

Part three.

BURIAL (II)
or the Key to Yin and Yang

17. The deceased (still not deceased. . .)

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17.1. The incident - or the body and the mind

Note 98 □(September 22) The latest notes for the Burial (apart from a few footnotes page) is dated May 24 - that's four months ago. The two weeks that followed, until June 10, were mainly spent re-reading and completing or reworking the notes already written, not to mention a visit of a day or two from Zoghman Mebkhout, who came to read all the notes for L'Enterrement before I entrusted it to the typesetter, and to give me his comments. I was confident that the final manuscript would be ready by early June, and that it would be typeset and printed (that was optimistic, after all. . .) before the university vacations. I really wanted to send my "five-hundred-page letter" to everyone before the vacation rush!

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In fact, the text of L'Enterrement is still unfinished as I write: as it was four months ago, it still lacks the final two or three notes - plus a¹ that has been added in the meantime: the one I've just started with the lines I'm writing, as a quick account of what's happened in the meantime. On June 10, a new contingency burst upon the writing of Récoltes et Semailles, which is rich in unforeseen events: i got sick! A stitch in my side, which appeared suddenly (when the minute before I'd suspected nothing), pushed me onto my bed with a peremptory force, without reply. Standing or even sitting up suddenly became very painful for me, only lying down seemed to suit me. It was really silly, especially at a time when I was just about to finish an urgent job, and I didn't want to talk about it anymore! Typing while lying down was out of the question, and even handwriting in this position is no picnic...

¹(September 23) In fact, it appears that this planned "note" was split into three separate notes (n°s 99-101)

It took me almost two more weeks, during which I tried as best I could to carry on with my work against all odds, to realize the obvious: my body was exhausted and insisting, without me even pretending to hear, on complete rest.

I'd had such a hard time hearing it, because my mind had remained fresh and alert, wriggling to keep up its momentum, as if it had an autonomous life, totally separate from that of the body. It was even so fresh and wriggly that it had the greatest difficulty in taking into account the body's need for sleep, constantly refusing, to the point of exhaustion, the deadline for sleep, that impediment to going round in circles!

Throughout my life, and up until three or four years ago, the unlimited capacity to recuperate through deep, prolonged sleep had been the solid, salutary counterpart to sometimes inordinate investments of energy: when sleep is secure, you can no longer fear anything, and you can afford (without it being madness) to throw yourself headlong and to the point of exhaustion into orgies of work - even if it means making up for it with orgies of restorative sleep! This ability, which all my life had seemed as much a matter of course as the ability to work, the ability to discover (and surely the two are intimately linked. . .), has in recent years ended up being eliminated, and sometimes even disappearing, for reasons that I can't quite discern at present, and that I haven't really made the effort to fathom yet. More and more, when, after a long day spent at my typewriter (or on handwritten notes) and obeying the injunctions of my body, which refuses to go on, I resolve to go to bed, the reclining position (and the partial relief it provides from the tension of sitting) immediately revives my thoughts. The thinking starts all over again, for hours or even the whole night (or rather, what's left of it. . .). I realize that the system is unprofitable (assuming it's **sustainable** in the long run), given that (for me at least) prolonged reflection without the support of writing ends up going round in circles, often becoming a kind of rehashing - the bad bent is well taken, and tends to get worse. It had become, it seems to me, the great focus of energy dispersal in my life in recent years, while other dispersal mechanisms have been eliminated one by one, gradually, over the years.

If this mechanism has taken root in my life with such tenacity, if I've been willing to pay such a price for the last few years, it's surely because something in me has found its reward, and would find its reward when the time came. It would be no luxury for me to examine the situation closely - more than once in the past four months I've been on the verge of doing so.

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□ This was undoubtedly an urgent task. Eventually, however, I realized that there was something even more urgent. He

The first thing I had to do was to deal with the most pressing problem: to re-establish contact with my body, to help it recover from the state of exhaustion I had come to feel and admit, and to regain the vigour it had lost. I realized that to do this, I'd have to give up all intellectual activity for an indefinite period - even meditating on the meaning of what was happening to me. Today's notes bring to an end this long and salutary "parenthesis" in my major investments, which for a time (since February of this year) had come together in the writing of "**Récoltes et Semailles**". The present note is a first reflection, or at least a kind of summary report, on this four-month "parenthesis".

By the time I understood, at the end of the ends, the need for complete rest, great fatigue had become profound exhaustion. Having failed to listen to the peremptory language of my body, the derisory few pages of comments and retouching in *l'Enterrement*, snatched from a state of physical exhaustion in those first two weeks, were done at the cost of an outlay of energy which, with hindsight, seems to me demented! In any case, after these feats, I had to lie in bed for weeks on end, getting up only a few hours a day for the indispensable practical tasks.

Remarkably, once I finally **understood** the need for complete rest, I didn't experience the slightest

I found it difficult to give up intellectual activity altogether, without any desire to "cheat". I didn't even have to make a decision per se - just by understanding, I'd already quit. The tasks that only the day before had kept me on my toes suddenly seemed very distant, as if they belonged to a very distant past... .

The present, however, was not empty. While for weeks and months sleep remained reluctant to come, and I lay for long hours, seemingly in total inactivity, I don't remember a single time when I found time long. I was reacquainting myself with my body, and also with my most immediate surroundings - my bedroom, or sometimes the patch of grass or dry grass bathed in sunlight right before my eyes, wherever I happened to lie down, near the house or during a short (and cautious. . .) walk. I'd spend long moments following the dance of a fly

in a ray of sunlight, or the peregrinations of an ant or tiny green translucent bugs

or pink along endless strands of ^{her}□^{be}, in inextricable forests of such strands tangling beneath

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my eyes. These are also the moments when, in silence and in a state of great fatigue, we follow with solicitude the hesitant wanderings of the slightest wind through our guts - the moments when we get back in touch with the elementary and essential things; the moments when we can fully appreciate all the benefits of a restful sleep, and even the marvel of simply pissing without any problem! The humble workings of the body are an extraordinary marvel, and we only become aware of them (sometimes reluctantly) when they are disturbed in one way or another.

It was quite clear that, "technically", the root of my "health problem" was sleep disturbance. The deeper reasons for this disruption eluded me and still do. By trial and error, I tried first and foremost to get back to sleep, the good old sleep I'd known, which mysteriously slipped away just when I needed it most! I've only recently found it again. Needless to say, the idea of relying on pills would never have occurred to me, and if I tried herbal teas or orange blossom water (which I was introduced to on this occasion), I knew deep down that they were expé- dients. More seriously, I took the opportunity to make some major changes to my diet: a reduction in starchy foods in favor of green vegetables and fruit (both raw and cooked), a (moderate) reintroduction of meat as a regular ingredient in my diet, and above all, a drastic reduction in the consumption of fats and sugars, where I (and many others in affluent countries) had been systematically unbalanced since at least the end of the war. My son-in-law Ahmed, who practises Chinese medicine and has a very good "feeling" for these things, helped me a great deal in realizing the importance of such a change of diet in restoring a disturbed life balance. He was also the one who insisted, without tiring, on the importance of significant bodily activity, on the order of a few hours a day, to keep up with intense intellectual activity. Intellectual activity otherwise tends to exhaust the body, drawing available vital energy towards the head and creating a strong yang imbalance.

Ahmed didn't content himself with lavishing me with good advice, accompanied by a yin-yang dialectic to which I'm quite sensitive, in the four or five years I've had ample opportunity to familiarize myself.

with this delicate dynamic of things. As soon as I was well enough to garden, □and seeing myself

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Ahmed took it upon himself to get the shabby mini-garden up and running again, by clearing new strips of land, bringing in soil, transplanting and sowing, building terraces and retaining walls, rearranging the compost heap and so on. As the days and weeks went by, I saw unfolding before me, under the impetus of my indefatigable friend, landscaping tasks sufficient to keep me busy for years, if not for the rest of my life.

for the rest of my life!

That's exactly what I needed, and what I'll need in the long term to counterbalance my over-enthusiastic intellectual activity. In this respect, the daily walks I could take myself, as suggested to me a long time ago, wouldn't be much help: my head continues to grind during the walks as it does in bed, undisturbed by the beauties of the landscape, which I cross without seeing much of anything! On the other hand, when I'm watering the garden - I'm responsible for making sure it's doing well - and even better, when I'm hoeing a bed of vegetables, I can't help but pay attention and get into it a little - to see the texture of the soil, how it's affected by the hoeing, by the vegetable plants and by the "weeds" that grow in it, by the compost and by the mulch.

- and also, as time goes by, become aware of the state of the plants I'm supposed to be caring for, a state which reflects to a large extent the greater or lesser attention I've been able to give them. This gardening activity, and all that revolves around it, responds to two strong aspirations or dispositions within me: the one that pushes me towards an action where I see **something coming out of my hands** on a daily basis (which is by no means the case for walking, and even less so for the weights suggested to me by a colleague and friend. . .); and the one that also pushes me towards an action where I see something coming out of my hands on a daily basis (which is by no means the case for walking, and even less so for the weights suggested to me by a colleague and friend. . .).); and the one that pushes me towards an action where, at every moment, I have the opportunity to **learn from** contact with things. It would seem that I'm best disposed to learn in situations where I'm actually "doing" something - "something" that takes shape and transforms itself under my hands... .

p. 426 Once I'd got over the state of exhaustion itself, my convalescence was, it seems to me, aided by two types of activity, or rather, two types of important and beneficial factors in my day-to-day activities, both at home and in the garden. On the one hand, there was **physical effort**.

that I often felt tired and listless before setting to work - the "harder" the job, involving me wielding a heavy pickaxe or large stones, let's say, the fitter, heavier I felt afterwards a good dose of fatigue. And then there was the contact with **living things**: the plants that had to be cared for; the soil that had to be prepared for them, then mulched or hoeed; the food that had to be prepared and that I ate with as much pleasure as I had had in preparing the meal; the cat demanding its pittance, and its share of affection; the various utensils and tools too, and right down to the rough and often badly licked stones that had to be turned and turned in all directions, in order to assemble them into low walls that would stand upright. . .

Physical effort and contact with living things - these are precisely the two aspects that are lacking in intellectual work, and which mean that such work is by nature incomplete, piecemeal, and ultimately, if not supplemented and compensated for by something else, dangerous or even harmful. This is the third time in just over three years that I've had the opportunity to realize this. It's even become quite clear now that I'm facing a drastic deadline: to change a certain lifestyle, to find a balance where the yin pole of my being, my body, is not constantly neglected in favour of the yang pole, the mind or (to put it better) the head - or else lose my skin in the very next few years. That's what my body has been telling me, as clearly as it can be told! I've now reached a point in my life where the need for a certain elementary "wisdom" has become a matter of **survival**, in the literal sense of the word. This is surely a good thing - otherwise "wisdom" would be perpetually postponed, in favor of the kind of bulimic intellectual activity that has been one of the dominant forces in my entire adult life.

Faced with such a clear deadline: "change or die! - I didn't have to probe myself to find out what my choice was. That's why, for almost four months, I was able to abstain from all intellectual activity, maths or no maths, without ever feeling like I was doing myself any violence. I knew, without having to tell myself

In other words, a living gardener is even better than a dead mathematician (or a dead "philosopher" or "writer", for that matter!). With a little malice, we could add: even better than a living mathematician! (But that's another story...)

I don't think I'll ever find myself in such a "borderline" situation, where I'll have to give up all intellectual activity, whether mathematical or meditative, in the long term. Rather, the task practice □ the most immediate, the most urgent in the years to come, seems to me to be precisely that of achieving

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a balanced life in which the two types of activity coexist on a daily basis, that of the body and that of the mind, without either becoming all-consuming and crowding out the other. I make no secret of the fact that my most powerful investments since childhood have been in the "spirit", and that the two main passions which have continued to dominate my life in recent years still lead me in this direction today. Of these two passions, the passion for mathematics and the passion for meditation, it seems to me that it is the first named above all, if not exclusively, that acts as a factor of imbalance in my life - as something that still has an unfortunate tendency to "devour" everything else for its own sake. It's no coincidence, surely, that the three "episodes of illness" in my life that have marked a situation of imbalance, since June 1981, have occurred precisely at times when it's the mathematical passion that has taken centre stage.

It could be said that this is not quite the case for this latest episode, which occurred during the writing of *Récoltes et Semailles*, a period of self-reflection, not to say meditation. But it's also true that this reflection on my mathematical past was constantly fuelled by my mathematical passion. This was particularly the case in the second part, *l'Enterrement*, where the egotic component of this passion was particularly strong and constant. Yet, even in retrospect, I don't feel that at any point this reflection took on an all-consuming, even demented, rhythm and pitch, as on the two previous occasions when my body was finally forced to let out an unanswered "ras le bol! Seen separately from the context of an entire life, my intellectual activity over the last year and a half (since "resuming" with the writing of *La Poursuite des Champs*, followed by *Récoltes et Semailles*) appears to have continued at a most reasonable pace, without forgetting to eat or drink (but sometimes, just a tad, to sleep. . .). If it finally led to a third "health episode" (to use a euphemism), it was undoubtedly the result of a whole life marked by the eternal imbalance of a head that is too strong, imposing its rhythm and its law on a robust body that has long endured without flinching² (*).

□ In the past two months, I've had ample opportunity to realize the irreplaceable benefit of bodywork, in intimate contact with humble living things, speaking to me in silence about the simple, essential things that books or reflection alone are powerless to teach. Thanks to this work, I found sleep again, that even more precious companion than eating and drinking - and with it, a renewed vigor, a robustness that had suddenly seemed to have vanished. And I've come to realize that, in my season of life, if I want to continue this new mathematical adventure I've been on since last year for a few more years, I can't do it without endangering my health and my life, except with my two feet firmly planted in the soil of my garden.

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The coming months will be those in which a new way of life will have to be put in place, in which the work of the body and that of the mind find their place and are reconciled on a daily basis. There's plenty to do!

²(*) I should make an exception here for the five years from 1974 to 1978, which were not dominated by any major task, and where manual occupations absorbed a not inconsiderable proportion of my time and energy.

17.2. The trap - or ease and exhaustion

Note 99 (September 23) Last night, I had to cut myself short, lest I keep going until two or three o'clock in the morning and get caught up in a spiral I know only too well. I was feeling refreshed, and if I'd followed my natural inclination, I'd have gone on into the wee hours! The trap of intellectual work - at least that which you pursue with passion, in a subject where you end up feeling like a fish in water, following a long familiarity - is that it's so incredibly **easy**. You just pull and pull, and it always comes, you just have to pull; it's only sometimes that you have the feeling of an effort, of friction, a sign that it's resisting just a little. . .

I remember, however, from my early years as a mathematician, a persistent feeling of heaviness that had to be overcome by stubborn effort, leaving a feeling of fatigue in its wake. This corresponded above all to a period in my life when I was working with insufficient or even inadequate tools; or to a later period, when I had to acquire tools more or less painstakingly, under the pressure of a milieu (essentially, that of the Bourbaki group) that used them routinely, without their *raison d'être* becoming apparent to me as I went along, or even sometimes for years. I've already had occasion to talk about these sometimes rather painful years (see "L'étranger bienvenu" s.9, and

"cent fers dans le feu, ou: rien ne sert de sécher!", note n° 10), in the first part of *Récoltes et Semailles*. It was mainly the period from 1945 to 1955, which coincides with my period of functional analysis. (He

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It seems to me that in the students I had later, between 1960 and 1970, this resistance to learning without sufficient motivation, where notions and techniques are swallowed up on the faith of the authority of elders, was much less strong than it was in me - to tell the truth, I didn't perceive any at all).

To return to my subject, it was from 1955 onwards that I often had the impression of "flying" - of doing maths by playing with myself, without any feeling of effort - just like some of my elders whom I had once envied so much for such almost miraculous ease, which had seemed well beyond the reach of my modest, ponderous self! Today, it seems to me that such "facility" is not the privilege of some exceptional gift (as I've encountered in others, at a time when such a "gift" seemed entirely absent in me), but that it appears of its own accord as the fruit of the union of a passionate interest in a given subject (like mathematics, say), and a more or less long-standing familiarity with it. If "gift" does indeed play a part in the emergence of such ease, it is undoubtedly through the factor of time, more or less long from one person to the next (and sometimes from one occasion to the next in the same person, it's true....), to arrive at a perfect ease in working on this or that subject³ (*).

Still, the more things go - as the years go by - the more I get this impression of "ease" when I do maths - that things are just waiting to reveal themselves to us, if only we take the trouble to look, to scrutinize them just a little. It's not a question of technical virtuosity - it's quite clear that from this point of view, I'm in much worse shape than I was in 1970, when I "quit maths": since then, I've had the opportunity above all to unlearn what I'd learned, "doing maths" only sporadically, in my own corner, and in a spirit and on themes quite different (at first sight at least) from those of yesteryear. Nor do I mean that it would be enough for me to get to grips with some famous problem (Fermat's, Riemann's or Poincaré's, let's say), to make my way in a straight line to its solution, in a year or two.

