

My Love Of thee year 2000

A Novel of love and Philosophy

by Georges Réveillac

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 which witnessed the event can still remember it? Yes, it seems so to me because the lightning which accompanied the fusion of our two bodies didn't burn us to cinders, all the more so because we were young and gifted with a vigorous heart. Later on, each of us two will feel hurt by the discomfort of this fusion, many times to such an extent, that we would often curse the moment of initial grace: you understand that it is not easy for two normal people who, so far, moved easily with their own pair of feet perfectly autonomous, 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 for all that.

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

«It is too much, you may tell me. Nowadays we no longer believe such a type of fable. – Well, so much the worse for you! This is my story and I can't help it.»

By waving a wand, two sterile beings had just been turned into a fertile being: whence my conviction that the nearby animals, curious in life, still remember the event. Were we exceptional beings? Each of us is, and the same luck can strike 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 has been offered to us.

Could it be that on approaching the mountain tops one dominates the vast panorama of peaks, hills, valleys revealing without modesty their mysteries, that the chalets at the foot look like huts of dwarfs in a kindergarten, that men, if one distinguishes them, are no better 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 he is about to play on them. In the splendour of the desert, I feel a similar impression: it seems to me that a new world is given all to me, to me alone, still more beautiful than the mountain, because it is free of your opposing presence, my dear fellow.

Hold on, since I have spoken to you of the ants, these tiny beasts many of which are being 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 luckily lacking in consciousness and however triumphant, happy of his 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 doubted 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.

One must climb up a mountain: so much the better since inertia to me is premature death. My muscles must be prevented from atrophying by doing nothing in their sarcophagi of fat. Each has to get down to working and growing more robust through exercise. Are they begging for some oxygen? That's good! I have to throw away my cigarette and spit out the tarry soot fouling my lungs. After this energetic chimney-sweeping, my reward would be to enjoy a cigarette on the top, peacefully sitting and contemplating the immense wild panorama which 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, 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 manifold inexhaustible splendours, telling me: "Look! Life will always open new ways to walk ahead. Let it be a lesson to you son! Lift your ass off the armchair and come see me more often."

Has nature invented beauty?

«Tell me, Mômmanh, are you doing it on purpose, offering us so much beauty? Or is it, quite simply, in your nature? »

The mountain is magic.

On each stage I penetrate another continent.

Below lies the opulent estate of nature, fatty, domesticated which works for us. In the course of its enslavement she has lost most of its innate defence mechanisms as if, from now on she 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 very own?

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

Is consciousness man's very own?

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 does my petty conscience weigh beside it? Practically nothing, in appearance, yet a lot, in reality, as you will not take long to understand.

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

« - How come that someone or something controls me without knowing it? - Because this someone or something is you, silly. - My god! How can all this possible? »

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

The will for existence which I will call Mômmanh, present in the smallest atom of matter, keeps in her memory all the events which affect it on one side, those which do her good, on the other, those which affect her wrongly. When an event recorded in the memory of Mômmanh recurs, she treats it according to the category it belongs to, welcoming with open arms that which has done her good and rejecting the opposite, that which has done her wrong. She has the ability to favour what seems good to her and to reject what seems wrong to her. This of course within the limits of its strength.

Preserved in her memory are only those events which recur; erased therefore are the accidental ones as well as many rather random others.

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

This is how, gradually, Mômmanh has favoured the appearance of life and then the blooming which we know. But how did the handover, from one generation to the other, take place, ever since the origin till 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 probable that all reproductive cells benefit from it. Only those? If such were the case, the cloning would reproduce incomplete individuals, poorly equipped for life.

And this is how Mômmanh invents millions, and billions of ways of existence in the vast universe which is ever slipping away. In spite of everything, among her multiple misfortunes, the most endowed of her creatures were only animals until the appearance of man, some three or four million years ago, a unique species, so different from the others that she can hardly recognize his parents. Ever since he appeared, his existential power has been growing, much like a snowball. It is now an avalanche which threatens to sweep away the whole planet if we don't learn, as soon as possible, to control it.

