servants, we had to share the household tasks; finally, after a lot of unkept promises, a deep reformation of communism was going to start. The long holidays were over, real life was going to start.

Since the new stakes were so important, since life was going to start for good, we were not going to let it be spoiled. One as well as the other, consciously or not, we were quite decided to struggle firmly to install definitely our power.

One of our favourite battlefields was the laying out of the house and garden, above all the internal part of our nest. Each one wanted to do it according to his own taste. If it is difficult to succeed a beautiful painting in two the task became downright impossible when each painted what he liked without worrying about what the other has put, if not to cover it again. Imagine what a mysterious masterpiece of art such cooperation will produce. It is however what we have done.

How many reproductions of work which I had lovingly chosen and paid for, pushing the gentleness as far as to offer them to My Love for Christmas or for a Mother's Day, how many of those beauties loaded our souls with light have they gone to look for refuge in a rubbish skip? How many wall papers have been pulled out, and then done again at great expenses? How many pieces of furniture, paid at bargain prices chosen by myself, have gone to try their luck at the rag man of Emmaus? How many charming ornaments whose main fault was that it did not please me at the wrong moment fell on the tiles mercilessly?

Now, we share the powers in our house: to Jeanne the house, and to me the garden. The criticism and the advice of the other are welcome but each one remains the master of his territory. What a waste before arriving there!

The episodes of the tough combat stretched on many years. I ended up by accepting a strategic defeat. The setting of our battlefield was far from being my major worry: it is because I gave up little by little some ground in the hope of obtaining some concessions on the fronts which concerned me more. I emptied like this the children's rooms, then the hall, the kitchen, all the house room by room, but I never obtained the slightest concession. And the same! Hang on! I have come to doubt again the moments when she would have asked for my advice!

Oh yes! Imagine yourself, that if she felt in spite of everything the need to have my advice on her plans for decoration, she never followed the slightest of my advices. Never! She feared so much seeing the enemy planting himself again on her territory that the slightest of my suggestions was taken as a camouflaged soldier whom I would have sent to prepare the victory again. One of her favourite expressions was the "phallic symbol." The phallic symbols were supposed to be concealed in the majority of my favourite decors. So I had just practised an uncertain strategy: since my choices were systematically rejected, instead of expressing them, I worked out other strategies completely contrary to my tastes, with the hope that chance positioned like this would favour my true wishes. But since I am not gifted for lies, those acrobatics were not very successful: I was caught in the act of deception and Jeanne became angry.

Not only, instead of taking the good road to correct our disagreements, we plunged in the opposite directions but, on the way, new differences were formed in the shadow and then come out in the open. Those arose from the fact that we changed inevitably all through our life, at the same time as the world around us.

How we cannot stop evolution: we can only try to take control of it.
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Because you know, for sure, that everything changed constantly, in the universe, everything.. So, those who want to fix nature at a stage of its evolution, those who will try to freeze a society in a benign period of its history, those will at most be taxidermists.

And, tell me, can Mômmanh love them when they are preparing themselves to stop its search for existences? Alas yes, because they are as much as we are, a part of her liberated consciousness; she can only let them go on, the time that their task will lead them to disaster.

However, the same phenomenon as for the carnal love must produce itself. Do you remember it: Christianity wanted to uproot from our souls what it considered as dirt, but with the support of the thinkers and of the humanist poets, our old Mômmanh carried it away.

Therefore, in the course of their life, the couple changes. The attributes which made good partners for existence could vanish. Your love was young, beautiful, rich, strong, powerful and famous. Fatally, he will lose his beauty on becoming old and fragile. He can also decline more and more quickly, finding himself disfigured, handicapped, ruined, sick and in prison. So, if you love more the money than the good mood of your husband, more his youth than his intelligence and more the brilliant situation than his generosity, your fake love will be crushed as soon as there is the first accident.

Even the character of the beloved one, that to which one refers when one says: "It is not his money neither his rank which I love, it is the person." it can find itself changed by the alchemy of time. Even that "myself" therefore, apparently unchanged, can undergo certain changes. Like this, a dynamic and cheerful person, can exceptionally undertake to dissolve his qualities in alcohol, a good for nothing can change into a worker, and a coward can become courageous... However, that type of change that of myself, is distinctly rarer than the preceding one.

When the basis of the existential agreement called "love" is like these changed, new differences between the lovers risk appearing. Fortunately enough, we have had the chance to escape nearly totally to that type of test. The most important changes concern me.

Jeanne had married a communist, who was also quite a renowned teacher. You know what happened to my faith in "The Party." As far as my career as teacher was concerned, it became more and more sombre, chaotic, and uncertain. At the end of that double evolution, I was an ex-communist and a contemptible teacher.

Ah well, those changes did not shake our love. And perhaps, they themselves have probably contributed to patch it up: I became aware that Jeanne was more attached to my person than to my attributes. I know I can count on her, and my love has been strengthened by it.

How each personal ideology tries to inscribe itself in a big ideological family.

Have I told you that, in the human space, every individual has his personal ideology? Since he cannot realise the existence all alone, he looks for the greatest number possible of coreligionists, in other words, he enters in the ideological family which suits him best, on condition that he finds himself.

In the heart of that family, which one calls church or party, a common trunk of convictions shared by the greatest number is formed. Amongst the French communists, that is called "the Party Line."

Surely, the personal ideology practically never coincides perfectly with "the line"

Here is therefore what one finds in Jeanne's personal ideology. She remains attached to communism for two reasons. One is the primordial concern for equality amongst men, concern which I share. The other is the very strong link which unites her to the martyrs of the family, above all to her father. She refuses to make a dishonouring image of them, and there again, I am with her. They were intelligent and generous, above everything. And they made history advance towards the development of human capabilities even though they were strongly deceived. She wants them to form part of posterity as they were truly, and not as the concurrent ideologies have disfigured them.

How we must give honour to enemy militants who believed to have done well.

Now, it is also what I want, since I have discovered Mômmanh and the gestation of the ideologies. I want the memory of those who have done their utmost to assure the triumph of the Existence: they were generous, even when they were severely deceived.

While reflecting well, I see a third fraternity amongst our personal ideologies: we ardently wish that sciences will manage to understand man and his history in a way so as to improve both of them.

Therefore, since we agree on those three essential points, there is not amongst us a sensible difference of ideology.

The poor state of my career risked enlarging more the split which was becoming more and more painful.

At the origin of these new setbacks, there was still the old illness of which I have spoken at length. My demon has not died: he will only lie down with me.

How a vice which has been pulled out of the subconscious is never completely uprooted.

And yet! I am not completely sure about it. No, it was not eliminated: I kept it in its den, as best as I could and it kept itself ready to come out with the first call. Don't forget, not any more, that I would never have discovered Mômmanh without that pact with the devil. But when he has broken his chains, he resembles a furious dragon and I do not manage to control him: I need patience for that.

A short time after our return from Africa, two great stresses chained the monster. The Marxist theory of history, supposedly scientific, seemed to me to be more and more in flagrant disagreement with reality, and suddenly, I was lacking in ideology. Having lost my gods, I needed to find others, under the penalty of not having a way out till death.

First of all, I had to teach history to college students. I have not been trained for that, but that was not what bothered me most.

