

My Love Of thee year 2000

A Novel of love and Philosophy

by Georges Réveillac

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

My Love Of thee year 2000

A Novel of love and Philosophy

by Georges Réveillac

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 first of all requires that the two lovers have values in common, to start with a common ideological stem.

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.

Therefore, we suppose that our two lovers have a common ideological base large enough, a big basket of shared moral values.

The ideology is not all. There are other values which evade morality. They are, besides

ideology, the things which count a lot in the existence of the individual, love for example, or football. And what else do I know ?...

It is good that lovers share also the values which are extraneous to morality. Otherwise, how can she accept it that he spends half of his time hunting and fishing ?

Therefore, some common, moral values besides others.

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.

To simplify, I use the same word to denote two slightly different things: the tastes and the preferences. To love the detective novels, the apricot jam or the English national anthem, that takes taste. Liking to command, do the crockery, and drive the car that requires preference. Ah well, all that I love, I say that they are to my taste.

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.

Oh ! 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 that: values and existential common methods.

Sexes, tastes and complementary aptitudes.

This is the basic formula of the great love.

The sharing of roles arises from the last two categories. And it is there 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 of which her dear father had endured, the man allowed himself easily to be demolished by all sorts of vices such as alcoholism, sexual perversions, gambling...

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 the bus... and order about. They are numerous to want to take the place of the male heads of the family which they have dethroned.

And all that. To him only that revolutionary momentum will lead to replace.

There is also the inevitable mistrust against the old “masters” the 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»

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 « sulked ». 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 deep 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 smoothen down, the head stretched out on the ground, his look attentive and imploring facing his master, waving his tail and emitting low groaning. When his lord orders him: « Hector ! On foot ! », he obeys immediately with joy. Ah well, to take only one example, giving up the last word and admitting that one is wrong, even against evidence that means: « you see, I am facing the ground and I see only with your eyes. Your judgement is mine, o lord! »

Because Mômmanh wrote down only the good 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 conscience. 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.

Ah 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 acquisitions 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 carry us adrift
to that leeway. What in your life carries a big
existential value looses the genetic code of our
reproductive cells. Like this all the life which
is worthwhile will leave two tiny messages in the
ocean of existence: one in history, - cultural
memory, the other in the genetic code, natural
memory.

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 !...

How does the purgation of our passions allow the fighting against our bad desires of the subconscious.

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 so? 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 so?... 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 spoilt 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 spoilt 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. I 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... If you 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.
--

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. I 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 renders us better and stronger.
--

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 renders us stronger.

In the dark forest which stretches since the origins, 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, Georges. 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 no. 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, good blood ! - 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 does the transition from selfishness to altruism function?

Have you calculated the measure of selfishness? Ah well, n : 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 precision and so much the worst if I have already done it. The track which leads from « myself-here-now » to « others-elsewhere-in time », that way 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 is an altruistic movement 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? If you 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 conscience 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.
- What ? 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 buy land, be it with the hope of finding a bigger farm to « make yourself worth » and buy the necessary equipment. My father loved to repeat : « Penny by penny, one accumulates a whole bagful. » (Little by little, one accumulates a treasure). There existed another saying as regards money: « You have to put aside something for a rainy day.» In fact, the peasants of the past were not protected by any

form of assurance, not even by the pension neither by Social Security. The consequence of all that were the relationship of peasants and money which had been instilled in my soul as a child.

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.

Ah 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.