³(*) Yet I know several mathematicians, each of whom has produced a profound body of work, who have never seemed to give me the impression of ease, of "facility" referred to here - they seem to grapple with an omnipresent heaviness, which they have to overcome with effort, at every step. For one reason or another, the "natural fruit" just mentioned didn't "appear of its own accord" in these eminent men, as it was supposed to. Which goes to show that not all unions bear the fruit one might expect...

even⁴ □trois! The ease I'm talking about is not the ease that sets out and achieves such and such a **goal**, fixed in advance :

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proving such and such a conjecture or giving it a counterexample... . Rather, it is that which allows us to dart into the unknown, in such and such a direction that an obscure instinct tells us is fruitful, with the intimate assurance, never to be denied, that every day and every hour of our journey cannot fail to bring us...

its harvest of new knowledge. Exactly **what** knowledge the next day, or even the next hour on this very day, holds in store for us, we certainly sense - and it's this "presentiment", constantly caught short, and the suspense with which it's bound up, that constantly launches us forward, while the very things we're investigating seem to draw us into themselves. What becomes known always surpasses what was foretold, in precision, flavor and richness - and what is known in turn immediately becomes the starting point and material for a renewed foreknowledge, dashing forward in pursuit of a new unknown eager to be known. In this game of discovering things, the **direction** we're taking at any given moment is known to us, while the **goal is** forgotten - assuming we started out with a goal, in fact, that we set out to achieve. This "goal" was in fact a **starting point**, the product of an ambition, or of ignorance; it played its part in motivating "the boss", setting an initial direction, and triggering this game, in which the goal has no real part. As long as the journey undertaken does not last a day or two, but is a long one, what it will reveal to us as the days and months go by, and where it will lead us at the end of a long cascade of unknown adventures, is for the traveller a total mystery; a mystery so remote, so out of reach in fact, that he hardly cares! If he happens to scan the horizon, it's not for the impossible task of predicting a point of arrival, and even less to decide on one as he sees fit, but to take stock of where he is at the moment, and from among the directions open to him for continuing his journey, choose the one he feels from then on to be the most burning. ...

Such is the "incredible facility" I mentioned earlier, in connection with the work of discovery in a wholly intellectual direction, such as mathematics. It is not **held back** by inner **resistance**⁵ (*)

(as is so often the case in meditation work such □as I practice it), nor by **physical effort** to

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The result is fatigue, which eventually gives an unequivocal signal to stop. As for **intel- lectual** effort (assuming we can even speak of "effort", having reached a point where the only "resistance" left is the time factor... .), it doesn't seem to generate either intellectual or physical fatigue. More precisely, if there is any physical "fatigue", it is not really felt as such, apart from occasional aches and pains caused by sitting too long in a fixed position, and other similar incidental problems. These are easily eliminated by a simple change of position. Lying down has the unfortunate virtue of making them fade away, and thus encouraging a revival of intellectual work, instead of much-needed sleep!

I've come to realize, however, that there's a physical "fatigue" that's more subtle and insidious than muscular or nervous fatigue, which manifests itself as such in an unmistakable need for rest and sleep. The term "exhaustion" here (rather than "fatigued") would be more accurate, although it's understood that this state is not perceived as such, in the common sense of the term, which designates extreme fatigue, manifesting itself as

⁴(*) Yet I know several mathematicians, each of whom has produced a profound work, who have never given me the impression of ease, of "facility" referred to here - they seem to grapple with an omnipresent heaviness, which they have to overcome with effort, at every step. For one reason or another, the "natural fruit" just mentioned didn't "appear of its own accord" in these eminent men, as it was supposed to. Which goes to show that not all unions bear the fruit one might expect... .

⁵(*) Yet I know a remarkably gifted mathematician whose relationship to mathematics is typically conflictual, hampered at every step by powerful resistances, such as the fear that a certain expectation (in the form of a conjecture, say) might turn out to be false. Such resistance can sometimes lead to a state of genuine intellectual paralysis. Compare this with the previous footnote.

in particular by the great effort required just to stand up, walk a few steps, etc. It's more a question of "exhaustion" of the body's energy for the benefit of the brain, manifested by a gradual lowering of the body's general "tonus", its vital energy level. It seems that this exhaustion by excessive intellectual activity (by which I mean: not compensated by sufficient bodily activity, generating physical fatigue and the need for rest) - this exhaustion is gradual and **cumulative**. These effects depend on both the **intensity** and **duration** of intellectual activity over a given period. At the level of intensity at which I pursue intellectual work, and with my age and constitution, it would seem that the cumulative exhaustion in question reaches a critical, dangerous threshold in my case, after a year or two of uninterrupted activity, without compensation through regular bodily activity.

In a way, the "ease" I'm talking about is only apparent. Clearly, intense intellectual activity involves considerable energy: energy is taken from somewhere and "spent" on work. It would seem that the "somewhere" is in the body, which "takes in" (or rather, **disburses**) as best it can the (sometimes dizzying) expenses that the head spends without counting the cost. The normal route to recovery

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of the energy supplied by the body, is sleep. It's when the head becomes bulimic that it ends up encroaching on sleep, which amounts to eating up energy capital without renewing it. The trap and the danger

of the "ease" of intellectual work, is that it relentlessly encourages us to cross this threshold, or to remain beyond it once crossed, and that moreover this crossing is not signalled to our attention by the usual, unmistakable signs of fatigue, or even exhaustion. It takes great vigilance, I realize, to detect the approach and crossing of the threshold in question, when we're fully engaged in the pursuit of an exciting adventure. To perceive this emptiness of energy at the level of the body requires a state of listening to the body, which I have often lacked and which few people have. Indeed, I doubt that such a state of communion of conscious attention with the body could flourish in anyone at a time of life dominated by purely intellectual activity, to the exclusion of all physical activity.

Many intellectual workers instinctively feel the need for such physical activity, and arrange their lives accordingly: gardening, DIY, mountains, boating, sports... . Those who, like me, have neglected this healthy instinct in favor of an over-invasive passion (or too much lethargy), sooner or later pay the price. That's three times in three years that I've paid the bill, and I've done it without complaint I might add, or better still, with gratitude, realizing with each new episode of illness that I was merely reaping the rewards of my own negligence, and what's more, that it was also teaching me a lesson that no doubt only he could give me. Perhaps the most important lesson I learned from the last of these episodes, which has just come to an end, is that it's high time I took the initiative and made such reminders unnecessary - or, more concretely, that it's high time I cultivated my garden!

17.3. A farewell to Claude Chevalley

Note 97 In my reflections yesterday and today, I have deliberately left out an event that took place right in the middle of the illness-episode, in the early days of July, at a time when I was still bedridden. This was the death of Claude Chevalley.

I found out about it from a vague article in *Libération*, more or less devoted to the event, which a friend had passed on to me on the off-chance that it might interest me. There was almost nothing about Chevalley, but a bit about Bourbaki, of which he was a founding member. I felt quite stupid when I found out about the news. For months I'd been picturing myself about to finish with *Récoltes et Semailles*, mint paperback and all - and go up to Paris dare dare to bring him a still-warm copy! If there were

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one person in the world I was sure would read my pamphlet with real interest, and often with pleasure, was him - and I wasn't at all sure there'd be anyone else but him!

Right from the start of my reflection, I realized that Chevalley had brought me something, at a crucial moment in my itinerary, something sown in effervescence, and which had germinated in silence. What I felt connected to him wasn't so much a **feeling of** gratitude, let's say, or sympathy, or affection. These feelings were surely present, as they are also present towards this or that other "elder" who had welcomed me as one of their own, more than twenty years earlier. What made my relationship with Chevalley different from my relationship with any of them and with most, if not all, of my friends, was something else. It's the feeling, I think, or better said, the perception, of an essential **kinship**, over and above the cultural differences and conditioning of all kinds that marked us from an early age. I don't know if there's anything of this "kinship" in the lines of my reflection where it's mentioned⁶ (*). In the period of my life to which these lines refer, Chevalley appears perhaps more as an "elder", this time on the level of an understanding of certain elementary things in life, than as a "parent". It's a distance, however, that my subsequent maturation must have reduced and perhaps abolished, as had been the case for a long time at the mathematical level, in my relationship with him as with my other elders. If I now try to put into words the meaning of this kinship, or at least one of its signs, it comes to me as follows: both of us are "cavaliers seuls" - travelers, both of us, on our own "solitary adventure". I write about mine in the last "chapter" (of the same name) of "Fatuité et Renouvellement"⁷ (**). Perhaps, for those who knew Chevalley well (and even for others), this part of the reflection is more apt to suggest what I'd like to express, than that which concerns him by name.

Meeting him and talking with him would surely have given me a better understanding of this friend than I had in the past, and a better grasp of both this essential kinship and our differences. If there were, apart from Pierre

Deligne^a person for whom I felt an eagerness to be able to hand-deliver the text of Récoltes et Semailles was Claude Chevalley. If there was one person whose comments, whether mischievous or sarcastic, would carry particular weight with me, it was him again. On that day in the first week of July, I knew I wouldn't have the pleasure of bringing him the best I had to offer, nor the pleasure of still hearing the sound of his voice.

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The strange thing - and which no doubt contributed to making me feel so **stupid** on the spur of the moment - is that more than once over the past few months, as I talked about an upcoming meeting with Chevalley, I remembered that he was struggling with health problems - and there was a worry in me, constantly brushed aside, that this meeting might not take place, that my friend might perhaps disappear before I came to see him. The idea of course occurred to me to write or telephone him, if only to ask about his health and how he was, and to say a few words about the work I was engaged in, and my intention to go and see him about it. The fact that I brushed it off as silly and unwelcome (that there was really no reason why. . . etc.), as one so often does in situations of this kind, illustrates just how much I, like many others, continue to live "below my means" - brushing off the obscure foreknowledge of things that blows me knowledge that I'm too busy and lazy to hear. . .

⁶(*) See "Rencontre avec Claude Chevalley - ou : liberté et bons sentiments" (section 11), and the last paragraph of the following section, "Le mérite et le mépris".

⁷(**) See especially, in this sense, the two sections "The forbidden fruit" and "The solitary adventure", n° s 46, 47.

17.4. Surface and depth

Note 101 (September 24) After the digression of the previous two days around the "illness episode" of the past few months, it's time to pick up where I left off in June. I foresaw that there would be two final notes yet to be written: a "Funeral Eulogy (2)" (which would follow on from and complete the note "Funeral Eulogy (1) - or compliments" of May 12), and a final "De Profundis", in which I intended to sketch out an overview of my thoughts on the Burial.

The planned substance of these two notes was still very much alive when I fell ill - I was just about to throw it all down on paper, just long enough to finish putting the finishing touches to all the previous notes, so as to feel that I was working on solid, tidy "backsides". ... During the three full months (since June 23rd to be exact) that I've practically stopped all work on Burial, apart from the occasional typing correction, it has, alas, slipped my mind a little. I feel

p. 435 even a little foolish, embarrassed in any case, to wisely set about filling in the blank pages waiting behind titles-pensums, on the pretext that these figures went in a provisional table of contents, and that I had the imprudence of alluding to it here and there in a certain text intended for publication. This is especially the case for "L' Eloge Funèbre (2)", and even rereading the first juice of "L' Eloge Funèbre (1)" (aka "les compliments") wasn't enough to warm up for me a substance that for months had had the leisure to chill in its corner!

And yet, from the day after May 12, when I wrote this note, and throughout the month that followed, my hands were tingling with the desire to delve deeper into this new mine I'd stumbled upon, without even suspecting it. When Nico Kuiper was kind enough to send me the jubilee brochure celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of the IHES last year, I must have spent half an hour going through it (including the two half-page articles on Deligne and me), without finding anything in particular. The only thing that struck me was the absence of any allusion to the difficult early years of the IHES, when its reputation was established in a makeshift room, myself (with the first Algebraic Geometry Seminars) being the only one to represent it "in the field". I reflected on this months later, when writing the note

"L'arrachement salutaire" (n° 14), in March 84. Not being sure of my memory, I have, as a matter of conscience asked Nico to send me another copy of the booklet (as I couldn't get my hands on the first one again). This was a second opportunity to go through the two topos again, perhaps with a less hasty eye. And yet, this time I'm definitely not hip. I note in passing, with some surprise, that the topo on Deligne states that "The main thrust of his work is to 'understand the cohomology of algebraic varieties'" - who would have thought! I forgot about it for a month or two (until I was reminded of it while writing the note "Refusal of an inheritance").

- or the price of a contradiction", n° 47). On the other hand, I don't notice that the word The word "cohomology" is not mentioned, nor is the word "schema". In my inattentive state at the time, there's still nothing to make me suspect that this anodyne text, a little overloaded with hyperbolic epithets, functions as a Funeral Eulogy, "served" (moreover) "with perfect fingering"! A fingering so perfect, in fact, that I wonder if any of the readers of this booklet (a little dull around the edges, by dint of deliberate pomposity on all sides, as the occasion demanded, it would seem. .) noticed it more than I did, on my first and second readings.

p. 436 This immediately ties in with an observation that keeps coming back to me, whenever, for one reason or another, I am led to look at something with a □ somewhat intense and sustained attention that I had previously been content to look at "in passing" with the "usual", routine attention I pay to the big and small things and events that go on in my life from day to day. Such a situation

is a frequent occurrence during meditation, which often leads me (more often than not "one thing leading to another" and without deliberate intent) to examine more closely certain events of the day or night (including dreams), which had passed more or less unnoticed in my customary state of attention, or whose meaning (often clear and obvious) had entirely escaped my conscious attention at first.

When I speak here of "somewhat intense, sustained attention", what I really mean is an **alert**, fresh look, a look that is not weighed down by habitual thinking or the "knowledge" that serves as a facade for it. If, for one reason or another, we are led to take an alert, attentive look at things, they seem to transform before our very eyes. Behind the apparent flatness of the dull, smooth surface of things presented to us by our everyday "attention", we suddenly see an unsuspected **depth** open up and come to life. This profound life of things didn't wait for us to take the trouble to get to know them - it's always been there, part of their intimate nature, whether we're talking about mathematical objects, a garden lawn, or all the psychic forces at work in such and such a person at such and such a time.

Thought is just one of the instruments we use to reveal and fathom the depth behind the surface, the secret life of things, which is only "secret" because we're too lazy to look, too inhibited to see. It's an instrument that has its advantages, just as it has its drawbacks and limitations. But in any case, thought is rarely used as an instrument of discovery. Its most common function is not to discover the secret life in ourselves and in things, but rather to mask and freeze it. It is a multi-purpose tool at the disposal of both the child-worker and the boss. In the hands of the former, it becomes a sail, capable of capturing the forces of our desire and carrying us far into the unknown. In the hands of the other, it becomes an immovable anchor, which neither turbulence nor storms can shake... .

The thought process was getting a bit lost, and now it's back to a starting point - which is the observation I **was** **arresting** on yesterday: to what extent, through habits and conditioning p. 437

I live below my means! (In which, moreover, I find myself in very good company...). It was through a gradual discovery of L'Enterrement, based on facts as large as the LN 900 volume⁸ (*), that my lazy attention was finally awakened. A reading of the note "Refus d'un héritage

- ou le prix d'une contradiction" (n° 47) led me on May 12 to reread for a third time (!) the two famous "topo". This time, however, I noticed a rather unusual detail: there was no mention whatsoever of "cohomology" (or algebraic varieties or diagrams), in the little text in dithyrambic style devoted to me in the jubilee brochure! The whole thing struck me as funny enough to merit a footnote, which I set about writing as quickly as possible. Along the way, I became aware of one or two other "funny" details that hadn't yet caught my attention: even though this was a third reading, it too had remained superficial and mechanical - I'd pretty much just **repeated** and **reproduced** the readings I'd done previously. It was only when I wrote what was supposed to be a footnote, and which became the note "L'Eloge Funèbre (1)", that I gradually became hooked on the game, that a **curiosity** was awakened, which led me to return to these texts once again, this time looking at them a little more closely. It was only then that the transformation I mentioned earlier took place - that a "depth" opened up, an intense life behind the flat façade of a dithyrambic discourse, served up in the florets of a grand occasion! It was this curiosity that transformed a mechanical, repetitive, distracted gaze into an "awakened" one. . .

⁸(*) See the note "Souvenir d'un rêve - ou la naissance des motifs", n° 51, and the following note "L'Enterrement - ou les Nouveaux Pères".

The "awakening" in question wasn't instantaneous, moreover; it came gradually, with the progress of the reflection pursued in this note-de-bas-de-page-sic. To tell the truth, it wasn't complete until the final point of this note, when the hour was late (I seem to remember) and prompted me to "get it over with"⁹ (**).

p. 438 But no sooner had I placed this point, or at least by the next day, than I realized that I was far from exhausting the subject of the Funeral Eulogy. It was only then that I felt completely to how these two texts, so short and innocuous on the surface, were rich in meaning, veritable mines in fact! And that I was far from having exhausted what they had to say, if only I would listen... .

(September 25) Last night, I had to cut my thoughts short again, even though they had only just started, it seemed to me. I'd been sitting in front of my typewriter for three and a half hours straight, and little signs were beginning to show me that it was time to get up and get moving.

I well remember the first time I was led to direct "intense, sustained attention" to written texts, and experienced day after day, for months on end, the amazing metamorphosis of a dull, flat "surface", coming to life and revealing a rich, precise meaning, an unsuspected "depth". It was also, at the same time, my first long-term meditation, in the spirit of a journey into the unknown, which would last as long as it lasted... . The starting material was the voluminous 1933 / 34 correspondence between my father (who had emigrated to Paris) and my mother (still in Berlin at the time, with me then aged five). My aim was to "get to know" my parents. I had discovered the previous year that the admiration I had devoted to them all my life, which had eventually congealed into a kind of filial piety, covered up and maintained a very great ignorance about them. This phenomenal ignorance, in which I had been happy to maintain myself all my life, only became fully apparent to me during the long-term meditation of the following year, from August 1979 to March 1980.