What history?

There is some good in all misfortunes: since I did not believe in it any more, I did not risk going to teach history according to Marx and betray like this the moral of Secular School.

Unfortunately, I could hardly benefit from that advantage because practically I had nothing to teach. The students looked up to their teacher, myself in this case, that I make them discover and relive the most important moments of their past. They waited for the pleasure to identify themselves with the heroes of long ago, and to

trample on the bad ones. They expected a living history and I only brought them a jungle of annoying questions.

To understand as well as one can the explosion engine, that is to say to the point of being capable to reconstruct it and modify it, that extreme care of understanding everything which stopped me from sleeping, was not shared by my students. Some of them, full of good will, accompanied me just the same in that walk to the threshold of the unbearable, the moment when by sheer force of questioning, the history had lost all the reality at the same time as all the interest. Like this, the epic of Ulysses found itself transformed in an unspeakable minced meat of which even the maggots would not want.

Led by my demon, I felt quite incapable to answer to the distress of the children. It happened all the same that my personal questionings achieved some elements of reply. Surely, I wanted to make the students benefit from it: alas! Generally those answers had such a level of abstraction that they could not grasp anything from them. Like this I had obstinately tried to explain the important role played by the birth of philosophy among the Greeks! In particular, they had started to reflect on the human intellect and had succeeded in rendering it more performing. The progress which they had thus brought in the art of reasoning allowed them to understand how they succeeded to win the peoples distinctly superior in number. If, instead of yawning, my audience would have followed, till there, then the incredible feat of a young kind of twenty years of age, Alexander the Great who conquered the greatest empire ever assembled till then, and that only in about ten years, would have become incredible.

“The Greeks had learned to make use of their own head much better than their neighbours.” This, my students could have understood. If I had been content of that explanation within their reach, the majority would have loved my course. But my demon was at the helm. He demanded that I reached the perfect intelligence of that epic. I felt incapable of it, but the demon which you know continued to pull me till I was completely drowned. So, seeing the whole class dismayed, I started to stammer

and the students moved about looking for more interesting occupations to kill the time.

In brief, when the devil kept the helm, I wanted to lead the students into my mad exigency of understanding everything and, luckily, they rebelled. Of course, I wanted to carry on and I struggled, but the demon had nearly always the upper hand, so strong was my need to understand everything perfectly, to start with history.

Like this, slowly but steadily, from year to year, I built a solid reputation of a professor whose history course was quite woolly and boring. They called me Strangelove, in memory of the sinister hero of a well known film. Some graffiti in my honour flourished on the tables and the walls of the classrooms where I taught.

“Strangelove P.D.

– Down with Strangelove!

– Strangelove, are you strange?”

The hostile words, the actions also, increased, involving most often the students, but equally the parents. One day, while going out of the college, I was hit by the core of an apple. Many times, my car was stained. At the telephone, at all hours of the day and night, insulting messages, one more humiliating than the other, arrived in the ear of whoever picked up the phone: Jeanne, myself, the one or the other of my children... One evening, when I was at the cinema in the company of a friend in the dark hall, we were bombarded from the balcony with pieces of chewed chewing gum. In the street, in the hypermarkets, in all the public places, it often happened to me to hear the gibes: “Strangelove, are you strange?”

Must I say more to you about it? I was progressively led to become aware of an urgent necessity: improve the quality of my course. The strong kick on the back was therefore healthy.

To make my dragon go back into his niche and make it possible for him to stay, I looked for another more efficient means than the others, those which had just proved their lack of reliability. In time, I had discovered Mômmanh. Suddenly, I had a global answer to my nagging questions on laws eventuality regulating history, but I could not use that unknown theory in my course. Moreover, according to scientific criteria, it might be wrong: I was convinced of that.

No, I used my discovery in another way.

It was the need to control everything, absolutely everything, that tormented me. Then, I said to myself: "It is not possible to ensure existence alone, but you do so with the help of others." Yes, I had just invented hot water, but nonetheless I felt relieved of an enormous weight.

This done, I was free to get started and to do my best. For this purpose, I just had to mobilise the resources entrusted to me by Mômmanh, saying: "They are almost always much greater than you think." I had just rediscovered how important it is to have self-confidence. I had again invented hot water and I put it to good use.

You know the importance of self-confidence. When Mômmanh is convinced that all of the resources of our being are capable of success, she mobilises them. All of them. And it works! Because she is the real leader.

You have to stop needing to be able to do everything by yourself. Get others to help you. And mobilise your energy to do something.

In practise, I concluded that certain formulas worked well, doubtlessly because they are specific and suited to my case. Here's one that always works: "You do not have to be clever. 'Leave some' to others. Take your existence to your fingertips."

And now, I managed to master the monster rather easily, given its usual pugnacity.

"Help yourself and heaven will help you." Heaven sometimes materialised in the form of nice students who gave Mômmanh a good dose of empathy: they had seen the demon inside of me and they helped me to hunt it down. When, after I started to give lengthy explanations and I began to stammer, feeling that I would never succeed in fulfilling my need for perfect intelligibility, they stopped me, saying: "All right, sir. We understand."

Thanks partly to their help, my history lessons were quickly becoming what they should always have been: clear and lively, as long as there were not too many interruptions. I thought that after some years of great efforts, the bad reputation which I had acquired would have been wiped out. I would then have become what I wished: a teacher.

Instead of that, the hostility in my regards worsened. I could not understand anything. A “dahu hunt” was launched against my person and I could not understand anything, because it was a new phenomenon in the schools.

Ah well, so much the worse: I decided to go to work in another town where my reputation would be clean. I obtained a transfer to Saint-Martin-de-Grosbois, at thirty kilometres away from La Fûtaie. I could start again on the right footing. I would be happy. Alas! It did not take me long to realise that a new “dahu hunt” was launched again, against me.

Jeanne has some doubts about that new harassment. Moreover, she told me: “The illness of the persecution is a sign of paranoia. Go and consult a psychiatrist.” The latter stated that I was not at all paranoid and on seeing my last inspection report, that I was a good teacher. I did not ask so much to be assured. However, the absolution of the doctor of souls did not stop the pack of hounds launched to me at my heels. The new “dahu hunt” bordered on a nightmare.

I owe you some explanations. In holiday colonies of my youth, the “dahu hunt” was a practical joke aimed at the new supervisors. They presented that chase like the best moment of the holidays. The dahu, which has never existed, was, they said, a local animal with succulent flesh, but particularly timid. He lived on the hollows of the big woods, well hidden, and came out on moonless nights. They organised then a great search of which the new supervisors were the heroes. Armed with sticks, they had to wait all night at the bend of a thick pathway, for the dahu which the beaters did not fail to send them.

In modern school, what I call “dahu hunt” is a type of hunt aimed at the “bad” teachers, that is to say those who have the reputation of being particularly incompetent. Ah well, it happens that that reputation can be unjustified. In that model, just as the dahu is imaginary, the “bad” teacher is not real. However, the unlucky one on whom one has grafted that remark and who does not succeed in getting rid of it, that unfortunate one exists.

He has all the aspects of an ordinary person, but one cannot fail to recognise him when he is aimed at by the gibes, indeed even small missiles such as the pellets of chewed paper, acorns, chestnuts... So, one asks himself what derisory indignity is concealed under the apparent respectability of the person.