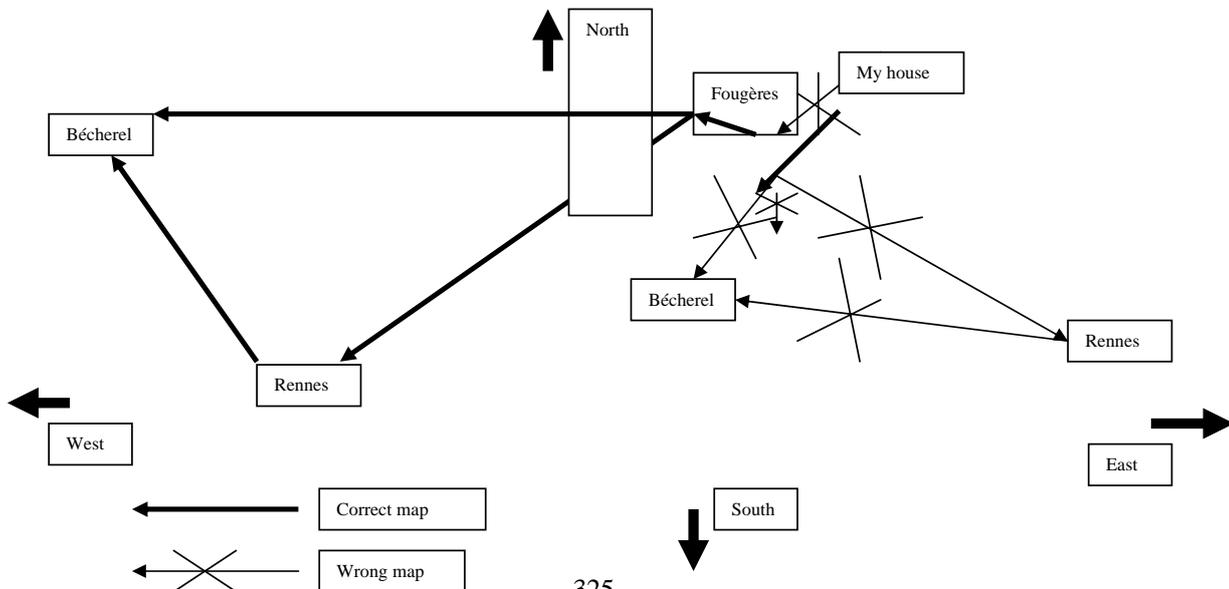
So, why expect the school to lead all the students to the summit ? How can they assume such an objective before having understood how the family culture acts on the studies ?

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.

A single personal example to show you the importance of the cultural basis acquired in childhood. Thirty 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 Rennes 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 Fougères 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 of Fougères which I imagine oriented towards the south while it heads towards the west.

I have tried to correct that error for fifteen years; inscribe in my memory the right orientation till the journey which leads to the Breton capital. There was nothing I could do about it: the wrong diagram did not want to be wiped out.

Like this, the other day, to buy some science fiction books, I went to Bécherel. There are down there about twenty second-hand book dealers : and I was sure to find my luck. Knowing that Bécherel is situated in the north-west of Rennes, I thought I was very close, at about 35 kilometres. 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. Fortunately enough, on the way, I let myself be guided by the indicating signs and the road map,

so I arrived at the right destination just the same.

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.

Therefore, if the education received in the family nucleus 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.

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 circumstances of life have led him to develop his intelligence besides the sources of other than his parents ? 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><i>How does the traditional Burkinabe education generate the scholastic success and the technical progress.</i></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. Since the barrier against science is maintained from generation to generation, why is it that the inability of Africa to develop itself does not stretch for some centuries ? It took our French ancestors a thousand years to find again the scientific level of the Greco-Roman civilisations.

Nothing surprising if at the secondary school the level and the motivation for the studies were so low both of them.

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.

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 was still left to be done : finding some families sufficiently altruistic to entrust the education of their babies to strangers and put up with the idea that their own children, having leapt in another universe, became strangers to them.

What is the principal cause of miseries in Africa ?

Finally, you know why our beautiful enthusiasm at the beginning had dissolved. We had arrived young and innocent, believing that we were going to transform Africa in the twentieth century, with a touch of our magic wand. Having become aware of blockage against sciences which perpetuated in 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 gains ground, accompanied by terrifying wars, genocides, famine... The unhappy Africans find themselves projected in an existential planetarian space with advanced scientific knowledge and to manage that modern existence, they cannot free themselves from the animist thought, so far away from the modern thought.