« Which is that quality which animals do not possess? - It is consciousness. - Ah true? - Yes. Our cousins, the big apes, chimpanzees and the likes of them, have hands thanks to which they can be as skilful as us. What they lack is consciousness. »

Consciousness? ...

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

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

The intelligence of the animal does not reach beyond its field of senses. The memories it has of the past experience are precise enough for it to recognize what it has lived through before when it presents itself, but far too vague to be able to relive it and handle it in thought. A dog may well dream of a string of sausages, as for action, it is a prisoner of the narrow field of its perceptions. Its dream will hardly ever come true. But myself, thanks to my precise memories, I can reconstruct the truth with which I have been in contact. Thus I delve into my memories and bring out enough to build a path which leads me on to the famous sausages..

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 consciousness. He has known for a long time that his death is inescapable whereas the cow is still ignorant of the farmer's intention to slaughter her.

Let us observe, if you want, the persistent progress of Mômmanh towards the significant existential stage of the formation of consciousness.

When she finds herself embodied in a few grains of matter, Mômmanh can only perceive her environment in direct contact with her: this very little and very poorly must be the memory forming in such conditions. She is therefore pure desire and blind force.

When Mômmanh finds herself in control of a living body, she constitutes a genetic memory, richer than the preceding one. Besides, she perceives even more the external elements especially when she is embodied in the animal's body and when she benefits from her mobility, but she finds herself even more limited in the fields which the senses of the animal which she embodies can perceive.

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

Even when the monkeys are endowed with hands, the latter aren't of much use to them, because «they can't see beyond the tip of their noses», because anything out of reach of their senses is beyond them. In what

perspective are they making objects since, practically, all the project is out of reach? You understand this. The same goes for articulated speech. What use would it have been to them, if they had access to it? Contrarily, what use would consciousness have been to man, if man had neither hands nor elaborate language in order to act alone or collectively on reality? Bound and gagged, he would have assisted to the spectacle of the world. With the same impotency, he would have observed the furious enemy soldiers come and the beauties he couldn't love. Consciousness would have only embittered his fears and desires until his death.

It is therefore probable that, as soon as consciousness appeared, man set out to perfect his hands and language which became his indispensable compliments.

With man thus endowed, Mômmanh has finally found a way to establish the kingdom of existence over the universe. In any case, she cannot help confiding in us, as long as we do not betray her.

Ah yes! Thanks to this gift of consciousness, here we are promoted big chiefs in the struggle for existence.

However, Mômmanh keeps almost all the secrets of her blind consciousness, and here is what our clear consciousness lacks most: during those billions of years when she advanced in the dark, like a mole, groping her way and following the instructions of her memory alone, each time a contact with the environment roused the latter, she worked wonders the least of which is beyond our understanding. She procured us the consciousness which she had previously been missing cruelly so much,

maybe, but we are often 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 the stage 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 will not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and of evil, because the day you will eat of it, you will 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 interrupt its acrobatics to hear to the meditation of the old trees, the gentle darling gives 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 in it, I was ready to share it with My Love, the little she presented herself.

I would be ashamed if I tried to deprive the others, my fellow creatures of 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 «ILS» the great Satan responsible for all our miseries, you know what «ILS» has 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, she 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, she widens my otherwise narrow horizons: she 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, » «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 mother 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 its 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 look out 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?... The 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 as long as it will be bearable.

«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! You are saying?... – Have you asked for the permission of the holy virgin? – Evidently no! And so? 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 look for which no grammar need be studied and which even dogs understand; by inscribing the sea in the eyes of the beloved, the consciousness of Mômmanh doubtlessly wants to remind us that the woman is the source of life, just like the primal ocean. Be it as it may, I will not go to call my love Ocean, because, in my French roots, I want to keep those which are healthy.