The “dahu” of modern times, from where can it come out? It was born, unknowingly to them, from a new behaviour of the parents. Those of long ago expected their children to respect the teachers, whoever they may be. Now, and perhaps it is a consequence of the rebellion of the sixty-eight, that duty inscribed in the tradition, the respect from which the notables benefited, does not exist any more. The doctors, the mayors, the judges, the professors are only respected if one believes that they deserve it. And even certain parents encourage their children to show their hostility towards the “bad teachers.” As long as that doesn’t infringe on the rights of man, that counter-democratic power is progress.

It must be only that. But a good principle can be found in opposition to one of his colleagues: another good principle.

In class, the children need a teacher, in the noble sense of the word. If the parents have withdrawn their power from the teacher, how can he be that teacher? Upset, scorned, if he does not manage to change opinion, he is condemned to be only a “bad” teacher for as long as his time of hard labour has not yet passed.

There are also, and they are more and more numerous, some parents who believe that the “bad” teacher is the only person responsible for the bad results of their children. Therefore, those poor little ones deprive him of his confidence. Their resistance which is not always passive adds its negative effects to the disorder already existing: the class strays from the “bad” professor who, unless he receives improbable help, has no longer the possibility to be a teacher. Even if he wasn’t a “bad” teacher, he has become so and it rests that way, prisoner of that trap, without the possibility of a change.

Why can a “good” professor be a victim of that process?

No, it is not the author's fiction. Some of them, even for whom the situation was particularly unbearable, have died because of it. Yes, it is true!

How the children feel responsible only in front of their parents.

As long as they have not got over the turbulent zone of the adolescent crisis, it is only in front of the parents that the students feel truly responsible. And yet? It is the privilege of their age: life is only a game, that is to say training before the start of the actual existence. It is Mômmanh who has wanted it: like this, the little man has all the time to form himself well during numerous years of youth so that he is on time, later on, to answer the immense hope placed in front of him.

“And the dahu hunt?”

– Behold! Here it is. That can happen like this.”

Some persons worthy of trust have spread a rumour within the college: “A professor particularly useless has just been appointed with us. It is a pity! What teaching are our children going to receive? What reputation is our college going to have? Our students are going to attend the private school the Immaculée Conception, and some amongst us are going to lose their place... What about the prestige in our school? And the back up of the secular ideal, do you think about it?”

A first element of the trap is in place. To the rest.

Like in any college, there are children who wish to evade scholastic work, even if it were on temporary basis. One finds also those who do not want to suffer because of their bad marks. If bad teachers can take on the responsibility of their failure, they will be relieved. No matter how slight their selfishness is, they look for victims among their teachers: whether he is a truly incompetent one, or whether he is a dahu. The new professor of history carries a big notice on his back: “Completely useless.” The small hunters are ecstatic: “Oh my my! What a magnificent dahu has arrived here!”

To start with, one observes him. The rumour continues to circulate. It increases. One of the Year 8 classes, named “P,” is particularly motivated for that type of action. They set going an armoured vehicle, that is to say one of the worst students of the class, who at some time, hates studies, adores disorder and does not fear punishments. He throws ink on the student next to him, the most studious of the class, provokes a scandal, receives a punishment from the professor, protests violently and with insolence, finds himself at the office of the assistant head, Mr Ventoux.

- You again! You start the year well! What have you done, this time?
- I have done nothing. It is the history professor who is accusing me...
- Stop! I know that song by heart. Who is your history professor?
- Dufour. He is completely useless.
- Monsieur Dufour, please!
- Monsieur Dufour. We do not understand anything he says. And he is always breathing down my neck.
- Monsieur Dufour! Yes, yes, I know... Professors are like parents: you can't chose them. But that is no excuse for your lack of respect for him. Your detention is approved and you must not forget to show me the work that he has given you...

The assault tank accomplishes its mission: “Good! I have my detention, I agree, but it is only because Ventouse cannot do otherwise. He has to back up his

professors, otherwise it would be a complete mess! In any case, he cannot fire Dufour, that is for sure. You can do it, guys! It is all good!

The students of this Year 8 “P” class send messages to all the classes concerned. The graffiti in my honour begin to flourish everywhere, on the tables, on the walls, on the covered playground, on the benches in the yard: “Toufou. Toufou, useless. Toufou, queer...” The “dahu hunt” is launched.

In all the meetings of the class at the end of the term, in front of my colleagues and a member of the administration, in public therefore, it is always me and quite often me only that the delegates of the class or representatives of the parents reproach. The latter all the same have a quality: their rich variety. It happened that a student’s parent poses on me a long, long, look filled with heavy reproaches which lead me to understand to which extent my presence is unbearable. And where can I go therefore?

In that college, three fourths of the children belonged to the cultured families. The remaining quarter had the majority of the weak children. The latter were placed in assisted classes, for the less motivated. Consequently, the other classes had most often a very good level. None of my students had ever obtained 20/20 mark for the trimester in “geo-history”: ah well, in that college that happened plenty of times. The “P” class was no exception: it had its share of stars and good students. Their intelligence expressed itself particularly well in the way in which they led the “dahu hunt.”

In the other classes, the process which I described had a spontaneous character and unfolded itself in confusion. The agitators of this “P” class, themselves, analysed it, as I have done for you, and they led their operation methodically, as future executives which they were. In the first place, they did not want above all to spoil their studies. Therefore, they concentrated their hunt only on three courses: history-geography, English and music. During the class council, their principal professor could even compliment them: “They are so gentle!” So, the three pathetic professors, so useless that they have known how to render aggressive these “gentle

ones,” you understand that they looked for in vain, in the council hall transformed into a tribunal, a place where to hide their shame.

Like this, their “dahu hunt” was conducted in a methodical manner. Here is another illustration. Their class counted on three “assault tanks,” type of students of whom I have already spoken. They could have hated the college if, kindly enough, their studious comrades had not offered them a golden opportunity: conduct the disorder against the dahus. So, they could finally exist within the educational community. What luck! One of them was surprised while speaking about me: “But why does he look at me as if I were a criminal? I don’t do anything wrong!” Another one, the most enthusiasts on the way to social exclusion, considered that he had accomplished his mission with the history professor. He wanted to develop his action as benefactor. To the agitators of the class, the future high executives, he asked:

- Can we bring down mother Lavion? She’s a loose woman.
- No, replied the leaders, with a sign of their head.
- Ah yes... And the bio. Professor, then, Jordan. He is a holy stupid bastard, that one.
- No, they answered making signs with their head.

In another Year 8 class, another year, a student delegate of the class enticed his assault tank and asked him.

- So? And Toufou?
- So, nothing for the time being. Yet I put the parcel, there, you can believe me! But he tightens his teeth...

A lot of signs of which I have just listed the most fearful which converged in a direction of a unique conclusion: in the teaching, Dufour is useless. I felt that everybody, or nearly everyone, had that opinion of me, an opinion which reinforced itself thanks to the efficiency of the “dahu hunt.”

How does other people's gaze affect my existence?

The look of the others is a mirror into which we must look. Remember that it forms part of the second existential human base: the links with others.