I will take only one example : see how they proceed to anticipate Aids.

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 !...

Ah 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.

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 conscience ; 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.

<p>How we must give honour to enemy militants who believed to have done well.</p>

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 Folamour, 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.

« Folamour P.D.

-Down with Folamour !

-Folamour are you mad ? »...

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 supermarkets, in all the public places, it often happened to me to hear the gibes : « Folamour, are you mad ? »...

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.

Theory of the struggle for existence : of its good personal use.

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 questioning on the eventuality laws regulating history, but I could not use in my course that unknown theory. Besides, according to scientific criteria, it could be false : I was convinced of it.

No, I used my discovery otherwise. I said to myself that nothing compelled me to control whatever it can be, that it was enough to do my best with the help of others, that I had more resources than I believed to succeed.

You know the importance of moral code. When my Mômmanh is convinced that all the resources of my being are capable of good success, she mobilises all the resources of my being. And that works ! And that starts with the daily training, of the body as well as the intellect.

No more demanding to control everything all alone, mobilise my energy to do something. No more demanding, but wanting.

In practise, I concluded that certain formulas succeeded well, doubtlessly because they are concrete and suitable to my case. Here they are : « You must not show off. « Leave that to others. Pull out your existence to your finger tips. ».

The biggest of that stress having been disposed of, it became easier to control the monster. In fact, I managed quite easily when keeping in mind its habitual pugnacity.

My history lessons were becoming very quick as it should always have been : clear and lively, on condition that there would not be 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 « chase the dahu » 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 « chase the dahut » 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 « chase the dahu » bordered on a nightmare.

I owe you some explanations. In holiday colonies of my youth, the « chase the dahu » 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.

At the new school, that which 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 hunt for dahu ? – Behold !... Behold. 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 l'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 by Jove ! What a magnificent dahu has arrived here ! »

To start with, one observes him. The rumour continues to circulate. It increases. The 5th 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 sing song by heart. Who is your history professor ?

- Réveillac. He is completely useless.

- Monsieur Réveillac, if you please !

- Monsieur Réveillac. We do not understand anything he says. And then, he is always breathing down my neck.

- Monsieur Réveillac ! Yes, yes, I know... The professors, they are exactly like your parents : one does not chose them. But that is no reason for your lack of respect for him. Your detention is approved and you will not forget to show me the work 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. It is necessary that he backs his professors, otherwise it will be a complete brothel ! In any case, he cannot fire Réveillac, that is sure, but he can take the necessary precautions, young fellow !... It is all good !...

The 5th P sends 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 : « Ravailac. Ravailac Useless. Ravailac PD... » The « hunt for the dahu » 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 5th P 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 « hunt for the dahut ».

In the other classes, the process which I described had a spontaneous character and unfolded itself in confusion. The agitators of the 5th P, 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 « hunt for the dahu » 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 5th, another year, a student delegate of the class enticed his assault tank and asked him.

« - So ? And Ravailac ?

- 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, Réveillac 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 « hunt for the dahu ».

How does other people's look 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 Folding » 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 Georges : I had at last become a « Mister », « Mister Réveillac ». 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 : « Mister Réveillac, 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 « hunt for the dahu ».

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 5th O. 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 : « Réveillac, nice ».

Oh by Jove !... What a lot of good that did to me !...

In the meeting of the 5th O, I did not hear any reproaches.

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 ?

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 the rash pass from one extreme to the other.
--

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 « chase for the dahu » 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, if you 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.

« - Georges, 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.

- For nothing. »

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 Georges Réveillac 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 is the important to render itself useful.

« - Mômmanh, if you please, tell me... I am not indispensable I agree, I have understood that well and I do not dread any longer death. But perhaps I can be useful. No? - Quite sure that you can be useful. And now, you sort out yourself. I gave you the lucid intelligence. You will quite well succeed to do something, Good Blood ! »

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 away ! 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.

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.