I had begun to "prepare the ground" throughout the month of July 1979, in particular by doing a first reading of the whole of this correspondence, alongside work on a "poetic work of my own composition"¹⁰ (*) which I was then putting the finishing touches to. Every evening, I spent a few hours reading three or four letters-answers, certainly with interest and, I would have said at the time without hesitation, with a great deal of pleasure.

attentive way. Yet I was dimly aware that I remained a stranger, an outsider to what I was doing.

p. 439 that the true meaning escaped me. What I was reading was often quite crazy, as if this man and this woman I saw living and parading before my eyes had nothing in common with those I had thought I knew - those whose clear, intangible image my memory restored to me. In the absence of patient, meticulous, demanding work on what I was reading, which I would have pursued as I went along, I was simply stunned, without more, by the (relatively) little in these letters that was "big" enough to catch my superficial attention. What was recorded in this way was superimposed on the "well-known", which had been the invisible and unchanging foundation of my life, of my sense of identity, since my early childhood and right up to the present day (without my ever realizing it, of course). Assuming I'd stuck to that first reading, surely the thin layer of new, undigested "facts" that had thus been superimposed on the master layers would soon have been eroded and washed away without leaving much trace, in the months and years that followed.

⁹(**) All the more so, I'm sure, as on the same day I had already gone through the long and substantial reflection "Le massacre" (n° 87), to which, incidentally, I refer towards the end of the note "L'Eloge Funèbre - ou Les compliments" which had followed on from it.

¹⁰(*) Allusion is made to this work and the episode in my life it represents, at the end of the section "Le Guru-pas-Guru, ou le cheval à trois pattes", n° 45, and in the note n° 43 to which it refers.

At the time of this preliminary work, my main investment was elsewhere, in the writing of a work that was absorbing most of my energy. I was well aware of the limits of a work done in parallel with another, and that I'd have to come back to it from start to finish, through a piecework project in which I'd put all my energy. I anticipated that it would be a matter of a few weeks - in fact I spent seven months in a row, devoted to a meticulous examination of the letters and writings left by my parents, of which the most "burning" part is surely the 1933 / 34 correspondence. Seven months, moreover, at the end of which I finally cut it short, realizing that the subject ("getting to know my parents") was as inexhaustible as ever. It had become more urgent to **get to know myself**, with the help of all the things I'd learned about my parents, and thus, indirectly at least... about my own forgotten childhood... .

I've just spent nearly two hours going through the beginnings of the notes of this meditation on my parents, begun on August 3, 1979. Contrary to what I thought I'd hastily remembered, I didn't then realize, except perhaps very dimly, the need to review thoroughly, "from beginning to end" (as I wrote earlier), the letters and other written traces of my parents that I'd read over the past month.

At least, I don't suggest anything to that effect in my notes. After a recapitulatory reflection by a

day or two, taking provisional stock of my multiple, tantōtinet confused impressions, aroused by p . 440

In no way do I pretend that I'm resuming this reading with meticulous piecework. Instead, I follow it up (as would be expected) with an equally brisk reading of **other** letters (notably a voluminous correspondence from my parents in the years 1937/39), and with a parallel reflection fuelled by my reading impressions. One thing leading to another, over the course of August and the following month, I began to learn what it's like to **work** on a letter (or any other written testimony of a life) in such a way as to apprehend its true, sometimes striking, meaning - a meaning, however, that the person writing often likes to ignore, to conceal from himself and from others, unseen and unknown! while managing to display it "between the lines" in a sometimes ostentatious, incisive way. And it must be rare for an insinuation or provocation (sometimes ferocious. . .) not to reach the addressee, for it not to be perceived and "cashed in" by him at a certain level, while he too is careful not to let this perception, this knowledge penetrate the field of his gaze, and he too enters with all sails unfurled, into this same game of "neither seen nor known!". It is unfailingly the most obscure passages, those that seem to border on debility (or insanity. . .) and defy all rational interpretation, that to the curious eye reveal themselves to be the richest in meaning: veritable mines, providing irreplaceable keys to penetrate further into the simple and obvious meaning behind the accumulation of apparent nonsense. Passages like these, frequent in the correspondence between my parents, and especially in the letters from my mother, who led the way, of course went completely "over my head" when I first read them in July. I began to pick up on them, here and there, over the course of the following month. It was only in September that various cross-checks made me realize that I'd definitely missed something essential in what I had to learn from the 1933/34 letters, and brought me back to them, prompting me to do a first "in-depth" reading of some of them. This reading immediately changed my childhood image of my parents and their relationship with me and my sister.

17.5. In Praise of writing

Note 102 (September 26) It's been two days since I've been in the midst of "autobiographical reminiscences", as I set off to write ("cold") the sequel to a certain note on a certain Eloge Fu- phique.

p. 441 nèbre. I don't know whether this digression will have warmed my ardor even a little! At the very least, it's about time I got to the point I had in mind when I launched into it ^{before-□hier}, a little in the direction of: "On the art of reading a message that pretends not to say what it has to say". This kind of text-message is much more frequent than I would have imagined... ...

It goes without saying that the question of the "how" of this "art" doesn't arise, as long as you're prepared (as I was for most of my life) to take at face value and to the letter everything you're told or written, and not to look for or see, in anything or anyone, any intentions other than those expressly expressed by the person concerned. On the other hand, the question arises when you are confronted with the indefinable expression that something is "not right" in a statement, tirade or narrative, that there's something fishy about it, that something has "passed", somewhere, that isn't supposed to have been said (what would you expect?). Sometimes, too, it's the elementary and disconcerting perception of an incoherence, an absurdity, sometimes so enormous and at the same time seemingly elusive, that it seems to defy all formulation, to the point of appearing to be debilitating or delirious. Such situations are often overloaded with anguish - and it was indeed by an instantaneous influx of anguish, never recognized as such but blurred and immediately retracted under a wave of violent, distraught anger, that I invariably reacted to such situations, where absurdity suddenly burst into my life: an inadmissible, incomprehensible absurdity, fraught with threats, each time shaking my serene vision of the world and of myself to the foundations! And so it was, at least until I discovered "meditation", when an intrepid, enterprising curiosity defused and took over from these waves of anger and anguish... ...

It was curiosity, i.e. the desire to know, that made me spontaneously find, under pressure of need, this "art" of deciphering a scrambled testimonial text - or more modestly speaking, a method that suited my limited means and cumbersome nature. No matter how hard I tried, and no matter how curious I was, on first reading (or even on second) of these weighty letters, all the essentials went right over my head - "I couldn't see a thing". Sometimes, commenting on a few often confused impressions, perhaps about this or that particularly obscure and disconcerting passage, I managed to penetrate further into the meaning of a text that had seemed hermetic. Along the way, I sometimes found myself copying, for quotation purposes, passages of greater or lesser length, distinguished either by obscurity, or because they gave me the impression of being "important", for one reason or another. □

p. 442 other. As the days and weeks went by, I realized that the simple act of **copying** a passage in extenso of the text I was examining, surprisingly altered my relationship with the passage, opening me up to an understanding of its true meaning.

This was completely unexpected, whereas my initial motivation (at least on a conscious level) had been a matter of pure convenience. I even remember that for a long time, there was a certain restrained impatience in me, to devote precious time to acting as a copyist, nothing more, nothing less, I'd eat my heart out to get to the end and write as fast as I could... . But there's no comparison between the speed of the eye reading written lines and the hand transcribing them word for word. No matter how fast you write, the "time factor" is absolutely not the same. And I suspect that this "time factor" does not act in a purely mechanical, quantitative way - or, to put it better, that it is only one aspect of a more delicate and richer reality. Nor, for me at least, is there any common measure between the action of the eye that scans lines that someone else has thought and written, and the act of the hand that letter after letter, word after word, rewrites those same lines. Surely, there is a profound symbiosis between the hand and the mind or thought; and at the very rhythm of the hand that writes, and without any deliberate purpose, the mind cannot help but reform, rethink the same words, assembling themselves into sentences laden with

meaning, and these in discourse. Provided that a desire to know animates this hand that reproduces letters, words and phrases, and that it animates this mind which, in unison, also "reproduces" them, at another level, - surely this double action creates a more intimate contact between myself and this message of which I make myself the scribe-writer, than the act, above all passive and without support or tangible trace, of the eye that is content to read.

This groping intuition is in line with a long-held observation - that for me, rhythm is the key to success. of working thought (be it mathematical work or any other, including the work I call "meditation") is most often (if not always) that of the hand that writes, and in no way that of the eye that reads¹¹ (*). And the **written trace** *laid* by my hand (or sometimes, by the typewriter maneuvered

by my hands. ...), at the pace of unhurried, never dawdling thought, is the indispensable material support of that thought - both its "voice" and its "memory". I suspect that the same is more or less true (though perhaps to a lesser degree) of most, if not all, "intellectual workers".

17.6. L'enfant et la mer - or faith and doubt

Note 103 (September 27) In any case, the fact remains that, just as I can only "enter" a mathematical theory by writing, I can only begin to enter a text-message, the "between the lines" of a message, by **rewriting** it. My first work of meditation "on texts" was transformed, an apparent platitude began to open onto a living depth, and the absurd to find a meaning, **from the** moment I began to rewrite in extenso the message, or (in the case of one of prohibitive dimensions) the passages that a flair made me feel were crucial.

In the absence of reliable "objective" criteria for guaranteeing the validity of an "interpretation", presented as the result or outcome of (so-called?) "work" on a text, let's say, we can make any text or discourse say exactly what we want, inventing whatever "message" we like to attribute to it. Nothing could be further from the truth, and sure-fire examples abound! Moreover, I doubt (except perhaps in a delimited discipline like history - and even then. . .) that it would be possible to identify such criteria. It wouldn't do much good anyway: it wouldn't stop anyone inventing fanciful interpretations, nor would it enable anyone to fathom and discover the true meaning of a message, a situation or an event. Rules and criteria are the ingredients of a **method**, which has its own usefulness and importance (often overestimated, to the detriment of other factors and forces of a completely different nature), as a tool for discovery and consolidation in the development of scientific or technical knowledge, and in that of any kind of know-how: driving or repairing a car, etc. On the other hand, at the level of self-knowledge and discovery of oneself and others, the role of method becomes entirely incidental: it's the "stewardship" that certainly follows, when the essential is there. And being inspired by a method, or even clinging to it, does nothing to encourage the emergence of that more essential thing.

- quite the contrary!

To put it another way: he who sets out to find such and such a thing *decided* *advance* (which he will call "true",

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or "truth") will have no trouble finding it, and even proving it to his complete satisfaction - and surely

¹¹(*) This circumstance, which seems to affect me to a greater degree than most of my fellow mathematicians, once made it difficult for me to fit into the collective work sessions of the Bourbaki group, finding myself unable to keep up with the readings as they went along. In fact, I've never really enjoyed **reading** mathematical texts, even beautiful ones. My spontaneous way of understanding maths has always been to **do** it, or to **redo** it (with the help, here and there, of ideas and indications provided by colleagues or, for want of a better word, books. . .).

along the way, he'll find one or another, if not a whole crowd, happy to form an alliance with him and share his convictions and satisfaction. He's like the butterfly hunter, who sets off with a beautiful butterfly in his net (a stuffed one, as it happens), and takes it out all happy (and to his own satisfaction) when he returns from his "hunt".

And then there's the one who finds himself placed in front of an unknown, like a naked child in front of the sea. When the child wishes to know it, he enters and knows it - whether it is warm or cool, calm or agitated. Anyone who is attracted by something unknown, and sets out to discover it, will surely know it to a greater or lesser degree. With or without a net, he will find the truth, or at least **some** truth. His mistakes and his discoveries are all stages in his journey, or rather, in **his love affair** with what he wants to know.

I know what I'm talking about, because in my life I've been both this butterfly hunter and this naked child. There's no difficulty in distinguishing one from the other. I doubt that "objective criteria" will be of much help here, it's much simpler than that! All you have to do is use your eyes...

And there's no difficulty in distinguishing the successive stages, the successive decanting stages, in this journey I've just been talking about, from this "dead" stage where no presentiment surfacing to consciousness yet gives rise to the suspicion of "something", beyond a certain flat, amorphous surface presented to us by sleepy eyes, and which through successive "awakenings" leads us towards an increasingly delicate, more intimate, more complete apprehension of this "something". It's not essentially different in nature, whether we're talking about the discovery of mathematical things, or the discovery of ourselves and others. The feeling of **progress in knowledge**, which deepens little by little (even through an accumulation of errors, patiently, tirelessly corrected) - this feeling is as indisputable in the latter case as in the former.

This **assurance** is one side of an inner disposition, the other side of which is an **openness to doubt**: an attitude of curiosity, excluding all fear, towards one's own mistakes, which enables us to detect them.

p. 445 ter and constantly correct them. The essential condition of this double foundation, of this **faith** indispensable to welcoming doubt as well as to discovery, is the absence of all fear (whether apparent or hidden).

about what will "come out" of the research we're undertaking - fear, in particular, that the reality we're about to discover will upset our certainties or convictions, that it will disenchant our hopes. Such fear acts as a deep paralysis of our creative faculties, of our power of renewal. We can discover and renew ourselves in sorrow and pain, but not in fear of what is about to be known, what is about to be born (any more than a man can know a woman and make her conceive, in a moment when he is afraid of her, or of the act that carries him into her). Such fear is no doubt relatively rare in the context of scientific research, or any other research whose theme does not involve our own person in any profound way. It is, however, a major stumbling block when it comes to self-discovery or the discovery of others.

However, the feeling that accompanies a discovery, large or small, is as compelling in the case of self-discovery or the discovery of others, as it is in the context of impersonal research, such as mathematics. I've already alluded to this feeling. It's a reflection, at the emotional level, of a perception of something that has just happened - the appearance of something **new** - and this "something" appears as tangible, as irrefutable (I apologize for the repetition!) as the appearance of a mathematical statement, let's say, or a notion or a demonstration, that we'd never thought of before. In fact, I find it difficult to distinguish or separate this feeling, which accompanies a particular discovery, from the feeling of progression I mentioned earlier, which accompanies an entire research project. Discoveries "big and small" are like the successive **steps** that materialize a progression, like

successive **thresholds** we have to cross. Progression is nothing other than this sequence of thresholds crossed, of accessions from each of these levels to the next.

The "feeling" or, better still, the perception that reflects and restores this process, is a sure and unmistakable "criterion".

- I don't remember it ever misleading me, either in maths or in meditation: that I had to realize, with hindsight, that this feeling would have been illusory. It often enables me, without any residual doubt, to distinguish the true from the false, or to discern the true in the false, and the false in what is supposed to be true. But above all, it is an irreplaceable **guide** in any true search - a guide ready to inform us at a moment's notice (provided we take the trouble to consult it) if we are on the wrong track, or are on the right track.

The willingness to listen to this sure guide is nothing more' ^{it} seems to me, than what in another p . 446

¹² (*) I have named "rigor". It seems to me that this rigor is no different in essence from the demands of mathematical research, or from those of self-knowledge, without which there can be no such knowledge. But it goes without saying that this in no way means that the presence of this rigor, at the level of such intellectual work, is a guarantee or sign of its presence for the knowledge of oneself and of others. In fact, the opposite is true, as I have observed on countless occasions, starting with myself. In this respect, the "rigor" I'm talking about here came into my life at the same time as meditation. Or to put it another way, I can't really distinguish between one and the other. The moments of meditation in my life are none other than those when I examine myself (most often through my relationship with others) in such a state of extreme exigency with myself.

¹²(*) In the section "Rigor and rigor", n° 26, where I refer to "rigor" as "delicate attention to the **quality of understanding** present at each moment" in a search.

18. XII The Funeral Ceremony

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18.1. The Eulogy Funeral

18.1.1. (1) The compliments

Note 104 □(May 12)¹ (*) Remarkably, in the little "topo" on my work that is done in this

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even in the brochure² (**), the word "cohomology" or "homology" is never uttered! Nor is the word "schematic". Certainly (as circumstances demanded, when I was acting as the "first Fields Medal to be awarded to the IHES"), there's mention of the "titanic aspect" of my work, the number of volumes published, the essential problems identified, with the greatest natural generality (funny French for that), very careful terminology, allusion to "Grothendieck groups" (another of those greatest natural generalities, I bet!), and even topos and their usefulness in logic (but certainly not elsewhere!) . . . But there's no hint of a **result**, or a **theory** I'd developed that might have been useful - it must be that these twenty titanic volumes were rigorously empty, or just collections of problems (never solved) and notions, with the greatest natural generality it's understood: Grothendieck's group is awarded (since my name is already stuck to it afterwards), presented as the "ancestor" of algebraic K-theory (!) (which has nothing to do, of course, with topological *K-theory*, of which nothing is said)³ (***); as for the Riemann-Roch theorem, it must have been the descendants of the "ancestor" who took care of it - those who make the real theorems, the serious stuff!

At a time when it is fashionable to disregard generalities (persifuted by the ridiculous phrase "greatest natural generality"). . .), □ the anonymous pen that took care of my praise here p. 448
funèbre gratified me abundantly with what today is delivered to the disdain⁴ (*). I also appreciated (perhaps I'm the first. . .) the humor of the same anonymous pen in this passage from the eulogy:

"He created a school of algebraic geometry at the IHES, gathered around the seminar he led and **nourished by the generosity with which he communicated his ideas**" (emphasis mine). Unfortunately, just like my "titanic work", this "school of algebraic geometry" that I nurtured so well is rigorously empty - not a single name is mentioned, and no one has come to complain that it has been forgotten, at least not to me.