Although one cannot help being deformed, we manage generally to make the best of that mirror, but my colleagues' look sent me somebody else's image, to whom I would not have liked to resemble. Accepting that fake portrait of myself, trying to conform to it, turn myself into derision, install myself like this in the human family, "Professor Strangelove" for lifetime, sent from one college to another like a ping-pong ball: was I going to make that choice in order to avoid being alone?

Certainly no. Besides, my dear colleagues forbade it.

About two-thirds among them blacklisted me. Nobody called me Michel: I had at last become "Monsieur," "Monsieur Dufour." Once I entered the staffroom, I said "good morning" and, as usual, nobody answered. I noticed a group of colleagues united around a table: all the history-geography professors in meeting. All except myself. One of them explained himself: "Monsieur Dufour, are you a history professor?"

The epidemic had hit the majority of classes where I tried to teach. To control the disorder, I did not find a more energetic remedy except for the detention. The trouble makers punished like this, received through the intermediary of the parents, the "detention sheet" inviting them to pass two hours in the study room to do supplementary work. Under the pressure of the hunters, I was led to put more and more "detentions," avoiding abusing of them. In spite of that, my detentions seemed more and more inefficient. One day I had the explanation: the administration often forgot to send them to their parents.

I am not going to compel you to accompany me till the end of tests which last as much as some years. I was capable of straightening the situation slowly and surely, starting from the arrival of a new principal who paid in person to stop the “dahu hunt.”

While waiting for the arrival of the rescue, I managed to keep on and survive without much damage, and that was mostly due to another “good” class: the Year 8 class named “0.” Not only did they treat me like a teacher, but they protected me. They dared combine some praising graffiti to the gibes which overwhelmed me: “Dufour, nice.”

Oh by Jove! What a lot of good that did to me!

I did not hear any reproaches toward the Year 8 “0” class during any of the teachers’ conferences.

The generous students gave me a present still, which might seem insignificant, but which I have only seen once in my career. During a lesson, a squirting of ink stained my clothes, shirt and trousers. That happened five or six times during the year. I raised my shoulders and continued the lesson. I turned my back to write on the blackboard some phrases of the summary. When I looked again at the class, a student came to me and said: “I am sorry, sir. It is I who has thrown the ink on you. I did not do it on purpose: when I pressed the cartridge in my pen, it burst in my hands...”

Other people came to the rescue. There was a group of attendants who always treated me like an ordinary man, worthy of respect and friendship. Some colleagues had that attitude as well.

How the females know how to sense the value of a man without necessarily being able to figure it out.

And then, there are the eyes of the females. Mômmanh, remember, has given them the power to detect the existential value of man, without being necessarily capable of seeing how she expresses herself: they can detect gold, but they are not capable to recognise it when it is hidden in nature.

Ah well, some deep female looks sent me messages of encouragement.

Thanks to all the combined help, the deforming mirror of the look of others ceased to fascinate me. No, no and no! I was never going to drown in those untruthful waters. I plucked up courage and I could hold on till the arrival of that brave principal.

Oh! But what a crazy thing I did! I was going to forget the most important: Jeanne. Yes My Love had rejected me during that test, when for me it was impossible to leave my family before Estelle met her death, another tragedy would arrive.

Since she did not believe that great rumour, I could think that her loving feeling was still more deformed than that of my colleagues. I preferred reasoning: since we lived together for such a long time in a profound intimacy, she knows me better than my mother. When I was on the verge of no longer believing in myself, neither in others, that type of reasoning gave me back a big part of lost confidence.

Since Jeanne stayed with me in the sorrowful period, it was that she loved me more than my reputation. She simply loved me, and that love of my well-beloved gave me the courage to struggle on when I was on the verge of letting the stream

carry the dam. After every day of the combat, there was a night with my bloody well-beloved. The warmth which electrified her body against mine recharged my batteries. In the morning, I felt cheered up, ready to face again the pack of hounds. And so much the worse if you take me for a fool.

Have I introduced our children to you. It seems no, with the exception of Estelle. There were three, born at Ouagadougou. Pablo, the eldest, very serious, was very fond of his mother. Then came Estelle, the little mother, so gracious, who adored her father. Thomas, malicious, curious of everything, delighted to be a child, was the third. In spite of everything, we had not led to the collapse of their education because they were worth more than us.

- Are they happy, you would ask me?
- From time to time, like everybody. It is not the question which is important.
- And Estelle?
- Be silent!

Who directs the education of the children?
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The children learn the existence from their parents or their substitute: Mômmanh has made them like this. I have had to repeat that.

Ah well, our war for leadership could have complicated dangerously that learning.

- Go to sleep, it is time.
- No, you can watch TV.
- I am going to enrol you for a judo course.
- No, you will do footing.

- Help me to peel the potatoes.
- No, you are going to pick strawberries and raspberries.
- You will go to a private school. They will know how to make you work.
- Surely not. We are the type to go to the Public School, we. And we are proud of it!

Imagine that they had to choose between two opposite wills all the time. Are we going to be torn apart all our life?

We were as much capable of avoiding the greatest of dangers. The selfishness nourished during our dear childhood did not lead us to devour our very own children: that parasite hidden in our existence demanded only that each of us would be an adulated leader. In that vast domain, he pushed the others till his rank as subordinate, but he did not forbid the other aspects of altruism which our families had taken care to cultivate in us: the sharing, the dedication, the solidarity, the courage... Furthermore, that secret selfishness could not go far under the risk of being unmasked, uprooted from its converted den in the subconscious and condemned by our conscience. It was necessary to give up the pace to the official authorities of our myself, the altruists.

The child learns within the family what he must know to succeed later on in his mission as man. The girl discovers that she will be a “mother” and, to start with, she falls in love with her father. In the same way, the boy falls in love with his mother. It is not rare that an adolescent dreams of having had an incestuous action, and wakes up at the moment when he is spreading the semen on his sheets. Ashamed of having done such a thing, in his dream, he understands that it is time for him to leave the family cocoon. And his mother’s skirts, to face the vast ocean of the external universe and inscribe there his own adventure. He goes to look for a beauty, to his convenience, and tries to conquer her.

When a little boy wants to seduce his mother, the simplest way is to take as a model he whom she loves: father. That dispenses him from having to guess his tastes and above all to discover alone how to realise them. For example, if mother loves the ingenious type who knows how to fix all the unmanageable objects of daily life, how

can the little boy acquire alone the mastery of that magic? He is quite compelled to learn from his father or from a supply teacher.

But we, indigenous parents, absorbed in our war for leadership, how could we answer that need? We did not even think about it. Carried away by our rage to win, we bombarded the portrait of our dear bloody adversary with some missiles altogether demeaning the ones as well as the others. It was up to the children to sort it out. That situation complicated their life a lot, but it was also stimulating for their intellect. Being unable to know what was good in the paternal model thus feeling queasy, the boys tried to discover at source their dear mother's tastes, then to satisfy them if possible. The exercise could prove to be particularly complex. Estelle had to put up with the same problem.