She will be called Jeanne, in the memory of Joan of Arc and also of Jeanne Hachette. Let us forget Joan the Mad, do you want to? 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 day, she who heard voices from Heavens ordering her to take the command of the armies to drive the English, would have obviously been 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 in a 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 stopped there.

Alas, in those days, one believed that carnal love was filthy. Consequently, the less one fornicated, the purer soul one had. What wicked words! What 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? Has the Islamic faith placed beautiful girls in its heavens? Doesn't it make a formidable rival to Christianity?

This, however, is another story.

« -Excuse me? What are you saying? – It is high time I begin to relate my love story! – But ultimately, I am the author! I write what I like... – Eh? What? I hear you very badly. You read only what is interesting to you? – That is a good one, that. 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. I would have nothing to relate if one of the conditions was lacking. Since destiny decided otherwise, you are going, if you 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. Ah 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. Fortunately, I do not know how to list all the instruments, but I am sure that there was a trumpet.

I who regret that I am unable to appreciate the great music drank 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. »

<p>How do you help nature? How do you delay aging? How do you keep in good shape and in good health?</p>
--

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 come back into my delivery van, on the day Jeanne entered my life.

To begin with, I had to show to the Apparition what a good driver I was and since I was lacking in self-confidence, it was a beautiful fiasco. Now, I would know better; I would tell myself, in the first place: « So much the word if she runs away from you, there are millions of others. » and I would add: «You have to try your luck, lazybones! After all, she is only human like you. She is not asking for the moon; Simply drive as you know how to do, avoiding unnecessary fears, and hope will take shape. » Luckily, I had not yet acquired that half-wisdom, because my story would have stopped there. It is exactly the lack of confidence and my clumsiness which managed to render me seducing in the eyes of the beautiful one. Ah 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 skimmed catastrophe and some mischievous crates had even split on my beauty, the new queen of edelweiss travelling under such an appalling escort. I believed to have foolishly ruined my slender chances when the old hag showered her compliments:

«- 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, except on rare occasions when I shall not pay much attention to her anyway.

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

«- It is nothing, George. 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 Viewvy-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. Viewvy-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 chord; 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 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 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 spot the blazing panther in its smooth black velvet dress, invulnerable: her majesty stretches her languorous muscles otherwise full of energy and 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 bluish lightning striking in the middle of the dumbfounded heaving chest definitely caught hold of in the last moment. 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 rather discrete 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 expedencies, of which Mômmanh has endowed women with to attract men? Or is it just another trick deliberately used by the majority of women?

In any case, and contrary to what one would make 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 misadventure: my look lured by the vision of a «nice bottom», I was eager for its owner to show her angel face but, when at last she turned round, it was a rat’s face which appeared, dressed in dead skin, with vicious empty eyes.

There you are. This portrait seemed enough so that you would recognize Jeanne, yours, the day she would come into your visual field, which will not fail to happen irrespective of the place of this planet which welcomes your presence.

Joan 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 most 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 can become human.

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 the neighbours interests them much more.

- To create works of art to nurture their souls?

- Think therefore. They prefer to contemplate their portrait taken in front of the pyramids of Egypt.

- Then what?

- You will never find out. Master. I am going to tell it to you... There you are: they dream of inserting their sexual appendix in the receptacle of a female and to eject their semen in it. But, hold on well! 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 different others, as often as possible, so long as the reproduction of semen allows him. Most of the time, the females are willing: in their own way they also seek that sort of coupling. However it happens that one or several males force a female to receive their seed. That is called «rape». To my knowledge, the females do not commit rape.

And now, dear Master, do you know that they call that sterile pastime? Oh! Do not look for anything. You will never find out. They call that «making love»!...

Wait, Master. There is worse. Those who refuse to waste their time in those games for the mentally sick, 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: those humans have nothing to give us. Besides, their madness is often devastating: see in what state 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 the meat. I can assure you that it is excellent: a true treat for us. My mission is accomplished. I am asking your permission to return, Master.

- Rapid Exploraclone, pursue your enquiry. Men 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 Exploraclone. 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 Walluillah.)