Yet I seem to remember seeing the young Deligne faithfully haunting this (presumably empty) seminar between 1965 (when he must have been nineteen) and 1969, and learning in this seminar and in our tête-à-tête not only the technique of schemas, but also cohomological techniques and staggered cohomology - in other words, the very tools used on every page of his work (among those I've seen, at least). In

¹(*) (May 18) The following note is "from a footnote (to note no.° 47) that has grown prohibitively large". I've inserted it here, believing that this order is more natural than the chronological one.

Since the very moment this note was written, I've felt the need to develop it a little further - this will be done in a follow-up note to this one, which has not yet been written at the time of writing. The two notes together have now taken on the appropriate name: "L'Eloge Funèbre" (The Funeral Eulogy)!

²(**) (May 18) This is the brochure published in 1983 by the IHES (Institut des Hautes Etudes Scientifiques) to mark its twenty-fifth anniversary. Reference is already made to it in the footnote "L'arrachement salutaire" (n° 42), and again at the beginning of the note "Refus d'un héritage - ou le prix d'une contradiction" (n° 47), to which the present note (L'Eloge Funèbre (1)) refers (see previous footnote).

³(***) My work on the Riemann-Roch theorem is the first strong start of **algebraic** K-theory, and null-an "ancestor". **Topological** K-theory was born the same year (1957) that I proved the Riemann-Roch-Grothendieck theorem, following my presentation at the Hirzebruch seminar. The "ancestor" of this unspoken "descendant" hadn't another year! Algebraic K-theory (with Bass's introduction of the *K* functor in addition to the *K* functor I had introduced) developed in the years that followed, under the dual influence of the "ancestor" and his first "descendant".

In fact, as early as the second half of the sixties, I had already taken a step towards a description of the higher K^i (for a "monomial" category, e.g. additive), along the lines of Mrs. Sinh's thesis. This remained heuristic, being based on the intuition of the **enveloping ∞ -category of Picard**, while no one at that time (or since) had taken the leisure to develop the notion of a (non-strict) ∞ -category, i.e., the ∞ -category of Picard. The notion I now call by the name of ∞ -field (on the punctual topos) With the sketch of foundations for a cohomologico-homotopic formalism of fields I'm about to develop in the Pursuit of Fields (in the right file of the ideas I developed between 1955 and 1965), this "geometrical" approach towards a theory of higher *K-invariants* would enfin be available.

⁴(*) (May 18) And I've gone on and on! For a complete quotation from my Eulogy, see the note "The Eulogy (2)".

p. 449 "topo" devoted to Deligne in the same brochure, no allusion either that might make the reader suspect[□] he might have learned something from me. Yet, remarkably, my name is pronounced three times in this eulogy (by no means funereal) of Deligne ("third Fields medal of the IHES"). And even in a periphrase there's a reference, with the vague rigor that must surround every appearance of my modest person, to the fact that I would have "constructed the theory of cohomology in geometry over any body" - and surely still "with the greatest natural generality", it smells of grothendieckery⁵ (*). The full context quote is worth giving, it's a little masterpiece of the genre:

"Starting from there [classical Hodge theory] and from l -adic analogies suggested by Grothendieck [one wonders where Gr. found the time to learn such serious things, while redigging his twenty volumes of greater natural generalities], he [Deligne] derived the notion of mixed Hodge structure and equipped the cohomology of any complex algebraic variety with it. In l -adic cohomology, i.e. [?] for varieties over a finite field, he proved Weil's proverbially difficult conjectures. This result seemed all the more surprising [!!] since Grothendieck, after having constructed the theory of cohomology in geometry over any field [one wonders what else he went looking for there], had reduced the remaining conjecture [??] to a series of conjectures that are as unapproachable today as they were then."

Clearly, far from having contributed in any way whatsoever to proving this surprising result of such proverbial difficulty, these grothendieckeries (with a name that would scare off the most hardened generalist-naturalist) have been no more than good enough to encumber us again with **conjectures**, as is only right (he never makes any others!) and unaffordable what's more (one would have guessed), just as much today as when he had the preposterous idea to make them.

p. 450 [□]Yet I seem to remember tackling them, these unapproachable conjectures, but that was probably because... that I was misinformed. It was around the time I left, I mean died, and my posterity, better informed than me, was careful never to put its nose in that stuff, since Deligne was formal: it was unapproachable!

I recognize the style: we've done our homework, quoted Grothendieck extensively (neither he nor anyone else will be able to claim that we're burying him on this solemn day), and even hinted at the " l -adic analogies" that had played a role in getting the mixed Hodge theory off the ground. This must be the second time since the famous lapidary half-line thirteen years before⁶ (*); both allusions bear a strange resemblance to the "weighty considerations" of a certain 1968 article⁷ (**): one is "thumbed", and one has led the reader by the nose at the same time! Here, the solemn occasion helping, the thumb reference does more than drown the fish - the impression this text wants to suggest about this famous Grothendieck is precisely the one carried by this "wind" of fashion that I've been feeling for a few years - the one I've already had the opportunity to feel today⁸ (***), no longer in the tones of eulogy and special occasions

⁵(*) (May 18) In the Eulogy, reference is made to my "great attention" to terminology. In the use of saucy expressions like "the greatest natural generality" or "the theory of cohomology in geometry over any body", I clearly perceive the intention to mock this attention.

The extreme care I take with the names given to things stems naturally from the respect I have for these things, whose name is supposed to express their essence, or at least some essential aspect of them. I've been shocked on more than one occasion by the disdain with which this attitude of respect seems to be treated today, a disdain which is sometimes expressed by the use of abracadabra names for important notions. On this subject, see also the note "Perversity" (n° 76).

⁶(*) This "lapidary half-line" can be found in Deligne's report "Hodge Theory I" to the Nice International Congress in 1970. See comments in note n° 78₂.

⁷(**) On this subject, see the beginning of the note "Canned weight and twelve years of secrecy" (n° 49), and the more detailed review in the note "Eviction" (n° 63).

⁸(***) See the note of the same day "The massacre", n° 87.

in front of a large audience, but in those of the massacre...

I'll continue the quote, it's worth it:

"This theorem (ex-Weil's conjectures) has helped to make *l-adic* cohomology a powerful tool... needless to name the brilliant and modest inventor of such a powerful tool... . . applicable to questions seemingly far removed from algebraic geometry, such as Ramanujam's conjecture.

More recently, he studied Hodge cycles on abelian varieties, taking the first step towards a "motivic" theory such as Grothendieck had dreamed of. He also demonstrated the algebraic mechanism of "intersection cohomology", the topological theory of Mac Pherson and Goresky. This made it possible to transpose it to *l-adic* theory, where it proved surprisingly useful."

So, one year after the publication of the "memorable volume"⁹ (****), an anonymous pen (I'm guessing the same one) has finally repaired a small "oversight" in the said volume. Perhaps someone had to ask a question anyway.

question, and Deligne is here to make up for the omission in his own way (it's nice of you to quote this dreamer, though

□ de Grothendieck, when it comes to, well, serious mathematics!). And always deceiving the reader, p. 451
given that the "first step" was taken as early as 1968 with Deligne's launch of the Hodge-Deligne theory, rooted in the yoga of motives which he had indeed "nourished" through my contact, throughout the four years that had preceded. This yoga, from which his work stems, from which he has never known how to detach himself while denying it, is in fact dispatched in the periphrase of the first quotation under the name of "*l-adic* analogies". An uninformed and attentive reader would certainly not suspect a link between these "*l-adic* analogies", which would have played a role as a starting point (but certainly not beyond. . .) for Hodge-Dixon's theory.) for the Hodge-Deligne theory¹⁰ (*), and a "motivic theory" of which I had indeed dreamed (and a devilishly precise dream at that) - if not this link, that it's still this same dreamer Grothendieck who manages (by dint of greater natural generalities) to suggest analogies to real mathematicians, on condition that they do some real work.

As for the famous "algebraic mechanism of 'intersection cohomology'", here we are in the middle of the Colloque Pervers¹¹ (**) (although the word "perverse" is not used). We've certainly taken the gloves off with the one

of the "four Fields □ medals of the IHES", given the solemnity of the occasion - but we don't have to embarrass ourselves with the student p. 452

posthumously by the same Grothendieck. My own burial on this exceptional occasion in the limelight, ministerial speech and all, is not burial by silence, but by **compliment**, skilfully measured and administered. But where Mac Pherson and Goresky are named, it goes without saying that for posthumous pupil Zoghman Mebkhout, silence is de rigueur, as it was two years earlier at the Colloque Pervers, and as it still is today.

⁹(****) This is the Lecture Notes volume n° 900 published in 1982, referred to in the notes "Souvenir d'un rêve - ou la naissance des motifs" and especially "L'Enterrement - ou le Nouveau Père" (n° 51, 52). This is the volume in which the motifs are "exhumed" (after a twelve-year deathly silence on their subject), under an (implicit) alternative authorship.

¹⁰(*) This Hodge-Deligne theory is still in its infancy, due to the failure to develop the notion of a "Hodge-Deligne complex" on any finite type scheme over \mathbb{C} , and the formalism of the six operations for these "coefficients". The need for such a theory was obvious to Deligne as much as it was to me, even before his first work on mixed Hodge structures, and it followed obviously from the yoga of patterns. But as soon as I left the mathematical scene, Deligne developed a "block" against the key ideas I had introduced into homological algebra (derived category, six operations, not to mention topos), which prevented the natural development of a theory that had got off to a spectacular start.

¹¹(**) On this Colloquium, see Cortège VII, "Le Colloque - ou faisceaux de Mebkhout et Perversité".

18.1.2. (2) Strength and the halo

Note 105 (September 29) The "previous" note, "L' Eloge Funèbre (1) - ou les compliments" (n° 104), is dated May 12 - more than four months old. It had begun as a footnote to "Refus d'un héritage, ou le prix d'une contradiction" (note n° 47, from the end of March), just to note in passing a little "funny" fact I'd only just become aware of. But as I was writing it, it became clear to me as I went on lines and pages that these two short, seemingly innocuous texts on which I was commenting, without really planning or looking for it, were a real "mine"¹² (*). It was also the day when I had already to paint a picture of a massacre (note n° 87), a picture that had gradually emerged from the mists of time. of the past few weeks. There, it had suddenly materialized, had taken shape by the mere virtue of an enumerative description, and now it was calling out to me forcefully. The massacre and the "compliments" - a eulogy for the late man - were like two complementary parts of the same striking picture, both appearing on the same day!

It was certainly enough to satisfy me! The very next day, "my hands were tingling" to keep up the momentum and, in particular, to probe further into this little gem of a mine I'd just unexpectedly got my hands on. It became clear that the first thing to do was to quote in extenso the two passages in question from the jubilee booklet - at the same time, it would also be the best way to make contact.

with these texts and get a better grasp of their real message, the message "between the lines". . . ¹³(**). Without even having had the ^{p. 453} □loisir yet to copy the two texts, the previous day's contact had already been awakened in me several associations of ideas, which I felt were juicy. I couldn't wait to pursue them, although I wasn't sure yet where they would lead. ...

In the end, I didn't keep up the momentum in the days and weeks that followed, though I did promise myself that I'd be back to it in the next few days. An unforeseen "health incident" put an end to all work on Harvest and Sowing for over three months, and indeed to all intellectual work whatsoever¹⁴ (*). The "hot moment" for pursuing this direction of reflection, which had just opened up in those days, has now passed. It's not certain that it'll come back, or even that I'll want to make the effort to "blow" (the heat!) to bring it back at all costs. To tell the truth, my real desire now is to come to the ultimate note, drawing a provisional **balance sheet of the** whole reflection named L' Enterrement - and to draw a **final line**! As far as this note is concerned, I'll at least give the full quotation I promised myself (and to the reader, for that matter); and perhaps at least a few summary indications, too, about certain associations of ideas that these two texts (and perhaps also the fact of rewriting them in black and white) will have aroused in me.

The two texts in question (pp. 13 and 15 respectively, from the 1983 jubilee brochure entitled "Institut des Hautes Etudes Scientifiques") are part of a series of "minute portraits" of the "permanents" and "long-term guests" who have passed through the IHES since its foundation in 1958, arranged in chronological order of entry. These are fairly brief texts, each about half a page in length, and each includes the dates on which the person joined the IHES, their position (professor or long-term visitor), their main honors, their main areas of interest and their most important contributions, with (where appropriate) the names of some of their collaborators. For my humble self, however, there's a remarkable gap in the last three.

¹²(*) For some retrospective comments on this subject, see the beginnings of the September 24 note "Surface and depth" (no. 101).

¹³(**) On this subject, see the note "Sur l'art de déchiffrer un message - ou éloge de l'écriture" (n° 102), which follows the note quoted in the previous footnote.

¹⁴(*) On this subject, see the notes "The incident - or body and mind" and "The trap - or ease and exhaustion" , n° s 98, 99.

objective "aspects of a work and a personality - areas of interest, main contributions, principles, main collaborators or pupils - which void is filled by these "compliments" in dithyrambic style, some of which have already been noted and quoted in the previous note. ...

The series in question, which I have the honor of opening, is made up of the following mathematicians and physicists:

A. Grothendieck, L. Michel, R. Thom, D. Ruelle, P. Deligne, N.H. Kuiper, D. Sullivan, P. Cartier, H. Epstein, J. Fröhlich, A. Connes, K. Gawedzki, M. Gromov, O. Lanford.

I thought I remembered that Dieudonné had been a professor at the IHES at the same time as me, and I see from this list that this is not the case - he had been content to take on the role of director of Publications Mathématiques. However, I now realize, on page 3 of the brochure, in the IHES "Curriculum Vitae", that this is not the case, and that Dieudonné, like me, has been a "permanent professor" since 1958 (and until 1964), at least theoretically. A strange little contradiction! I'm copying here the beginning of the "Curriculum Vitae", at the first two "dates", 1958 and 1961:

1958 Creation of the Institut des Hautes Etudes Scientifiques association in Paris, by Léon Motchane, assisted by world-renowned scientific advisors and a group of European industrialists.

The scientific activity was launched by two mathematicians: Jean Dieudonné (→1964) and Alexandre Grothendieck (→1970) appointed permanent professors. Issue no. 1 of "Publications Mathématiques de l'IHES" is published.

1961 Recognized as a public utility.

.....

Incidentally, in this brief Curriculum Vitae, I thought it would be useful to mention the (somewhat symbolic) publication of issue no. 1 of Publications Mathématiques (consisting of a 24-page article by G.E. Wall, the author of which had no particular connection with the newly-born association), but not the algebraic geometry seminars (well known under the familiar acronyms SGA 1 and SGA 2). Wall, whose author had no particular connection with the newly-born association), but not the algebraic geometry seminars (well known under the familiar acronyms SGA 1 and SGA 2) through which I began to single-handedly ensure the scientific reputation of an institution, during years when it barely existed "on paper". Indeed, until around volume 24 of Publications Mathématiques, the bulk of these publications consisted of the successive volumes (1 to 4) of the "Eléments de Géométrie Algébrique"¹⁵ (*), all the other volumes tour¹⁶nant around fifty pages each (of high scientific standard, that goes without saying). Moreover, on page 19 (after the series of "minute portraits" from which Dieudonné was absent, God knows why¹⁶ (*)), we read, in a very "placard publicitaire" layout (with a tantalizing photo of the impressive stack of volumes in their entirety from the prestigious Publications):

Publications Mathematics

It was Jean Dieudonné alone [!] who, from 1959 onwards, took Publications Mathématiques to the pinnacle of world excellence.

Since 1979, they have appeared as a regular 400-page annual publication, under the direction of an editorial board headed by Jacques Tits.

Distribution is handled by... (etc)

¹⁵(*) Of which I am the author, in collaboration with J. Dieudonné.

¹⁶(*) (September 30) It occurred to me that the reason might well be this: so as not to have to say that during the years in question (1958-1964), Dieudonné's time was essentially divided between writing Eléments de Géométrie Algébrique (in which I unfortunately appear as principal author) and Bourbaki essays - apart from the piano and cooking (Dieudonné was both a musician and a cook), which, alas, could not be mentioned in this brochure, too selective for a passing smile to find its way

The reason why Publications Mathématiques is singled out in this way - **here**, in this jubilee presentation of a prestigious institution whose main vocation has never been that of a periodical publisher - is undoubtedly to make people forget a certain fact that is unpleasant to some¹⁷ (**): that the said institution would undoubtedly have been written off and forgotten long ago, if for three or four critical years a certain quidam, stubbornly pursuing in his corner ideas of his own (which had the good fortune to catch the eye), had not been able to come up with a solution.

p. 456 some, including in the "big world"), had only brought it against all the odds¹⁸ (***) a caution and credibility that the "plus beaux statuts d'association du monde, et même les plus beaux "conseillers world-renowned scientists" (sic), are powerless to deliver.

(September 30) The style of this jubilee booklet (which I'm going to get to know very well!) is certainly not that of my friend Pierre, nor of Nico - they surely have other things to worry about, both of them, than composing this kind of occasional text. On the other hand, it's obvious that the two minute portraits I'm interested in, one of me and the other of Deligne, weren't written without Deligne at least providing the words.