Moreover we were overcome by pity when, behind the smoke of our artillery shots, we discovered them completely disorientated. There was an immediate ceasefire and our first concern was to give them back the reality: "But no, dear Pablo, your father is not an idiot. He is even very intelligent, imagine. He wants to understand everything and he reflects a lot: it is for that that I love him..." or rather: "But no, my dear little red princess! Treasured mother is not a factory of s...! She simmers lovingly with her beauty all day. And then, she is curious of everything that one can have everywhere, everywhere! even elsewhere. She dashes with her head down after she believes to have discovered some nuggets in a puddle of water, and this happens twenty times daily. That is why I love her, your dear mother."

Therefore, when passion led us too far away, we took some security measures in order to protect our children. Alas! Quite often the mad war of the leaders led us to the danger zone.

The accident always happens to the others: on a beautiful evening of May, it was our turn to realise that cruel stupidity.

That came on us in the usual style: everything happened too quickly.

The feminist movement had entered the phase which it was following now: public opinion backed the total emancipation of woman, and men in conflict with their companion suffered an unfavourable prejudice. Imagine how My Love could push ahead in that prepared ground. Moreover, having a primary concern, the bloody hunt for the “dahu,” I found myself in a very vulnerable situation. It was enough that Jeanne abandoned her general principles and I was ripe to fall under her blow.

However, before launching her great offensive, she led me for consultation at the marriage counsellor: in vain. Since the counsellor for couples in distress was a woman, I doubted her impartiality. Jeanne consented to accompany me to the psychologist. Although he was a man, this time, the result was not better. Nobody could help us to take care of our love. But what soul surgeon is capable, at that time, to force our subconscious to open itself?

A great explosion was necessary for that, a terrifying stress. To pull us out of our passions, strength greater than that which alienated us was necessary. Since neither the attractions of happiness nor of love managed to create that force for our children, it was quite necessary that a great unhappiness terrified us and gave us finally the courage to discover in ourselves some unhealthy elements.

Not only, life is a mortal illness, but it is constantly under the threat to be blown away like the flame of a candle...

So, the Hundred Years War was intensifying itself. There were no longer any truces. Each fighter threw all his strength in the battle: it was our Verdun.

How impulsive people go from one extreme to the other.
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You have not forgotten how Jeanne is rash: she answers immediately to the slightest stress, without taking time to cover the field of existential possible answers: selfish and altruistic. I believe that it is necessary to look for the origin of a strange behaviour: of an unpredictable manner, she perhaps can be all selfish during some weeks or, during other periods, show herself all altruistic.

I imagine the following process: if one perspective of pleasure, or the opposite, tickles strongly and leads her ego to command, she is going to take care of the last one for such a long time that it will remain in the first rank. What can dislodge it from there? Ah well, it is necessary that a great emotion seeks altruism so that in its turn, the latter will take up the direction of the existential operations.

Yes, we perhaps keep there the explanation of the strange phenomenon. Having a lot of difficulties to take the retreat, my impulsive Jeanne will remain hanging on for some weeks to her ego, afterwards she will be prisoner of altruism, and then a new identical cycle will start. In the same way, when she follows a debate, she agrees with the latter who has spoken, provided that however he has been a good lawyer.

Ah well, Jeanne was going through an exceptionally long period of nearly complete selfishness.

She had reached the peak moment the evening when I perceived that the saving book was empty: she had planned that money to the purchase of a new car.

- I was ashamed when I went to work in my rusty tub which served me as a car.
- But, they are our savings! You took them without even talking to me about it...
- No! No, poor sick one! You will not start to harass me. I will not let you be.
- Oh! Tell me that I am dreaming. Not only you steal my savings, but you have the guts to accuse me! And what am I capable of?
- Of stinginess! Of unbearable stinginess. You hatch yours well like a stupid chick hatches eggs in a plaster. And we, during that time, there we lived miserably.
- But! But!
- Besides, I do not want to talk to you any longer!

And she went out quickly banging the door. She headed towards her new car. I jumped and I caught her before she opened the door. Then? Then? What crossed my mind so that I got to the point of hitting her?

Estelle and Thomas ran, pulled me as best as they could and protected their mother. I felt degraded to the rank of the animal, a poor animal that had only his impotent strength to try to survive. I was so ashamed! But what could I do? What could I do? Good God! Faced with the intolerable?

I jumped into my car and I went in the middle of the forest, our great vigorous forest quite bushy with oaks and beech trees some of which have seen the passing of many centuries. Was I to take advice from the trees whose patience has its roots in time? Yes, it was that: I needed time to find a way out of the trap which was killing me.

To start with, I wandered aimlessly across the thickets shouting and uttering sobbing which should have moved the surrounding environment. But neither plants, nor animals, not even a fly, nobody paid attention to me. I stayed up however to stay well hidden, because the “dahu hunt” had not yet finished: if I were surprised by one

of the tormentors, the local gossipers announced to all, that this time, I had become completely mad.

Therefore, nobody paid attention to me. However, I believed I heard voices. Who was talking to me? It was not the crows, because I did not understand any of their irritating cacophony. The other birds, all on their business, were not addressing me any more than by chirping. Was that coming from the source which for five thousand years dug its nest in the mossy rock? No: I was in no state to understand its sweet murmur.

Across all those actors of nature, trying hard to fatten up our planet Earth, it is Mômmanh who spoke to me. “How is that? And in which language, please? Listen: since you are not stupid like me, you will know how to find yourself.” Here you are, some details approximately, of what our conversation was like.

– Michel, my little one, I see you despairing. You are in a dead end. And then? There is often a way out: the way which I lent you, you give it back to me. What is there simpler?

– And who can therefore replace me? Nobody, since I am unique.

– Unique: yes. Irreplaceable: no. A little handyman who believes he is an inventor, you will not even know how to produce the first brick as a living. Look at all the roads which I have created by feeling in my blind universe, the billions of billions of energetic roads, which at any moment push ahead the existence and which are a good road to conquer space and time, those deceitful two which would like to slip away in their mad race. As regards all that, you can count much less than the most insignificant grain of sand in the Sahara.

– But I discovered you! Mômmanh, and nothing knows it. Therefore, nobody can use that knowledge to improve the human existence and the walk of the world.

– And so? The intelligence which I have given you, favoured by the circumstances, has known well how to discover itself! Ah well, sooner or later, other intelligences will reach it too.

– Other intelligences! Surely not. I am the first. That discovery belongs to me. Besides, I am going to write my name on it and take out a patent for it so that

nobody can take it from me.

– And humanity in that business? Supposing that you have done a real discovery, isn't humanity a priority, since she needs it? Do you want to disinherit her and close the treasure in your ego as much inflated as perishable? Do you want to put the discovery to rot?

– No Mômmanh. It is hard, but I don't have another way. While waiting, the idea of dying without being able to transmit what I believe I know, that idea there is borne with difficulty.

– Accept that eventuality, since you have no choice. It is life... And then, it will not be so serious since, I repeat it, your discovery is supposed to be feeble, others will do it one day or another.

– And since that does not happen, a band of idiots can quite well burst our world.

– And then? You know that I am gifted with infinite other resources, to start with the living planets.

– So, I am not indispensable to you: therefore, I can die. Thanks just the same.

– You're welcome.