-And it's equally clear to me that these two texts, at least, were not delivered to a printer without Deligne having first read them and given the go-ahead. So it seems clear to me from the outset that the two texts in question reflect in any case and first and foremost my friend's dispositions and intentions - the image he strives to give of myself and himself, both to himself and to the mathematical public. It is in this respect, of course, that these two passages interest me. This interest does not depend on whether or not Deligne is the author of these revealing lines, or whether the author is someone else (the one who undoubtedly "thought up" the brochure as a whole), who for one reason or another would have espoused this "message" that my friend wanted to get across.

At the end of these pages, you'll find the two minute portraits, taken from the portrait gallery (pp. 13-19) entitled "Activities of permanent and long-term visiting professors".

ALEXANDRE GROTHENDIECK, mathematician, professor at IHES from 1958 to 1970, Fields Medal.

p. 457 During his 12 years at the institute, A. Grothendieck renewed the foundations and methods of algebraic geometry, and opened up new applications for it, notably arithmetic. At the IHES he created^a a school of algebraic geometry, based on the seminar he led and nourished by the generosity with which he communicated his ideas. The titanic aspect of his work is reflected in his publications, including the treatise "Eléments de géométrie algébrique", in collaboration with Jean Dieudonné (8 fascicules) and the 12 volumes of the "Séminaires de géométrie algébrique du Bois-Marie", in collaboration with numerous students.

In algebraic geometry, he identified the essential problems and gave each concept its greatest natural generality. The notions introduced have proved essential far beyond algebraic geometry. They often seem so natural that it's hard to imagine the effort they cost. If

¹⁷(**) With all due respect to my friend Nico (who at the time had been director of the aforementioned jubilee institution for twelve years), who surely (on this occasion as on others) saw nothing but fire. ...

¹⁸(***) Against all odds: throughout those four years, I didn't let myself be impressed by the persistent warnings and rumors of imminent bankruptcy of an "adventure" (as some well-informed friends would have us believe. . .) that was entirely unrealistic, not to say a bit of a smokescreen! The fact is that, at the time, IHES had no financial or land base whatsoever, and its life was constantly dependent on short-term donations from a few more or less well-disposed industrialists. I didn't worry much about this, confining myself to trusting the founder-director Léon Motchane, who managed year after year to "save the day" through feats of financial prestidigitation and "public relations". After all, in these clement times, if things fell apart, I had a good chance of quickly finding a less problematic fallback position! On the other hand, if I won the bet I'd made on IHES (with the encouragement of Dieudonné, who knew Motchane and in whom I had every confidence), my position at IHES suited me better than any other I knew of.

This was undoubtedly facilitated by the great attention he paid to terminology. Let's not forget that the "Grothendieck groups", linked in algebraic geometry to the theory of intersections and used in topology, are the ancestors of algebraic *K-theory*. The topos introduced in algebraic geometry on a general base field to transpose results previously proved on \mathbb{C} by way of are now used in logic.

He left the IHES in 1970, at a time when his passion for mathematics was waning. Are we to believe that the problems he was tackling along the lines he had set himself had become too difficult?

.....

PIERRE DELIGNE, mathematician, professor at IHES since 1970, Fields Medal, Henri Poincaré Gold Medal, Foreign Associate of the Académie des Sciences.

The main thrust of his work is "understanding the cohomology of algebraic varieties". If the complex algebraic variety X is nonsingular projective, the theory of harmonic integrals provides a Hodge structure on $H^*(X)$. Based on this and on l -adic analogies suggested by Grothendieck, he derived the notion of mixed Hodge structure and equipped the cohomology of any complex algebraic variety with it. In l -adic cohomology, i.e. for varieties over a finite field, he proved Weil's proverbially difficult conjectures. This result seemed all the more surprising given that Grothendieck, having constructed the theory of cohomology over any field, had reduced the remaining conjecture to a series of conjectures that are still as unapproachable today as they were then.

This theorem has helped make l -adic cohomology a powerful tool, applicable to questions in seemingly far removed from algebraic geometry, such as Ramanujam's conjecture.

□ More recently, he has studied Hodge cycles on abelian varieties, taking a first step towards a "motivic theory", just as Grothendieck had dreamed. He also demonstrated the algebraic mechanism of "intersection cohomology", the topological theory of Mac Pherson and Goresky. This enabled it to be transposed into l -adic theory, where it proved surprisingly useful.

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He is currently interested in non-commutative harmonic analysis (theory of functions on real or p -adic Lie groups - or finite classical groups - and certain homogeneous spaces), as an extension of his work on automorphic forms (Ramanujam conjecture) and, with G. Lusztig, on representations of finite groups.

He is quick to assimilate and penetrate all mathematics, and as a result has enlightening and constructive reactions to every question put to him.

These two texts need to be supplemented by a third, in which Deligne and I appear in one breath. I found it in a loose leaf inserted in the brochure, under the same title "Orientation des recherches à l'IHES" as the chapter in which the "galerie de portraits" is inserted, with the subtitle: "Note sommaire sur les 'perspectives des activités scientifiques'". This is essentially a draconian "shortening" of the portrait gallery, reduced this time to just the "permanent professors" (present or past)¹⁹ (*), with two or three lines devoted to each. These are (in the order in which they are cited) myself, Deligne, Michel, Thom, Ruelle, Sullivan, Connes, Lanford III, Gromov. This is the order of the more detailed portrait gallery, except that this time Deligne has "moved up", for the benefit of being quoted in one breath with me. Amusingly, in this text the proper names of the eminences reviewed all appear underlined, with the sole exception of my modest self²⁰ (**)! Here's the passage about my friend and me:

¹⁹(*) (October 1) To keep things in perspective, we've also included Connes (although he's only a "visitor"), so that's one more "Fields Medal" for the collector. On the other hand, my friend Nico Kuiper has been left out. He wouldn't have made a difficult of stepping aside for the occasion. ...

²⁰(**) (October 1) The typographic effect of this brilliant process (which may not have been consciously intended) is that

Alexandre Grothendieck's theories of legendary depth and Pierre Deligne's brilliant discoveries (both Fields Medals) have linked topology, algebraic geometry and number theory in "interdisciplinary" ways (cohomology). More recently, this has enabled G. Faltings from Germany (who had previously worked at IHES) to prove a landmark theorem in number theory, which sheds light on the famous "Fermat theorem".

Incidentally, in this mini-gallery, the "Fields medals" have been given a capital M - and "interdisciplinarity" has been a favorite theme of its founder-director since the early days of the IHES. It is perhaps thanks to this circumstance, moreover, that this digest finally seems to imply that my person might have something to do with a certain "interdisciplinary means" called "cohomology" (which also happens to be the "guiding axis" of Deligne's work, by who knows what coincidence).

But here I am, taking this text by the scruff of the neck! The occasional reference to Faltings, who had overnight risen to the top ranks of scientific actuality with his sensational result (described here as "arduous", as if that's what it was all about - but that's beside the point...) - it too is part of the "little bit" of the text: the scribe's "signature" in short, and hardly worth my attention. It's the first sentence about Deligne and me that obviously contains the essential "message" of the passage. It tells me a lot about certain dispositions in my friend and ex-student - and above all about a profound "Unsicherheit" (insecurity, lack of assurance, deep inner grounding)²¹ (*). Here, no more than in any of the published texts signed by him²² (**), or in the two minute portraits that preceded it, nothing could make one sup-

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I don't think my friend could have learned anything from me at some point. But here he is, in no uncertain terms, presenting himself as **another father** of a vast unifying vision "taken" from others²³ (*), as if subjugated by the intimate conviction of his profound inability to conceive himself and allow **his own** visions, as vast or even more vast, to blossom within him ; and as if, in order to be and appear "great", all that remained to him was the derisory resource of **reclaiming for his own account** the halo with which it had pleased him since his youth to surround a prestigious and now defunct elder (or at least, declared as such by a providential consensus . . .). To take hold of a **halo**, rather than let the still unformed and nameless things within him germinate and blossom, waiting to be born and named - rather than to live out **his own strength**, which lies within him, and which is also waiting. . .

(October 1) Last night, it seemed to me that I was once again at the heart of the conflict - the very one I mentioned in general terms at the very beginning of Harvest and Sowing, eight months ago (in the section

this passage, which is about to be quoted, appears to be dedicated to PIERRE DELIGNE (whose name appears typographically as the head of the "permanent" line, to the exclusion of my own), and that I am somewhat of a **collaborator**, a stranger to the establishment! Chronological order is certainly respected, nothing to say for sure - and yet the effect produced (and surely intended) is that of a role **reversal**, arousing familiar associations in me (evoked in notes such as "le renversement", "L'éviction", "Pouce", n°s 68', 63, 77). As a result, I've also rediscovered a certain **style of** appropriation - the "Pouce! - style, which clearly identifies me as **the real** author of the message.

²¹(*) The German word "Unsicherheit" that came to me here has no equivalent in French, nor (I believe) in English. Its literal translation "insecurity" can hardly be applied to a psychological trait. The negative term "lack of assurance" is another makeshift approximation. It's understood that what we're talking about here is "assurance" at a deep level, the lack of which can be perceived on certain occasions, while superficially the impression of assurance, of perfect ease prevails; they form like a protective carapace, of an often considerable, foolproof inertia and "solidity". ...

²²(**) At least the ones I've seen so far.

²³(*) There's a particular irony in the fact, moreover, that this vision, taken here from others as a "halo" for himself, has in fact been scorned and systematically opposed since the master's "death", by the very same person acting as heir while at the same time standing out and repudiating the inheritance. On this subject, see the three notes "L'héritier", "Les cohéritiers. . .", ". . . and the chainsaw" (n° 90,91,92); and for further illustrations, the X procession (Le Fourgon Funèbre), made up of the four "coffins" 1 to 4 and the Gravedigger (notes n° 93 to 97).

"Infallibility (of others) and contempt (of self)", n° 4), and which I found again "in an extreme and particularly striking case", towards the beginning of the Burial (in the note "the knot", n° 65, April 26). This was again an unexpected encounter, at the turn of a quotation that I ended up including in the wake of the other two, out of a sense of conscience! I'd spotted the passage a few days ago, while leafing through the famous booklet, and it struck me at the time, but I didn't dwell on it. But yesterday, once I'd written it down in black and white, it immediately struck me as more meaningful, and more striking, than the two circumstantial passages I'd just copied down and which were supposed to form the main theme of the note I was writing. Yet there was no shortage of places that clicked in these two passages, eliciting associations that I would not have failed, even four months ago, to develop as dryly □ over another ten pages if not not twenty. But it suddenly seemed to me that what I could have developed in this way was basically, with one exception at most, something **already known** that I was finding confirmed, perhaps from a somewhat different angle, and above all: that these were **accessory** aspects after all, the kind of aspects I had dwelt on extensively in the previous "Compliments" note of May (and even throughout my reflection on the Burial). The third passage, on the other hand, brought me back to something **essential**, which I'd tended to lose sight of during the long "investigation" that was (among other things) my work on the Burial.

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I was tempted to leave it at that then, without at least trying to put into words what this single, pithy four-line sentence was saying to me, and which on some level was indeed "heard". In the end, I ignored it. The words came slowly and hesitantly, while the impression, diffuse at first, became clearer as I wrote. Once I'd written it down in black and white, and pruned away what seemed unnecessary, I knew I'd captured what I'd "heard" as well as I'd ever be able to.

It was getting prohibitively late, and I really had to stop there. I went to bed happy, but not yet sure whether I'd include what I'd just written in my testimonial for publication. After all, I might as well leave it to the reader, if he was interested in going beyond the surface of a message, to find out for himself what **he** heard in it! It was only today that I knew I would include this passage, which does express a certain perception or understanding I have (or think I have) of something that seems to me important, even crucial as the mainspring of this Burial.

18.2. THE KEY TO YIN AND YANG

18.2.1. (1) Muscle and gut (yang buries yin (1))

Note 106 (October 2) I'd still like to pursue at least one of the associations of ideas aroused by the three-part Funeral Eulogy (which I finally quoted in full yesterday). This association had occurred to me the day after May 12, when I had just written the note "L' Eloge Funèbre (1) - ou les

compliments" (n° 104). It touches on a certain aspect of things that often breaks unnoticed, and that I only began to really realize □ five or six years

ago
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Between the lines in the texts examined, we see the cult of certain **values** asserting itself. Thus, what is emphasized about Weil's conjectures, proven by Deligne, is their "**difficulty**"²⁴ (*)-not their

²⁴(*) (October 3) Diffi culty described as "proverbial", no less! It makes little sense, other than to impress those not in the know! The "diffi culty" of a conjecture can only really be appreciated once it has been demonstrated - it's its fruitfulness, on the other hand, that can be sensed from the outset, and which often manifests itself objectively, even before it has been demonstrated, through the work it has inspired. The "great" conjectures are not distinguished from the others by their "diffi culty" (which is unknown - even supposing the term has any meaning. . .), but by their **fecundity**. I note in passing that this is one aspect

beauty, their simplicity, the vast perspectives they opened up from the very moment they were enunciated by Weil. I'm thinking, too, of the fruits of these glimpsed perspectives, long before they were demonstrated, and of other glimpsed fruits that now fall at the right moment, once the last step in the long journey to their demonstration has been taken. It is the beauty, the extraordinary internal coherence of these conjectures, and the previously unsuspected links they reveal, that have made them such a powerful and fertile source of inspiration for two generations of geometers and arithmeticians. The most profound part of my work (both the "fully completed" work and the "dream of motifs") is directly inspired by them (through Serre, who was able to capture and communicate the full force of the vision expressed in his conjectures). Without them, neither *l-adic* cohomology nor even the language of topos would probably have seen the light of day. To put it another way, the "vast unifying vision" of (algebraic) geometry, topology and arithmetic that I've been striving to develop over the last fifteen years of my life, is to be found in these "Weil conjectures". And as the vision gained in breadth and maturity, it was this vision itself, and the previously hidden things it enabled me to apprehend one by one, that told me step by step what to do, by which end to "take" what was at hand. The last step in the demonstration of Weil's conjectures was neither more nor less than one of the steps in a long and fascinating journey that began, I can't say when, long before I was born, and which, after my death, will not be completed any time soon!

p. 463 □ But following the spirit one detects in the quoted text, one could believe that Weil's "conjectures" were a question of weights: here's the weight to lift "à l'arrachée"! Two hundred kilos is no mean feat, the difficulty is proverbial, many have tried it and not one yet has been able to do it - until "H-day" (like "Hercules")! The result was astonishing (106_1), just think of the two quintals - no one would have believed they'd ever manage it. ... The same spirit can be perceived in the laconic commentary on the "difficult theorem" proved by Faltings: here again, in the very designation of this new stage in our knowledge of things, it is the **difficulty** again that is highlighted, to arouse the admiration of the crowds - not the perspectives that open up, starting from a new summit crossed²⁵ (*). It didn't even seem worth mentioning the name "Mordell's conjecture" (admittedly unknown to a non-mathematical audience) - as if the apprehension and formulation of the conjecture (here, by Mordell) were an accessory, because "easy". Instead, a biddon perspective on "Fermat's theorem" (which is supposed to be "enlightened"). It's true that the latter is universally known (even outside mathematical circles) as a weight of well over three hundred kilos (which has withstood three centuries of effort).

The first point I wanted to make is that the values exalted in these texts (with the discretion befitting the occasion, of course) are those that can be called the **values of muscle**, of the "cerebral muscle" in this case: the one that makes it possible to surpass, by sheer strength of wrist, proverbial records of "difficulty".

These are not just the values of the hero in the spotlight, like those of the author of a certain jubilee brochure (an anonymous author whom I think I recognize). They are also the values increasingly (does it not seem) dominate the mathematical world, and more generally, the scientific world. Even beyond this world, which is still relatively small, □ ^{we} can say that these are also, and increasingly, the values of a certain "culture", described as "Western"²⁶ (*). Nowadays and since

p. 464 of a thing, while "diffi culty" is a typically "yang", "masculine" value.

²⁵(*) What struck me most, from the moment I held in my hands Faltings' preprint in which he proves three key conjectures, including Mordell's (discussed here), was on the contrary the extraordinary **simplicity** of the approach, by which he proves in some forty pages these results, which were supposed to be "out of reach"! (Compare note n° 3.)

²⁶(*) When I refer here to the "values" of our culture as they appear today, I'm of course referring to the "values" of our culture as they appear today.

It's been a long time since this "culture" and its values conquered the surface of our planet, wiping out all others as irrefutable proof of their superiority. The planetary symbol, the heroic embodiment of these values, is the cosmonaut in his waterproof armor, the first to set foot on some unimaginably remote and desolate planet, in front of millions of breathless TV viewers slumped in front of their screens.

These values, which in the absence of a closer definition I've limited myself to a brief term of symbolic value, "muscle", are not new. In ethnologist's jargon, we could also call them "patriarchal". One of the first written texts, it seems to me, in which their primacy is forcefully asserted (force without reply!) is the Old Testament (and more particularly, the book of Moses). And yet, one only has to read this fascinating document from a remote era to realize that the primacy of "patriarchal" values, that of man over woman, or that of "spirit" over "body" or "matter", was far from going as far as the negation or contempt of complementary values (which were perhaps not yet perceived as "opposed" or "antagonistic")²⁷ (**). I don't know if the history of the vicissitudes of these two sets of complementary values has ever been written - and it must be a fascinating thing to pursue this history, through centuries and millennia, from the time of Moses to the present day. It's also the story, no doubt, of the gradual degradation of a certain balance of "values", "patriarchal" or "masculine" on the one hand, "matriarchal" or "feminine" on the other - of "muscle" and "guts", of "spirit" and "matter"; a degradation that has visibly moved in the direction of "male" values (or "yang", in traditional Eastern dialectics), to the detriment of "feminine" values. to the detriment of "female" (or "yin") values.

□ It seems to me that our era is characterized as one of excessive exacerbation of this degradation. The last acts of this history include the closely interrelated "space race" between the two antagonistic superpowers (imbued with essentially identical values), and the arms race (nuclear in particular). As the final act and probable outcome of this relentless evolution in the outbidding of a certain type of "force" or "power", we can already foresee some nuclear holocaust (or other, there's an embarrassment of riches to choose from. . .) on a planetary scale. Perhaps it will have the merit of solving all problems at once and once and for all... .

My intention here, however, is not to paint a tantalizing picture of the "end of the world" (they didn't wait for me to do that), and even less to wage war against "muscle", or "brain" (aka "mind"). I know that even my "guts" would have nothing to gain from it! I value my muscles and my brain, which I'm sure are very useful, just as I value my "guts", which are no less useful. Rather, I'd like to say a few words here (if I may) about how this profound conflict between these two types of values, conveyed by the surrounding culture, has played out in my own life. In more down-to-earth terms, it's also about the history of my attitudes (of acceptance or even exaltation, or rejection) of two equally real and tangible **aspects** or **faces** of my person, inseparable and complementary by nature, and in no way antagonistic in themselves. I could call them "**the man**" and "**the woman**" in me, or also (to take less "loaded" appellations, and which therefore offer less risk of misleading), the "**yang**" and the "**yin**".

It would seem that for most people, the "chips are down" from early childhood, when the

"official" values - those conveyed by schools, the media and the family, and which are the subject of a general consensus in various professional circles. This does not mean that these values are unreservedly accepted by all, nor that they form the basis of everyone's attitudes and behaviour. Indeed, it is with distress that honest people, the media and competent professional literature (from the pens of educators, sociologists, psychiatrists etc.) speak of a "certain youth" in particular, who decidedly don't "fit in" and who don't fit in with a certain picture!

²⁷(**) Mother worship, for example, is a deeply rooted tradition in Judaism, which no doubt serves to compensate for the "official" values (so to speak) emphasized in the sacred texts. This tradition is found again, in a modified and more exalted form, in the Catholic tradition, with the cult of (the Virgin!) Mary.

in place The essential mechanisms which, for the rest of our lives, will silently dominate our attitudes and behavior with the efficiency of a perfectly tuned automaton. At the heart of these mechanisms are those of affirmation or rejection of such and such traits in us, or of such deep-seated impulses, with either a yang or yin "signature", or of such and such "packages" of traits and impulses with a given signature, or even of the entire "yang" or "yin" package. It is these mechanisms which, to a very large extent, determine all the others. choice mechanisms (affirmation or rejection) structuring our "self".

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□ For reasons that still remain mysterious to me, in my own case the history of relationships (both (both in the "boss" himself and in the "worker", both of whom are dependent on the double yin-yang aspect of all things) - this history has been more eventful than usual. I can distinguish three periods. The last, in a sense, is the same as the first, which spans the first five years of my childhood. This third period, which I can call that of **maturity**, can be seen as a kind of "return" to that childhood, or as a gradual reunion with the "**state of childhood**", with the harmony of the uneventful marriage of "yin" and "yang" in my being. This reunion began in July 1976, at the age of forty-eight - the same year I made the discovery (three months later) of a hitherto unknown power within me, the power of meditation²⁸ (*).

The dominant values of both my parents, my mother and my father, were yang values: willpower, intelligence (in the sense of intellectual power), self-control, dominance over others, intransigence, "Konsequenz" (which means, in German, extreme coherence in (or with) one's options, particularly ideological-logical), "idealism" in both political and practical terms... . In my mother's case, this valorization took on an exacerbated force from an early age, and was the flip side of a genuine hatred she had developed towards "the woman" in her (and from then on, towards the feminine in general). (I myself only discovered these things five years ago, three years after meditation came into my life). In such a parental context, it's a mystery (and yet a fact that's beyond doubt for me) that I was able to blossom fully during the first five years of my childhood - right up to the moment when my parents, my older sister and I were uprooted from our parental environment and my family of origin (made up of my parents, my older sister and myself) was destroyed by my mother's will and the political events of 1933.

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Note 106₁ □ (October 3) Neither I nor Deligne have ever had the slightest doubt that Weil's conjectures may not be valid, and I don't recall anyone expressing such doubts. Describing the "result" (i.e. the proof of these conjectures) as "surprising", again shows a deliberate intention to impress. In fact, at no time since the introduction of "topology" and scalar cohomology have I felt that these conjectures were beyond my grasp, but rather (from 1963 onwards) that they were bound to be proved within the next few years. When I left in 1970, I had little doubt that Deligne, who was in the best position of all, would soon prove them (which he did), along with the stronger "standard conjectures on algebraic cycles" (which, on the other hand, he set out to discredit).

Indeed, Deligne is right to express reservations about the validity of the latter conjectures, of which I'm no more convinced than he is. But the scope of a conjecture doesn't depend on whether it turns out to be true or false, any more than its so-called "difficulty" renders it "out of reach".

²⁸(*) See the two sections "Desire and meditation" and "Wonder", n°s 36 and 37.

- is entirely subjective. It depends solely on whether the **question** on which the conjecture puts its finger (and which had not been perceived, before it was asked) - whether this question touches on something truly essential to our knowledge of things. It's obvious (to me, at least!) that there can be no question of having a good understanding of algebraic cycles, nor of the so-called "arithmetic" properties of the cohomology of algebraic varieties (or, indeed, of "pattern geometry"), as long as the question of the validity of these conjectures remains unresolved. Even today, as at the Bombay Congress in 1968, I consider this question, along with that of the resolution of singularities, to be one of the two most fundamental issues in algebraic geometry. I'm well aware of the significance of both! This potential fruitfulness cannot fail to manifest itself, as soon as we no longer limit ourselves to bumbling around a conjecture that has been declared "too difficult", and someone finally takes the trouble to roll up their sleeves and get to grips with it!

18.2.2. (2) Story of a life: a cycle in three movements

18.2.2.1. (a) Innocence (the marriage of yin and yang)

Note 107 □ (October 4) I have already had occasion to mention an important aspect of these first five p. 468 years of my life, as a "privilege" of great price²⁹ (*): a deep and unproblematic identification with my father, which has never been touched by fear or envy. I became aware of this circumstance, and of the very existence, as well as the silent strength, of this identification with my father, only four years ago (during the meditation on my childhood and my life that followed the one from August 79 to March 80 on my parents). This identification was like the peaceful and powerful core of an identification with the family we formed, my parents, my sister (who was four years my senior) and me. I had boundless admiration and love for both my father and my mother. For me, they were the measure of all things.

This in no way means that my attitude towards them was one of automatic approval, of blissful admiration. I probably didn't know that they were the measure of all things to me, but I knew full well that they were fallible like me, and there was no fear in me that would have prevented me from noticing a disagreement and making it clear. In the conflicts that surrounded me, I wasn't afraid to take sides in my own way. This had nothing to do with a certain faith and self-assurance that formed the deep, unshakeable foundation of my being - rather, it flowed spontaneously from that very faith and self-assurance. Sometimes my father, in fits of impotent anger when my sister (without seeming to) took pleasure in provoking him, would strike her brutally - and each time I was outraged, in an outburst of unreserved solidarity with my sister. I think these were the only big clouds in my relationship with "my father" (there were none with my mother). It's not that I approved of my sister's sometimes pitiful tricks, nor, I think, that they really troubled me - **she** wasn't the measure of things for me. Her tricks (the reason for which surely escaped me as much as it did my father, who always "worked", or my mother, who never intervened either before or after) - in a way, these tricks didn't really have any consequences for me. She was my sister, just the way she was, that was the trick. But **my father** let himself be to such blind brutality...

The three people closest to me, who together formed the matrix of my early years, were torn apart by the conflict between ^{each}□^{of} them and themselves, and between them and the other two: an insidious flict, aup between my mother and my sister, and violent conflict between my father and my mother of a

²⁹(*) See the note "The massacre", n° 87.

on the one hand, and my sister on the other, who each on her own account (and without anyone during my parents' lifetime ever pretending to notice. . .) made it work in their own way. The mysterious, extraordinary thing was that, surrounded by conflict in these most sensitive, crucial years of my life, it remained **outside** me, that it didn't really "bite" into my being in those years and settle there permanently.

The division in my being, which has marked my life as much as anyone else's, didn't take hold in those years, but in the two or three that followed, from my sixth to my eighth year or so. At a certain point (which I thought I could pinpoint to within a few months of my eighth year), there was a certain **turning point**, after more than two years of separation from my parents (who didn't bother to give me any sign of life) and from my sister. It was above all a **break with my childhood**, "buried" from that moment onwards by effective forgetting mechanisms (which have remained in place, more or less, to this very day). At some deep level (not the deepest though. . .) my parents were then declared by me to be "foreigners", just as my childhood was now declared to be "foreign". I **abdicated**, in a sense: to be accepted in the world that now surrounded me, I decided to be like "them", like the adults who made the law there - to acquire and develop the weapons that command respect, to fight on equal terms in a world where only a certain kind of "strength" is accepted and prized... .

It was this strength, too, that was favored by my parents, who had surrounded me in my early years. And here I come back to that "mysterious thing" (from which I've just moved away, following the thread of another association aroused by this thing), the **absence of division in me**, in those early years of my life.

Perhaps the mystery for me no longer lies in this absence, but rather in this: that my parents, both my father and my mother, then **accepted me in my totality**, and totally: in what in me is "virile", is "man", and in what is "woman". Or to put it another way: that my parents, both torn apart by conflict, each denying an essential part of their being - each incapable of a loving openness to himself and to each other, as of a loving openness to my sister... . that nevertheless they found such openness, such unreserved acceptance, toward me □ their son.

To put it another way: at no time in these first five years of my life have I felt **ashamed of who I am**, whether in my body and its functions, or in my impulses, inclinations and actions. At no time have I had to deny anything about myself in order to be accepted by those around me and live in peace with them.

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Of course, there were times when I did things that just didn't "fit": like all children, I was bound to be a pain, even unbearable, when I got down to it - and it was clear from time to time that I needed to put things right. I didn't lay down the law, nor was I tempted to, not having to compensate for some secret mutilation. And in my parents' love for me, there could have been no room for adulation, for indulgence in whims - for unconditional approval. But while I was bound to be "sent packing" by my father or my mother (just as the reverse could sometimes happen), neither of them ever made me feel ashamed of an act or behavior that didn't please them.

Against the backdrop of a deep, unambiguous identification with my father, I see myself as a child, imbued with both virility and femininity, both strong.

It seems to me that in each being and in each thing, in the indissoluble and fluctuating marriage of the yin and yang qualities within it that make it what it is, and whose delicate balance is its profound beauty,

the harmony that lives in this being or thing - that in this intimate union of yin and yang there is often (perhaps always) a background note, a "dominant", which is either yin or yang. This background note is not always easy to detect in a person, because of the more or less effective and complete mechanisms of repression, which distort the game by substituting a borrowed image for an original harmony. So my "brand image" for forty years was almost exclusively masculine - without ever being questioned or even detected as such, either by myself or (it seems to me) by others, until my forty-eighth year. I tend to believe, however, that the background note present at birth remains present throughout one's entire life, at least in deep layers that will perhaps never find their way to the outside world.

the opportunity to come out into the open. In my own case, strangely enough, I still don't know what to make of it. say what this dominant note is, the one therefore □ which permeated my early childhood and which was "mine"

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when I was born. Various signs have made me suspect more than once that this note is "yin", that it's the "feminine" qualities that dominate in my being, when it finds the opportunity to manifest itself spontaneously, in the moments when it's free from all kinds of conditioning that have accumulated in me since childhood. To put it another way: it could be that what is the creative force in my body and mind, what I've sometimes called "the child" or "the worker" in me (as opposed to the "boss" who represents the structure of the self, i.e. what is conditioned in me, the sum or result of the conditioning accumulated in my person) - that this force is even more "feminine" than "virile" (whereas by nature and necessity it is one, and the other).

This is not the place to go into all these "signs". The important thing is not whether this deep dominant note in me is "feminine", or whether it is "virile". Rather, it's that I know how to **be myself** at every moment, welcoming without reticence both the traits and impulses within me by which I am "woman", and those by which I am "man", and allowing them to express themselves freely.

When I was a child, in those early years, it wasn't unusual for strangers to mistake me for a girl - without this ever creating the slightest sense of unease or insecurity in me. It was mainly my voice, I think, that had this effect, a very clear, high-pitched voice - not to mention the fact that I had long hair (mostly disheveled), perhaps simply because my mother (who had plenty of other things to worry about) didn't often take the time to cut it for me. I was also as strong as a Turk, and I didn't mind playing violent or daredevil games, although I did have a penchant for silence, even solitude, and a penchant for playing with dolls³⁰ (*). I don't remember anyone making fun of me for this, but it certainly happened here and there. If such incidents passed without leaving a trace of injury or humiliation, it's surely because they were not echoed or amplified by any feeling of insecurity in me, while the acceptance of who I was, by those who alone really mattered to me, was beyond question. Mockery couldn't have reached me, it could only be turned against the one who must have seemed so foolish to me, to pretend to find fault with the most natural thing in the world.

□ I was well aware, moreover, that this kind of rather strange silliness is by no means an uncommon thing, that the mere sight

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nudity can cause scandal! Yet for as long as I could remember, I'd had every opportunity to see my mother, father and sister naked, and every opportunity to satisfy my legitimate curiosity as to how each of them and myself were made. It was quite obvious that there was no cause for scandal in the conformation of either men or women, which seemed to me decidedly fine as it was.

³⁰(*) If this inclination seems rare in little boys, I think it's mainly because it's systematically discouraged by those around them.

it was - and more particularly (I made no secret of it) that of women.

18.2.2.2. (b) Superpère (yang buries yin (2))

Note 108 (October 5) It was in 1933, when I was in my sixth year, that the first crucial turning point in my life took place, which was at the same time a crucial turning point in the lives of both my mother and father, in their relationship to each other and to their children. It was the episode of the violent and definitive destruction of the family we four formed, a destruction of which I was the first and only person, forty-six years later, to acknowledge and follow the events, in my parents' correspondence and in one or two exsanguinated, enigmatic and tenacious memories, patiently probed and deciphered - long after my father's death and that of my mother³¹ (*).

It's not my place to expand here on what I've learned and understood in the course of this long work, about the significance and meaning of this episode. Three days ago, I already alluded to this turning point³² (**), as marking the abrupt end of the first of the three great periods in the history of the marriage of yin and yang within me. In December 1933, I found myself hurriedly dumped into a foreign family that neither I nor my mother, who had brought me there from Berlin, had ever seen. In fact, these unknown people she was taking me to were simply the first people who would take me in as a "boarder" for a very modest pension, and with no guarantee whatsoever that it would ever be paid.

p. 473 my mother was preparing to join my father as soon as possible, who was moping around waiting for her in Paris. It was an *en-tendu* thing between my parents that everything was going to be for the best so much for me in Blankenese (near Hamburg),

than for my sister, who for a few months had been dumped at the end of the day in an institution in Berlin for handicapped children (where she had been accepted, even though she was no more handicapped than me or our parents).

At the end of six strange months, heavy with dull menace and anguish, I found myself overnight in a world totally different from the only world I'd known in my life, the one formed by my parents, my sister and me. I found myself as one of a group of boarders, eating separately from the family and looking like second-class children to the children at home, who formed a world of their own and looked down on us. From my mother I received a hasty, stilted letter from time to time, and from my father never a line in his hand, during the five years I stayed there (until 1939, on the eve of the war, when I finally rejoined my parents under the pressure of events).

The couple who took me in quickly endeared themselves to me. Both he, a former pastor who had left the priesthood and lived on a meagre pension and private lessons in Latin, Greek and mathematics, and his vivacious and sometimes mischievous wife, were unusual people, endearing in many ways. He was a humanist of vast culture who had lost his way a little in politics, and had run afoul of the Nazi regime, which eventually left him alone. After the war, I renewed my acquaintance and remained in close contact with them until both died³³ (*).

From him and especially from her, as from my parents, I received the best as well as the worst. Today, with the benefit of hindsight, I am grateful to them (as I am to my parents) for the "best", as well as for the "worst". It was this best and worst that I received, first from my parents, then from them, that formed the bulk of the voluminous "package" I received as a child (as everyone receives the

³¹(*) My father died in Auschwitz in 1942, my mother in 1957. The work I'm talking about here took place between August 1979 and October 1980.

³²(**) See the end of the note "Yang buries yin - or muscle and guts", n° 106.

³³(*) She died at the age of 99, two years ago, and I was able to see her dead again, face to face with her, the day before the funeral.

his. . .)j, which it was up to me to unpack and examine. They are part of the substance, the richness of my past, and it's up to me to nourish my present.