So, little by little, death seemed sweet. My sobbing ceased. It was a beautiful summer evening, the sun was still high in the sky. I sat on a dead trunk, close to the spring. I tried to imagine my immersion into nothingness. "Farewell everything. I cannot take any more. Continue without me." The wiping out of Michel Dufour seemed bearable, even soothing.

I asked myself what will happen if all the human beings reacted like this. At the outcome of my reflection, I was not proud. I imagined Jeanne and the children deprived of my help and I felt pity. You also, although to a slight extent, unknown readers. I had pity on you: without the new means which the theory of "The Struggle for Existence" brings to us, will you know how to pull humanity from the noisy and the disorderly assembly? So, I called Mômmanh again.

How important it is to make oneself useful.

"Mômmanh, please, tell me something.. I know that I am not indispensable, I understand that well and I no longer dread death. But perhaps I could be useful. Don't you think? - Quite sure that you can be useful. And now, you sort it out yourself. I gave you the lucid intelligence. You should manage to do something with it, for Pete's sake!"

The desire to die blurred itself. I had that idea before plunging irreversibly into nothingness, I had perhaps other cards to play. I turned all the pockets of my memory and I found that memory: "There are people who divorce." I started to become aware of the chains stretched forth which tore me apart. Soon, I can start to undo them.

It was about two demands which made me their slave. I have already spoken about the second, but I was not yet ready to tackle it myself: it was the unwavering will to be the head of the family.

I have already told you, isn't it so, how that type of demand hindered our existence: at first by diverting the resources which we would be able to dedicate to multiple objectives, afterwards by paralysing us when she finds herself in conflict with other imperatives of life.

Behold therefore the first of the two demands for me in my family, all perspective of divorce or separation was unheard of.

The bonds of marriage are indissoluble. Divorce is a monstrosity which trains the decay of the couples, at the same time as the definite catastrophes, above all if there are children. It is forbidden, I had inherited during my childhood, in the peasant family some catholic traditions well grounded. As usual, one had forgotten for a long

time the primary causes of its establishment, buried in the distant past. Like this, in my family of peasant origin, the divorce has remained under control until now and it only started to make a discrete apparition in the last generation of citizens.

During the course of my formation at the Normal School, that ban had already suffered a strong erosion. For as long as there were no children in the couple, if one of the two wanted to go away, in the name of freedom we think it's right to do it. But, if there are children, we strongly disapprove of divorce. In the formation of the personality, Freud has put in evidence the essential role of the family: the dislocation of the latter took therefore in our eyes the colours of crime as regards the children.

I have stopped there. It was the chains which rendered my life impossible. In my family I demanded to be the leader, because of which, I was going away. I had already done it on my return from Austria, remember. Yes, but at that stage of our love, we were not married and, above all, there were only two of us. Now, this time, I could not go since the divorce risked destroying our children.

An idea was circulating in the air and from time to time touched me lightly, without my ever giving it attention. That evening there, in the heart of the forest, near the spring, the broken shell of my conscience let it enter: "A successful divorce is better than a failed marriage." I started to work on that idea.

New convictions came out of it which I hand over to you. I am always attached.

When the little man reaches the age of an adult, he cannot grow bigger. So much the worse if he has failed his belief: it is too late, he will remain undeveloped all his life. It is the same for the formation of his soul: tastes, values and intelligence. When the time of learning his existence is over, it is too late from now on to do everything again. One can only practice a little surgery of the soul to overcome, as we have seen it do, certain defects easy to bear. And yet! you know how that risks being painful without as much as assuring the recovery definitely.

It is necessary that, from their birth till their maturity, the parents are in a position to nourish the body and soul of the little one.

And if, in spite of all their efforts they cannot manage? So, they have to look for a substitute to their weak family. Such a transplant necessitates big precautions.

Besides everything, the second element of human existence, love, must be preserved in the soul of the little ones. If they believe to discover that it is not a stall holder ball which explodes with the slightest choc, how can they love from now on?

While I was conducting that reflection, the acceptance of divorce instilled itself in me. To live without My Love and away from my children was a painful perspective, certainly, but not desperate as my situation of two hours earlier, then when I looked for refuge and consolation in the forest. The chain of marriage could break: I was free to evade from the theatre of the War of the Hundred Years whose only issue seemed to be the demolition of us all. So I elaborated a plan.

I proposed to Jeanne to go towards the divorce in stages, the definitive rupture intervened only after the failures of the attempts to agree. To start with, I would ask to be sent abroad.

To the children, we would tell the truth, everything simply, but paying attention not to hurt them severely. Yes, we would love them always. And for ever! It was good because we did not want any longer that our quarrels without end would continue to make them suffer... I would write to them. I would spend the holidays with them, at least a part...

Why the devil was it necessary that the presentation of that plan transformed itself into a violent confrontation where it was a question of brutal separation or conflictual divorce?

– Jeanne, I believe that I am going to ask for a transfer abroad.

– Do you believe or are you sure? There you are beating round the bush. I have a

job myself! I don't have any time to lose in dribbling ravings. So? What twisted blow are you on the verge of simmering?

– There is no simmering blow. We cannot carry on like this. It is bad for the children as well as for us. And that does not lead anywhere.

– You believe you can kick me with a pathetic blackmail to divorce. How could I have married such a nullity? Go on! And above all do not retreat this time! Clear the camp! I hope only for that. What a relief! Ah but, what a relief! From now on there are two big feasts in the year: Christmas and the anniversary of your departure. It will be like the feast of the liberation, in 45, when they burnt the effigy of Hitler...

I have had to be patient as I know how to do now. I knew it already, the step adopted in that situation. Since Jeanne was trained at the same time by her ego in madness and by her anger doubled by rashness, I had to wait till altruism came to the helm, that which could not be late. Instead of that, in the first squabble, I launched myself head low in the stupid War of the Leaders.

– Jeanne, please do not reverse our responsibilities, even when it is possible. Up till now, it is you who have made me the blackmail of divorce, to make me walk on all fours. When you trivialized that infamous divorce, in the Parisian way and of your family, you knew that for me, it was an unheard of crime.

Nothing doing: I cannot divorce!

Then, you were keen on it!... your blackmail, to bend me to your whims.

Everyday, you brandished it like a whip loaded with nails. Ah well, it is over! No!

No, this time, you are going to listen to me till the end.

It is over, I say to you. I am free. And do not believe above all that it is a twisted blow.

I accept the divorce.

Whew! From now on you can always try to make the birds walk at their pace, because for me, it is over. And I do not believe that you can find another fool to disgust. In any case, I...! On foot, on horseback, by car and even by plane. Thanks for having freed me.

For once, she remained voiceless, open mouthed. I had finally my last word. Sinister stupid! I went out, without stumbling, banging the door.

In the shadow of the corridor, the waves of red hair brushed against me. I jumped as if I had received an electric charge but, to my resentment, I was happy to say: "Hold on! Estelle, what are you doing there?" and I did not listen even to the reply.

The following day was a Wednesday. After my theatrical coup on the eve, the family atmosphere was sinister. I had slept in the caravan which was waiting near the house a hypothetical departure on holidays. Jeanne had not spoken to me and, that time, I was quite set not to try reconciliation before two or three days. I wanted like this to soak my will never again to escape divorce and convince Jeanne of that completely new determination.