My new environment was all very "proper" and conformist in many ways, with in any case the repressive attitudes de rigueur for everything to do with the body and, more particularly, sex. It took □pourtant several years, I think, before I internalized and took p . 474 back to myself. these attitudes, like the shame of showing myself naked, go hand in hand with an ambiguous relationship with my body. This shame, inculcated from an early age, is one aspect of a deep-seated division, where the body is the object of tacit contempt, while so-called "cultural" values (confused with intellectual capacity for memorization and the like) are held in high esteem. This division within me remained ignored until my forty-eighth year, when it began to be resolved. This was the second great turning point in my life, marking the advent of the "third period" in the history of my relationship to myself, i.e. if that of my relationship to my body, and to the "man" and "woman" in me. But before that, I had ample opportunity to help pass on this division to my children³⁴ (*), whom I could see passing it on in turn. ...

I alluded yesterday³⁵ (**) to the "changeover" that finally took place within me. Delayed by more than two years after the uprooting from the initial family environment (or, better said, after the **destruction of** this environment), this shift consecrates the setting up of the common repressive mechanisms, from which my childhood had until then had the rare good fortune to be exempt. So far, I've detected two major forces of a repressive nature, which dominated my adult life and a large part of my childhood (108₁). I think it's fair to say that they didn't emerge gradually, but that in my case they appeared more or less overnight and in their full force, as the consequence of a deliberate **choice**, at an unconscious level. I described this choice earlier as "abdication", but at the same time it was also a powerful principle of action: "I'll be like 'them'" (and not "like me") also meant; I'm going to "bet" on "the head", no worse in me than in anyone else after all, and fight and "them" fight with their own weapons!

One of these mechanisms, and the one I'm most interested in here, is one of the most common: the **repression of my "feminine" traits** (or those felt as such by common consensus), in favor of "masculine" values. The other side of the coin was, of course, to invest fully in my traits and aptitudes. and the over-development of these, which have taken on a disproportionate role.

□If anything here is out of the ordinary, it is not of course the mere **presence of** this double mechanism, p . 475 nor (it seems to me) the strength of the "repressive" component itself, the strength of the repression of "yin" traits, attitudes and impulses. There's no comparison here with what happened to my mother, whose life (and that of her loved ones) was devastated by her lifelong hatred of what made her a woman. At no time, I think, were my ways entirely devoid of a certain gentleness, even tenderness, which stubbornly rounded out the character I'd carved out for myself as a child, and often won me sympathy and affection. The exceptional side of me is rather in the excessiveness of my investments, in the **excessiveness of** the energy I invest in my tasks, without letting myself be distracted by a glance to the right or to the left! When I'm not working, my mind is constantly focused on the completion of some stage of the job. This attitude ("Zielgerichtetheit" in German, "aimdirectedness" in English) is par excellence a yang attitude, an attitude of **tension**, of **closure** to everything that doesn't seem directly linked to the task.

This excess was likely to conjure up in others the image of a kind of "super-man" or "super-male",

³⁴(*) At least, the four of them I helped raise. The fifth and last one is being raised by his mother, and so far there hasn't been a single opportunity for us to get to know each other.

³⁵(**) See the beginning of the previous note "Ecllosion de la force - ou les épousailles", note n° 107.

admirable, alas (given prevailing values), but immediately arousing (at a level that remains unconscious most of the time) instinctive reactions of defense or even antagonism in the face of such a display of force, perceived as threatening or even aggressive, or in any case dangerous (108₂). Above all, this image irrevocably evokes the image of the "**super-father**", and immediately sets in motion the ambiguous multiplicity of reactions of attraction and repulsion knotted around the age-old conflict with the father. ... This is **my** contribution to the **ambiguous** relationships that have been so common in my life, and with which I found myself confronted so many times in the course of Harvest and Sowing. This ambiguity is reinforced, not diminished, by the persistence of yin traits in me, which fuel a sympathy that the mere hypertrophy of yang traits into a kind of gigantic "superman" would be powerless to arouse.

And once again I can see, in these endless "relationships of ambiguity", that I'm still only reaping what I've sown myself, even if each time the harvest turns out to be unexpected (and unwelcome. . .)! For hasn't the motivation (or at least **one of** the motivations) that drives "the boss" in me to constantly surpass himself in the accumulation of works, been precisely to constantly force and boost the esteem of my peers (in the first place) and of my blunders (moreover); to hear some of the best lament that they can't keep up with me, at the rate I'm going?! Yes, there has been in me this secret desire to arouse in others (as in myself) this "larger-than-life" image, disproportionate-like the very one it reflects-and which obstinately returns only through the other: in clear, lofty words, through the praise expected (and cashed in like a due) - and **also**, through the deep, obscure channels of muted enmity and conflict... ...³⁶(*)

Note 108 □(October 6) I mean that the forces of a repressive nature at play in my life, seem to take mostly, if not exclusively, one of two specific forms: burying the past, and emphasizing my "virile" features to the detriment of my "feminine" ones. I don't mean to say that these two "forces", both repressive in nature (i.e., aimed at "repressing", at suppressing a certain reality), are the only ones that have "dominated my life"! To do so would be to forget the whole non-egotic aspect of my being, the drive for knowledge expressing itself at the level of the body as well as the mind. (On this subject, see

in particular "My passions", section n° 35.)

Even among the forces structuring the ego, emanating from the "boss", there is at least one which is not repressive in nature, which predates the forces of repression by far, and whose role in my life has been even more essential: identification with my father, who has been like "the peaceful and powerful heart" of the feeling of my own strength. This identification in no way exalted certain values or qualities (let's call them virile) to the detriment of others ("feminine"). Irrespective of the values my father professed, his personality (until 1933, when a shift took place in him³⁷ (*)) was marked by a strong yin-yang balance, in which intuition and spontaneity were no less important than intellect and willpower.

Finally, another important "force" of an egotistical nature, intimately linked to repressive mechanisms (or, to put it better, of a "repressive" nature itself), is **vanity**, which has played as heavy a role in my life as in anyone else's. But this "force" is so universal in nature, as is the dominant role it plays in everyone's life (in more or less coarse or subtle form), that there's hardly any need to mention it. But this "force" is so universal in nature, just like the dominant role it plays in everyone's life (in a more or less coarse or subtle form), that there's hardly any point in expressly including it in a list of specific forms.

³⁶(*) (October 6) To tell the truth, the "secret desire" to which I've just put my finger, has not yet been consumed, even if it has been detected in the meantime (just a few years ago. . .), and is less all-consuming today than it was in the past.

³⁷(*) Remarkably, this "shift" in my father (then aged 43) was towards a **super-yin** state, towards a kind of pasha-like passivity, in close connivance with my mother, playing a super-yang role. She took charge of him instead of her children. (They were left to "profit and loss", at least until 1939, the year in which, under the pressure of events and against her will, she finally took me back to her... .) This relationship of dependence on my father, and the yin-yang role reversal between my parents, lasted until my father's death in 1942.

the forces and mechanisms that structure the ego and give it its particular physiognomy and foundation.

Note 108 □(October 6) In this "deployment of force" there is no "aggressive" intention in the common sense p. 477 of the term, neither conscious nor unconscious, only an unconscious desire to impress, to force esteem. It's true that the term "forcing esteem", which comes back to me spontaneously, already carries a connotation of **constraint**, close to that of "aggression". This unconscious intention to coerce, also perceived at an unconscious level, must often be experienced as a kind of aggression (even though this experience remains hidden, as do the antagonistic reactions it triggers). At the same time, this experience must often be conflated with similar childhood experiences involving the father as the protagonist, where the latter appears as the main holder of repressive authority, or even as a crushing rival, envied and hated.

Even without such an amalgam, and independently of any perception in others of a "constraint" intention in me, there must often be the perception of a strong **imbalance**, a fundamental disharmony, in this exclusively yang "deployment of force" (in spirit and intention, at least). This excess is detrimental to the main person concerned, myself, and in fact "dangerous" to his very physical survival (as the health incidents of recent years have clearly shown me!). This is undoubtedly what I was thinking about when I wrote that "such a display of force" was felt "in any case to be dangerous" - dangerous "by nature", an example not to be followed... ! Surely such a feeling is enough to provoke "defensive reactions", even in the absence of any aggression or intention to aggress.

It's true that such relationships of ambiguity recurred after 1976, with some of my students in particular, at times when any mathematical investment was absent, and when there was no apparent "de- poyment of force" in my life. It's also true that the "deployments" in question in the **past** have created a **reputation**, which continues to stick to me, especially in my professional life, and which to some extent replaces the perception of who I am **in the present**. What's more, I've acquired such an ease in dealing with certain mathematical subjects that, even outside my mathematical periods and with the help of my reputation, this natural ease or mastery can already have the effect of a "deployment of force", on unmotivated students, and make them feel me to be (in spite of certain pleasant, even reassuring) as a kind of Superman (a little Superpère around the edges!).

□ Besides, as a flip side of the ease I'm talking about, I often tend to underestimate the difficulty that p. 478 This tends to place them at odds with my expectations. (On this subject, see the note "Failed teaching (1)", n° 23 iv.) Such a situation must quite often be one of the important ingredients of a false relationship. to the father...

18.2.2.3. (c) The reunion (the awakening of yin(1))

Note 109 (October 9) Four days ago, as I finished my previous note³⁸ (*), I felt very happy. I found myself unexpectedly reconnecting with an intuition that came to me on a certain Sunday, October 17, 1976 (eight years ago, give or take a few days) - the intuition of the devastating effect, in my life as well as in my mother's, of a "certain force" within me. It was the first time in my life that I had given any thought, however brief, to what my life, and above all my childhood, had been like. It was also the day after

³⁸(*) See note "Yang buries yin - or the Superfather", n° 108.

of the day I had discovered the power of meditation³⁹ (**), and it was the first time since then that I had made use of this power, so long ignored. It was not by design, but by the effect of a profound impulse, as if moved by a very sure instinct, that the reflection that day ended up being directed towards my childhood. Only in retrospect can I appreciate the extent to which it was the source of my true strength, as well as of the conflict and division within me, that a deep need to know had carried me to that point. For almost three years, I would not return to it, distracted as I was by the "order of the day", without realizing that I remained on the periphery of the conflict in my life, while stubbornly staying away from the heart of it: from that childhood drowned in mists, which seemed so infinitely far away... .

p. 479 I've just gone through again, "diagonally", the eighteen exceptionally dense leaves of this crucial meditation in my life. It was during the night that followed this meditation, or rather in the early hours of the morning after this night of meditation, that I had a dream of shattering force - the first dream of my life too, whose message I probed passionately. I was no more aware then of where I was going and what was happening, than I had been the day before when I was "discovering meditation". Du□rant four hours I delved into the meaning of this experience, this dream-parable, through successive layers of increasingly burning meaning, before arriving at the heart of the message, its simple and obvious meaning.

It wasn't like a sudden understanding of "intelligence", nor even like a sudden light in a darkness or half-light. Rather, it was like a deep wave born within me and suddenly surging through me, and in its vast waters bringing me that sense which had eluded me until then: that I was at this moment reuniting with a very dear and precious being, whom I had lost since childhood... .

That moment felt like a **birth**, like a profound renewal. This feeling remained strong throughout that day, and again in the days that followed. Looking back over eight years, that moment still seems to me to be the most creative of all in my life, and an essential turning point in my spiritual adventure. It had certainly been prepared by many other "moments" in the days and months leading up to it. Perhaps the first precursor was that "salutary uprooting", more than ten years earlier, from an institution where I had intended to end my days⁴⁰ (*). These earlier moments seem to me to be the ingredients, or rather the **means** at my disposal, with which I was able to cross this other "threshold" that lay before me unnoticed, at a deeper, more hidden level than others I had crossed. Everything was in place, for a few days or hours, for me to cross it - and I could cross it, just as I could not cross it, day after day for the rest of my life. ...

And with this threshold well and truly crossed, the way was opened to other crossings, to other "awakenings", each of which by its very nature is also a renewal, and to some extent, a "new birth", a re-birth. I've avoided some of them for months, even years, before finally taking the plunge, relieving myself of some nagging illusion that for a lifetime had stood between me and the full flavor of my life and the world around me. And surely, there are some I continue to evade, even as I write these lines. ...

p. 480 □ In the light of reflection over the last few days, it's that moment of reunion with my childhood, believed lost and dead for a long life, marking the end of the "second period" of my spi- ritual itinerary: that of the predominance, in my personal life, of **egotistical mechanisms**, against the creative forces, the forces of knowledge and renewal, which had gone through an almost complete stagnation of forty years. It was also the time of the predominance of a "certain force", of a force of an almost exclusively "virile" nature, in the image of the values in honor in the surrounding world, at the expense of the "masculine".

³⁹(**) See "Desire and meditation", n° 39.

⁴⁰(*) See note n° 42, of the same name.

deep "feminine" aspects and forces of my being, ignored and repressed (with never complete success, thank God!).

The very first intuition about the destructive nature of this force, which had dominated my life as well as my mother's, and that of other women who had been important in my life - this intuition made a brief appearance in these days of intense maturation, thanks no doubt to the re-emergence of yin, "feminine" energy, in my conscious apprehension of things. Contrary to my hasty recollection earlier, this appearance did not take place during meditation on the eve of the reunion, but a few hours afterwards, in a short meditation on the meaning of what had just happened. The intuition is born and takes shape at the very end of the few pages of notes from this meditation. I perceive the destructive nature of this "force" (which today I would call "superyang force", i.e. excessively yang-dominant) first in my mother, then in other women, and then in these final lines:

"As for the 'strength' in myself, it was certainly this that made me the target and object, expected throughout a young life, of the secret hatred and resentment of M., then J., then S. - of a hatred deposited in them long before they knew of my existence, in the distraught days of a childhood deprived of love."

In fact, the word "childhood", in the last line again, which bears witness to one of the most important days of my life, appears for the last time for almost three years! As for the intuition about the nature of the superyang force in me, as provoker of antagonistic reactions, even of hatred and resentment, it tended (it seems to me) to sink a little into oblivion until the very last few days. To be more precise, it remained present only in my perception of certain important relationships in my life (and especially, relationships with women I've loved). On the other hand, she hardly penetrated really p. 481 situations.

⁴¹ (*), with certain students in particular, as I've had to examine or evoke many times in the course of Harvest and Sowing. Throughout all this reflection, the fact that I myself, by a kind of involuntary "provocation", made my own contribution to the conflict situations I evoked or examined here and there - this fact often remained completely hidden, whereas the protagonist's contribution was quite clear to me. This is, of course, a very common reflex, not to say universal! My reflections over the last few days have defused this reflex and, at the same time, brought it back into focus for me - by bringing me face-to-face with myself - with **a certain** me, at least - at the end of the road (a reflection on yin and yang. . .).

My brief reflection of four days ago barely scratches the surface of the many aspects of my personality that made the yang imbalance in the "character" I'd been playing since childhood felt; and the crushing effects this imbalance could sometimes have on others. On those in particular where the yang-type strength was still lacking - and first and foremost on my own children. I'm thinking here above all of a certain "mode" of peremptory assurance on which I operated, in all the things (and there were many) about which I had, rightly or wrongly, a way of seeing or feeling, or strong opinions. Of course, the idea would never have occurred to me to impose these ways of seeing on anyone, least of all on my children - and thanks to this absence of any desire for constraint within me (at least on a conscious level), I was unable for most of my life to realize the extent to which these ways of being within me (which seemed spontaneous and natural to me, and whose complex nature I was far from discerning. . .) - the extent to which they had an impact on my life.) - to what extent they had the same effect on my children and others as a constraint; or rather, an even more insidious effect: that of arousing or maintaining in others an **insecurity** about the value of their own feelings, ways of seeing, opinions - as though

⁴¹(*) Or treated as such. ...

these (in the face of my unwavering assurance, even my pained astonishment) didn't even **need to exist**.

p. 482 I have a feeling that the development of this propensity in me, particularly in relation to my children, could well be quite complex, intertwining intimately with the vicissitudes of my married life. This is not the place to try and follow its mysteries; nor is it the place to make a more or less inventaire. There were many other aspects of my person that manifested this imbalance, one of which I tried to identify in the previous note: the "deployment of force".

We shouldn't think that this imbalance, cultivated over a lifetime, and the multitude of psychological mechanisms through which it manifested itself, disappeared overnight as if by magic. I didn't expect anything like it, not on that day of our reunion, nor in the days and weeks that followed.

(October 10) These were days of melting ice, buoyed by a powerful influx of new energy - days of inner work and wonder, before the new worlds I saw opening up day after day, taking birth in the humble weave of daily minutiae and unfolding under the intense action of eyes eager to see. These were also the days when the first inkling of the richness of this unknown suddenly calling out to me, which I had ignored only the day before, began to dawn on me. I apprehended it through these "bits" that had just made themselves known to me, in the very instant of the reunion, and in the unpredictable and unforeseen journey that had followed it. I felt that this "birth" through which I had just passed was just the **beginning of** something entirely unknown, or rather the **recommencement of** something that had been interrupted, cut off or stifled one day, and then mysteriously started again. To tell the truth, this intense "becoming" had already been in motion again in the preceding months, but at a level where introspective **thinking** had hardly had any part to play. ...

One of the most profound aspects of this new-found becoming, this new-found work, was the gradual restoration of the original balance of "woman" and "man", of yin and yang within me, over the course of days, weeks and years. In a way, I can say that since the moment of my reunion, "childhood" or the state of being a child has remained present, "in power", through a deep and indelible knowledge within me of my own nature, of my essential, indestructible unity, beyond the effects of a certain "division".

p. 483 which often continues to agitate the surface of my being. The very word "child" or "childhood" to designate the thing, this unity of being, ^{didn't} appear until years later, around the time I began to become acquainted, at the level of conscious thought, with the dual yin-yang aspect of all things. This was also the moment when the knowledge (or at least, the presentiment) emerged that the state of childhood, the creative state, is that of the perfect balance of yin and yang forces and energies, that of the "marriage" of yin and yang, manifesting itself in a state of creative harmony.