I relieved my suffering simulating, in my thought, my life alone, far away from my family. From time to time, I managed to accept it and the headache which had been in my skull retreated. As to the losses which I would have suffered, I imagined the compensations: look for another love, enjoy the freedom acquired... I felt nearly cured.

It was probable that I had some illusions. Whatever it could be, I never had the possibility to verify it by means of experience. Destiny was preparing itself to surprise me.

In the afternoon, I had to conduct Estelle to the dancing lesson. Exceptionally, we were both silent. For the time being, I did not want to alarm our children by making them part of my change in attitude faced with a divorce. As far as our violent dispute of the preceding day, it seemed that it did not have to affect them more than the preceding one.

Marital discord: the price to pay.

As usual, I parked the car in a small parking place, at about a hundred metres from the school and, as usual, I set about accompanying the little one as far as the entry. Half way, she stopped, saying: “Look, papa.” On the edge of the pavement, in front of the way, she closed her eyes... and crossed the road running. There was a little flow and one single car had to slow to avoid Estelle. On the pavement in front, she cried to me:

“Papa! Papa! Have you seen? I am lucky, hey? Now, I am coming back.
– **No!** I screamed.”

But the impossible monstrosity had already taken place.

That bleeding mass on the asphalt...

You know the rest.

And now.

Life must go on. Life continues.

11-Beyond Death

The War of the Leaders never started again. We practiced finally the conjugal democracy. In case of disagreement we together looked for what was the most convenient for our existence. If we do not find any, either we abandon the decision to the one of the two which seemed the most suitable, or well we leave to each the possibility to do as he likes. We share a lot of responsibilities in the function of our competence and of our most ardent tastes: to Jeanne the house and its management, to me the making up of the garden and surroundings, to me the cars, to her the research and the choice of beautiful shows...

How selfishness leads us towards death whilst altruism leads us to life.

Since here we are freed from our slavery, the demand of being each the leader which pushed us to struggle head against head till death, we can at last nourish and take care of our love. It carries on well. It develops. A loving creation, you know, does not realise itself one against the other but in two.

It is because, the "Myself-I-Here-Now," otherwise called absolute selfishness, cannot

serve him as base since it is strictly individual. Besides, it emits a smell of death. Yes, I said that a strong dose of selfishness does not forbid love. It is true, but it is not necessary that a certain threshold is surpassed, beyond which one leaves the house of the lovers.

It was like this that Jeanne and I found ourselves subtly swept away towards what has the greatest value for Mômmanh: altruism.

Love makes us better. We must also, to avoid outdoing each other, construct it a little each day. And Mômmanh, from time to time, rewards us with some notes of her celestial harp.

To live without fearing death: to overcome death without God's help
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And this is how the “Good Geniuses” work to whom, on her deathbed, Estelle entrusted a large part of her existence. Does she not tell us that we would find her again here, next to the “Good Geniuses”? Indeed, we will come across her again from time to time.

But this is not all. Jacques, our third son, has totally adopted his godmother Estelle. But yes! You know well!

We are free to choose our ancestral cultures: ah well Jacques has chosen his little elderly sister. As the nobles were expected to perpetuate the honour of the

ancestors, which encouraged them in spite of everything to be brave and generous, Jacques has committed himself to do his best to put in action the qualities of his sister: noblesse oblige. It is not easy, but he is keen on it.

He designates that by a funny name: his “challenge.” We have ended by understanding that it is a challenge which he launches: “Did you ever manage to please Estelle. – Ah well! It is what one is going to see.”

Estelle was nine years old. She was curious of everything. Beauty shown out from her shouts and tears. Jacques will therefore be an artist. Fortunately enough, he is gifted. But his godmother always at nine years of age: will he always be as young as that dead one, all by becoming himself responsible? There still, he answers us that it is included in his “challenge.”

We tell him time and time again:

– You do not have to face this challenge. Estelle held on to freedom too much, she was too generous, too, to ask for something like that.

– I know, I know! So I’m free to attain Estelle’s freedom. If it really gets too hard, I will give up. Besides, she would never have asked me to do the same things she did. I am a good person, that’s all she wants... sorry, all she would like. So far, it’s a pleasure.

– So, everything’s going well, my little Jacques.

And it is true that Jacques has understood the rules of the contract that he has chosen to sign with his young deceased godmother: so young, deceased, and yet a godmother: sometimes, he says, “I agree with Estelle.” and other times “Estelle agrees with me.” Because he knows that to take over from his godmother, he does not have to repeat what she achieved, to continue the work and go further in achieving Existence, inventing future life.

This is how the “Noblesse oblige” contract works.

We never pronounce the name of Estelle. However, she is always in our company. At every important decision which we have to take, we have that dialogue.

– Michel, do you believe that she will agree?

– She was still too young to judge... But, you know, at the bottom of my heart, I believe that she will approve.

– I think so also. All that seemed to serve Mômmanh’s plans pleased her.

Quite often, she keeps the place of our guardian angel. We appreciate her company, and however it happens that we wish to find ourselves both of us alone. In that case, we go on holiday for some days. Estelle never needs looking after: we are sure to find her on our way back. So, both of us, as long ago in the mountain pastures, we do crazy things. “Like what? – That’s none of your business.”

As promised, we made Mômmanh known. Very progressively, in about twenty years, that theory has seduced a good nucleus of researchers. A lot of scientific discoveries and inventions have come out of it. Perhaps we have the tendency, both of us, to believe in it more than in reason, to mix up faith and science. In any case, it seems to us that humanity and our old planet have just taken a new take-off.

But attention! This time, let us not repeat the dreadful deceptive vision of the “Grand Evening.”

Now I must make a confession. As I decided to build this novel with real bricks, I must tell you that I have expressed my desire here rather than the truth. After 12 years of presence on the Internet, the pages containing the theory are visited more and more (439 times in November 2014) and some intellectuals, scientists and other people have said that my speculations are plausible. Now it is your turn.

We estimate that we have passed the relay fallen in our hands. We have the right to some holidays now. Your turn, then! Before rejoining the subject and Mômmanh in her dark dreams, let us go and take some rest among the living.

INTERSTELLAR CONVERSATION

Swift Exploration, the council has studied the document joined to the report, "My Love." The humans are on the verge of discovering some milestones which limited their field of existence and they will soon get over them. Afterwards, they are going to travel in interstellar space and discover the other conscious animals which are called "men."

They have had a rough time to realise that all the men in their planet are equal. It is not necessary to repeat that mistake with the men of the universe.

The moment has come to meet them. We send an ambassador to the seat of the U.N.O. Prepare yourselves to receive it.

While waiting, continue your study of the role of selfishness in the human existence. We do not see if the great place which Mômmanh has left him constitutes an advantage or a handicap.

As for love as it is written in the genetic code of the human females, it seemed to us to contain at times a generator and a stimulator of existence. "Making love" is a magnificent invention of Mômmanh. We look for the genetic writing which develops those aptitudes. But that need which the human males feel to dispose of their semen nearly everyday and to spread it in the body of any female "screwable" of their environment, we are close to considering that as an illness. We shall continue to reflect with the humans themselves..

(Exploration of the Earth. Great Archives of Waliullah.)

Table of Issues Addressed.

For all of the following questions, look first in the introduction.

What are the criteria of a scientific theory?

What is a science-based philosophical theory?

Can history be explained?

Communists and historical materialism.

Should we separate scientific research from other issues?

Does existence precede essence?

How can matter give rise to spirit?

Is spirit already in matter?

Can we control the future of humanity?

How can we fight poverty, unemployment, wars, pollution and madness?

Did the marginalised scientists such as James Lovelock, Jacques Benveniste, Roland Plocher make real discoveries?

Is the Earth alive?

Does water have a memory? Does matter have a memory? Does matter have the power to communicate?

Does homeopathy have a scientific basis?

Can part of our experience become hereditary? Can the acquired modify the innate?

Was Lysenko's theory totally wrong?

Why have there been so many failures in cloning?

Towards the unity of cultures. Towards the diversity of cultures.

Are the various philosophies complementary?

Can globalisation save life? Bring prosperity? Promote diversity?

What role can science fiction play?

When are dogmas useful? When are dogmas harmful?

Templates for creating electronic games.

What is the role of love in evolution?

Keys to the future.

The beautiful, the true and the good meet at infinity.

Structures for building exciting video games: the creation of stories and virtual worlds, the invention of possible worlds.

For all of the following questions, look in the novel.

– The will for existence: the origin and the guide of life, the origin and the guide of man.

– How can the paradoxes of emergence be resolved?

– THE STRUCTURE OF HUMAN EXISTENCE.

– Are ants altruistic?

– Has nature invented beauty?

– Does nature have a consciousness? What is the consciousness of the animals like? What is Human consciousness like? What is man's own consciousness like?

– What lessons does Nature give us?

– Does Nature need man? What is the purpose of nature's beauties? Are nature's inventions models for us?

– How do you help nature? How do you delay aging? How do you keep in good shape and in good health?

– How do you preserve the heritage of humanity?

– Eroticism: what is the purpose of the butts of women?

– The young and the feeling of eternity. What is beauty for? Why does natural adaptation appear to obey the principle of an end?

– Inspiration and artistic creation

– In what conditions can man take his wishes for realities?

– Part of the technique in the art of making love.

– Why do women know how to distinguish the men of merit?

– Spoiling a child causes his misfortune. Why?

– What is stress? How can stress release the existential reactions? How is stress indispensable to existence?

- To obtain a better response possible to stress, what qualities must man develop?
- How does the requirement of happiness transform life into hell?
- What is an ideology?
- Why does ideology rest on the explanation of the universe?
- What has caused the fall of communism in the Soviet bloc?
- What are the conditions of a great love?
- How can love be found?
- Why is the pleasure of love inscribed in our heredity?
- Difference between love and sexuality
- What happens when a desire is so strong that it becomes a high expectation? What are the risks of spoiling the children?
- How to obtain the good dose of self-confidence which allows you to act in the best of ways?
- Why is the orgasm of love a product of the natural selection?
- Why is the deceived lover the last one to perceive it?
- The origin of a great deal of consuming passions or vices: the game, avarice, jealousy.
- How far is the Buddhists' control of desire healthy?
- What exceptional resources do we have to face the immediate dangers?
- What is the field of active existence?
- In which way is knowledge a liberator? In which way is ignorance a prison?
- How the theory of the struggle for existence is still nothing but a hypothesis.
- What is the negative stress? What is the positive stress? What is anxiety?
- How can selfishness kill love?
- What are the differences between screwing up and making love?
- How love requires a minimum of altruism
- Why has the natural selection given to man selfishness and altruism?
- What is the purpose of dreams? Do we have a guardian angel?
- How an isolated village is a closed field of existence, an existential prison.
- In what is the isolated village alienating itself? In what is the city a liberator? In what does the closed village favour the sclerosis and the city the progress?
- What is humour? What is the purpose of humour?
- What does a game serve for?
- How the subconscious which sometimes governs us is not always bad.
- How can existence transcend death?
- Which must be the role of truth in art?

- Why is it necessary that the student surpasses the teacher?
- Defeat death.
- How to become immortal?
- How does the field of existence cover all the past and all the future.
- Which are the specificities of the feminine sexuality?
- Why do women have the key to paradise?
- Can we infringe a natural law?
- Difference between the biological acquisitions and the cultural acquisitions.
- Which are the five gifts of the woman?
- What cultural acquisitions of the child favour his studies?
- Why is the foreigner attached to his cultural origins?
- Which are the two means of improving his social level? The good? And the bad?
- From where does the tendency to take our desires for reality come? How do you fight it back?
- How three false ideas on sexuality cause havoc. They have a historic origin.
- The real danger of masturbation.
- How to look for their origin to get rid of the embarrassing beliefs.
- How can rape be prevented?
- How do revolutionaries and their heirs struggle so long before applying the new principles integrally.
- Why does the natural selection make of us beings of faith?
- Which is the basis of human existence in Burkina Faso?
- What is animism? How did animism, polytheism link themselves?
- How is the loving orgasm the firework of two successful existences?
- The pleasures revealed by experience and the pleasures still to be discovered.
- How can the cultures understand each other without destroying each other?
- How is the evolution of the material framework of human existence done: of the clan towards the world-state. Why is it that the Burkinabés don't even have the sense of state?
- Is it necessary to renounce the hope of finding paradise on earth?
- In a global economy, do we need a world-state?
- How can man and nature be saved?
- As the Earth is a village, when will it have a mayor?
- How can globalisation be controlled?
- How nature and culture are sometimes conflicting.

- Why must lovers have the same values, but not necessarily the same tastes?
- What is the recipe of the great love?
- How is it necessary to surpass the struggle for power within the couple.
- How dangerous is anger.
- How the soul which is overcome by rationality looks for her compliment: a soul overcome by emotion.
- Are the existential experiences of our life written in the memory of our gametes?
- How does the purgation of our passions allow the fighting against our bad desires of the subconscious.
- From hatred to excess of love, passing through the break-up of love: how does the parents' love condition the character and the existence of the child.
- How a bad divorce can lead a child towards toxic mania.
- How even, with the purgation of the passions, the bad desires of the subconscious are difficult to fight against.
- How men have always known how to find recipes not to be slaves of their desires.
- How love makes us better and stronger.
- How the transition from selfishness to altruism works?
- How is it very difficult to replace the cultural acquisitions of childhood? Which is the principal cause of scholastic failure?
- How it is difficult to correct an apprenticeship which is badly done.
- How does the traditional Burkinabe education generate the scholastic success and the technical progress.
- How the Africans can jump into our era preserving the best of their cultures?
- What is the principal cause of miseries in Africa?
- How we cannot stop evolution: we can only try to take control of it.
- How each personal ideology tries to inscribe itself in a big ideological family.
- How we must give honour to enemy militants who believed to have done well...
- How a vice which has been pulled out of the subconscious is never completely uprooted.
- Theory of the struggle for existence: its good personal use.
- How the children feel responsible only in front of their parents.
- How does other people's gaze affect my existence?
- How the females know how to sense the value of a man without necessarily being able to figure it out.
- Who directs the education of the children?

- How impulsive people go from one extreme to the other.
- How important it is to make oneself useful.
- How selfishness leads us towards death whilst altruism leads us to life.