It seems to me that, at a certain level, this knowledge of my fundamental unity is present at all times, and that it **acts** at all times. It is also true that this action is more or less sensitive and effective according to the moment, and that it is by no means in the nature of a more or less permanent elimination, or even a wholesale destruction of the egotic forces, of the "boss" therefore - nor even of an elimination of the forces of repression (which form a good part of the "I", if not quite its totality. . .). These are the forces of surreptitious concealment of the reality that surrounds me and the reality that unfolds within me - the forces silently and obstinately at work to maintain against all odds the tenacious illusions, which without them would immediately collapse under their own weight... . Some of these repressive mechanisms have been identified one by one and have disappeared. I got rid of certain **illusions** that had weighed heavily on me, and I cleared up the few stubborn **doubts** that, over a lifetime, had been relegated (by the care of the

"boss") rotting in garbage-undergrounds, never examined. Their message finally heard, these doubts have disappeared, leaving a peaceful and joyful knowledge. I've also spotted some very powerful mechanisms of repression, deeply rooted in the ego, which I've come to realize (over the last few years) have had a considerable impact on my life, today as never before. They go in the direction of yang imbalance, in the direction of the occultation of certain yin forces and faculties. I don't know if these mechanisms will ever be defused - and I know it's up to me. No doubt they will vanish on the day, and only on the day, when I have entered into the origins of the conflict in my life much more deeply and fully than I have done so far.

For the moment, with my life currently focused on a major mathematical investment, I can safely say that it's not going anywhere!

18.2.2.4. (d) Acceptance (the awakening of yin (2))

Note 110 □(October 11) I've been wanting for a day or two to take stock, in a few words, of where p .484 (after eight years) this "gradual restoration of the yin-yang balance" in me.

Perhaps the most important change of all is in a much greater **acceptance** than in the past of who I really am from moment to moment. Another way of putting it is that the mechanisms of repression within me have softened considerably. As I said yesterday, some have disappeared after being discovered and understood, and others, which I had ignored all my life, have become familiar to me in their everyday manifestations. I see them in action, not as enemies I must try to extirpate at all costs, but as part of the multiplicity of facets of my conditioned being, and thus of the richness of the present "given", which faithfully reflects my past history; both the "ancient" history of my conditioning and the roots of division in my being, and the more recent history of my maturation, the work by which I end up unpacking, "eating" and assimilating the initial package bequeathed to me by my parents and their successors. This "acceptance" within me therefore includes not only the impulses and traits of the "child" that I had long ignored and repressed (particularly those reflecting the feminine aspects within me), but also the repressive mechanisms specific to the "boss", i.e. the inveterate mechanisms of "non-acceptance"! Accepting the latter has nothing in common with "cultivating" or fortifying them. On the contrary, it's an indispensable first step towards unravelling them or defusing them to some extent, through the effect of curious and loving attention. The experience of the last eight years has convinced me that, if this attention goes deep enough and to the very root of the repression, the latter can be resolved and disappear, releasing a considerable amount of energy - that which until then had been immobilized to maintain against all odds such and such a set of repressive mechanisms, and the habits of thought and other things that serve to maintain them.

But it wasn't in relation to the inherently "knotted" aspects of myself that this new acceptance of myself first appeared in my life. It came without fanfare, even before the discovery of meditation, and therefore even before the "reunion" that closely followed it. It was in July 1976, during a brief love affair with a young woman, G., perhaps a little more "homely" in her ways than the women I'd loved previously. As fate would have it (?), Les

The material circumstances surrounding these loves were such that I saw myself placed in a typically "feminine" role. I did the housework and prepared the evening meals, waiting for the spouse to return from a p .485 long and tiring working day: tending a herd of one hundred and fifty goats in the hills, which she also had to milk in the evenings. It just so happened that this unusual role of housewife suited me like a glove. It may seem a small thing, but it clicked. I made the connection with some of my friends.

impulses and desires in my love life, expressing themselves for the first time in certain love poems, where the experience of love appears, without any ambiguity, as "feminine". I understood then, without reflection or "effort", without any hint of reticence or embarrassment, that in my body as well as in my desires, in my feelings and in my spirit, I was a woman, as well as a man - and that there was no conflict of any kind between these two profound realities in my being. In those days, the dominant note was feminine - and I accepted this gratefully, in mute astonishment. When I thought about it, there was a quiet, gentle joy in me.

This joy was self-sufficient, it didn't need to be expressed in words, either to myself or to others. I don't know if I spoke about it to the woman whose lover I was, or perhaps whose lover I was... . Surely, on some level she knew, without my having to say so.

This joy has not faded, it has remained alive to this day. It comes from living knowledge, like the fragrance that accompanies a flower. In some moments or periods of my life, this knowledge, and the joy that is a sign of it, is more present than in others, more strongly active. But I don't think it ever leaves me.

When I have spoken of this experience and knowledge here and there, in the weeks and years that followed, it has always been as if I were communicating something of great value to others, in a moment when I felt open to receive, if only for a few moments, something of this joy within me. I've never felt embarrassed to talk about it, as if it were something a little scabrous (perhaps there would have been such embarrassment at times, however, if the reality and strength of the "man" in me hadn't been above suspicion!) And I remember one occasion when I was really showing off, showing off and winning on both counts - all I needed was to get my period like everyone else and give birth to a kid that dry.

My new feminine identity, superimposed on my masculine one, had an immediate renewing effect on my love life. It aroused a very strong echo from the women I subsequently fell in love with, by awakening masculine impulses in the lover, which had been carefully repressed throughout her life, and had hitherto only found expression "on the sly", as a kind of burr, unworthy of appearing in the conscious experience of love.

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The unconscious experience of love is rich in archetypal impulses, one of the most powerful of which is that of returning to the Mother, to the original bosom. Such an archetype is present in the deepest layers of the amorous experience, in both men and women. In women, resistance to the satisfaction of such an impulse in the couple's experience of love is even stronger than in men, where it comes up against a key taboo, and not two as in men. In both cases, the satisfaction of these impulses in the shared experience often remains more or less symbolic and, above all, hidden from awareness. When such an archetype and this experience rise up from the deepest layers to the light of day, in the field of conscious awareness, this experience is immediately transformed, acquiring a new dimension. At the same time, considerable energies previously compressed by repressive mechanisms or bound by repressive tasks are released. The effect is an immediate **liberation of** the erotic impulse, manifesting itself in a renewed intensity and a new fullness in the experience of love.

From the foregoing, it's already clear that this new acceptance of myself has gone hand in hand with an acceptance of others. The two are inextricably linked. Of course, I'm talking here about "acceptance" in the full sense of the word, which in no way means a (often bittersweet) **tolerance** of such and such "foibles" or "faults", felt as a sadly unavoidable evil for which one is obliged to "make do". What I sense in such an attitude is resignation, not to say abdication,

and certainly not a source of joy, nor a surge of awareness of something worth knowing: the presumed, unknown depth behind the flat surface of such "faults" or "shortcomings" that we're willing to tolerate... ..

The fact that this is a joyful, creative acceptance in no way implies that this acceptance is total. An attentive reader will already have noticed this for themselves

more than once in the course of Harvest and Sowing, as I happened to en□rendre in passing,

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(But when it comes to myself, this mechanism more often than not has the effect of not even taking note of the unpleasant thing in question. . .)

The acceptance I'm talking about is rooted in an **interest** in the thing being "accepted", whether in oneself or in others. Whereas acceptance is in itself a typically "yin" inner disposition, this connotation of "interest" that it takes on in me is of a "yang" nature - it's the "yang in the yin", in the delicate Chinese dialectic of the infinite interweaving of yin and yang. ... I was about to venture that there was a pure and simple identity between acceptance (the real thing!) and this interest, this curiosity. And yet, as I reflect a little on the matter, I realize that there's another way of accepting, one that's more totally yin in nature than the one I'm used to. It's like **welcoming** the accepted thing, rather than rushing towards it to probe it. (This nuance of welcome seems to me to be the "**yin** within the yin", here we go!) The impulse of interest, and the attitude of welcome, can both form the keynote of acceptance of others or of oneself. What both have in common is **sympathy**. This, too, is one of the forms of love. If there is any profound identity to be identified here, it would be the observation that **acceptance is a form of love**. Love of self, love of other, both indissolubly linked. ...

Except in rare moments, my interest is more intensely involved in my own person than in that of others. It's this passionate interest in myself that has animated the long periods of meditation over the last eight years. It's true that self-knowledge is at the heart of knowledge of others and of the world, and not the other way round - and I feel that it's towards the heart of things, towards what's most essential, that my new passion, meditation, has carried me and still does. My interest in others has become more fragmented and reluctant over the years, as has the acceptance that comes with it. One of the ways it has manifested itself concretely is in a lesser propensity to talk when I'm in company, and in an attitude of listening. Most of In my life, this ability to listen had been almost entirely lacking. Even after the great turning point of the reunion, I still had to realize quite often □ that I had spoken out of turn, for lack of listening etp . 488 of discernment, before this inveterate propensity began to pass me by. If it has become much less invasive, and has even almost disappeared, it's in no way the result of some self-imposed discipline (such as: you won't open your mouth unless. . .). It's simply because I've lost the urge to talk, at times when I feel that it's useless, that it doesn't contribute anything to others or to me - at least nothing of any value to me. If I can now often feel such things, it's undoubtedly because I've become more attentive. This too has not come about as a result of discipline ("you'll be careful to open your ears wide when..."), but I can't say how. In any case, I feel better for it, and life is that much more interesting (and, above all, less noisy!). And other people feel better too...

I think I really started to talk less, as soon as this

It's the force within me that drives me to always want to rectify what appear to me (rightly or wrongly) to be "errors" in others - as if it wasn't enough for me to detect and rectify my own! It's the same force that drove me (and sometimes still drives me) to want to convince others of this or that, instead of simply looking at why so-and-so prefers to stubbornly believe this rather than that (which seems like "that" to me, and which I'd like to convince him of!); or why I'm so keen for him to believe that, rather than this. This almost universal force within us, which constantly pushes us to seek in the approval of others (and even just one. . .) the confirmation of the validity of what we hold to be true - this force deeply rooted in the ego has finally, I believe, let go of me. It was a great relief, the end of a tremendous dispersion of energy. It was when I finally realized, two years ago, the extent of this force in my life, its nature, and the extraordinary dispersal of energy it represented, that it was defused - and I found myself lightened by "a hundred tons of weight". To be aware, without reluctance, of the echoes that others reflect back to us, without being bound by any desire or "need" (however hidden) for approval or confirmation - that's really what it means to be "free of him". It's such a need or desire that really constitutes the discreet, yet unfailingly solid "hook" by which conflict can "hang" in us, and by which we are (whether we like it or recognize it, or not) under the dependence of another, of his good will - by which in short he "holds" us, and (minutely) us maneuvers as it pleases...

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Logically, accepting others should also mean accepting their way of seeing things, whether or not they seem wrong to us, and even when it comes to their way of seeing our own precious selves (including our own ways of seeing. . .). But that's where the problem lies - it's the crux of our acceptance of others, not the acceptance of more or less embarrassing common "faults" that don't directly involve ourselves. Quite often, moreover, if we reject such "faults" in others, it's above all because they make us feel directly implicated, by the very fact of being confronted with ways of being that seem to us (rightly or wrongly still) to be the opposite of our own. In other words, it's an **insecurity** within us, manifested in reactions (more or less overt or hidden) of vanity, which is the great obstacle, opposing our acceptance of others. But this deep-rooted insecurity, compensated for by the movements of vanity, seems to me to be indissolubly linked to the non-acceptance of ourselves, like an inseparable shadow.

So it's full self-acceptance that appears here as the key that opens us up to acceptance of others. And this link, which has just appeared to me here, links up with another profound link, which I've known for a long time, perhaps for as long as I can remember: that self-love is the heart, peaceful and strong, of love for others.

18.2.3. The couple

18.2.3.1. (a) The dynamics of things (yin- yang harmony)

Note 111 (October 13) Yesterday I didn't continue writing the notes. Instead, I amused myself by reviewing a number of yin-yang "couples". Starting with the ones that popped into my head, a bit luckily, I then got into the game, and ended with a sort of "census" of all the ones I could get my hands on. I'd started because I figured that a lot of what I'd written lately was likely to go entirely "over the head" of a reader who wasn't already at least a little familiar with the double yin-yang aspect of things. Perhaps it wouldn't be out of place to take the trouble to give at least a few striking examples of such couples, in addition to those that had crept in by the tape in recent days. Then, driven by the little devil (or angel, I don't know. . .) of

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the systematics within me, I ended up digging out my old thoughts on the subject from five years ago. Over the course of a week or two, I had "collected" a hundred or two of these suggestive couples, which had then been assembled by affinity into some twenty groups. As this reflection took place on the bangs of the famous "poetic work" I was writing, I couldn't help arranging these groups as best I could, by affinities and filiations of meaning from one group to the next. Last night, taking a step back, and without a poetic straitjacket around my neck, I came up with eighteen groups (instead of twenty), by grouping them perhaps a little more rigorously. I suspect, moreover, that there must be many more groups, perhaps even an unlimited number, corresponding to modes of apprehending reality that I haven't thought of in the course of the work (nor, perhaps, ever yet).

As for the eighteen groups I have actually identified, I have endeavored to assemble them into a diagram (or "graph") following the main affinities linking them to one another. Some of these links only came to my attention in the course of drawing successive drafts of the diagram. The work here was really very close to the familiar mathematical task of graphically capturing, as strikingly as possible, a more or less complex set of relationships (given, for example, by "applications", represented by arrows) between a number of "sets" or "categories", appearing as the "vertices" of the "diagram" we were endeavouring to construct. Here too, essentially aesthetic requirements, notably symmetry and structural transparency, frequently lead us to introduce (and if necessary, discover or even invent) "arrows" or links that we hadn't thought of at the outset, and sometimes even new "vertices". In any case, after five or six successive drafts, I ended up with a vaguely Christmas-tree-shaped diagram that satisfied me for the time being - especially as it was getting prohibitively late!

I went to bed happy, feeling that I hadn't wasted my time, even if my notes hadn't progressed a hair⁴² (*). But I was back in contact with some decidedly juicy

f - every one of thesep

each of these couples has something delicate and important to tell me about the nature of this world in which I live, and often about my own nature. I've rediscovered with renewed strength a feeling that was already present five years ago: that the delicate interplay of yin and yang, of the "feminine" and the "male" in all things, is an incomparable thread leading to an understanding of the world and of oneself. It leads us straight to the essential questions. Often, too, the very "yoga" of yin and yang - I mean, the very act of paying attention to the aspect of things and events that is expressed in terms of yin-yang balance and imbalance - provides a first key to a better understanding of these questions, and to an answer.

I apologize if, for the last page or two, I have given some readers the impression that I'm talking about the sex of angels, when they wouldn't even really see what these famous yin-yang "couples" I'm talking about are, let alone these "groups" into which some of them come together, which groups are finally supposed to assemble into a "diagram" (maths is useful, after all!). I should give at least one of these groups here - and I feel like taking the one I spontaneously started with yesterday, the one that ended up appearing in the course of reflection as the "primitive" group(*), from which all the others seem to gradually emerge, through some sort of successive "filiations" (continuing on my famous diagram of eight "generations". . .). Here's a list of the "couples" I've identified that make up this primitive group (which we could call by the first of these couples, "the **action - inaction** group").

⁴²(*) In compensation, I could apply for a patent on the invention of a new poetic form, namely the "non-linear" or "diagrammatic" poem.

- Action-inaction
- activity-passivity
- sleep-wake
- subject-object
- generate-design⁴³ (*)
- execution-design⁴³ (*)
- dynamism-balance
- élan-assise
- perseverance
- enthusiasm-patience
- passion-serenity
- tenacity-detachment.

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I'd like to add the following two couples, among a dozen or so "latecomers" who came to me again this morning, following on from my thoughts yesterday:

- know-how
- explain-comprehend.

Needless to say, in these couples, it's the term "yang" or "masculine" that is put first, following the usage of our patriarchal society, where the man gives the name to the couple? On the other hand, while traditional Chinese society is considerably more patriarchal than our own, when we follow Chinese usage to speak of the relationship between yin and yang, we always put yin ("feminine") first, for example when speaking of "yin-yang balance" (instead of yang-yin). The meaning of this usage surely lies in the archetypal intuition that it is yang that is born of yin, which is the "most primitive" principle of the two, and not the other way round... ..

This is not the place to comment on any of these couples. For the reader who doesn't "feel" anything when he sees them, it would in any case be wasted effort; but for the reader who feels challenged by them, who senses (albeit obscurely) that each of them has something to say to him about the world and about himself - about balance and imbalance, about the internal dynamics of beings and things... . can dispense with detailed commentary, and take this challenge as a starting point for his or her own reflection.

18.2.3.2. (b) Enemy spouses (yang buries yin (3))

Note 111 There's just one point I'd like to stress here, common to all yin-yang "couples" without exception. It is also the most crucial thing of all, it seems to me, for an understanding of the nature of the relationship between yin and yang, and hence of the nature of each of these two principles (or energies, or aspects, or forces. . .) in the Universe. It's this: each of the two terms of one of these couples, such action-inaction, **in the absence**⁴⁴ (*) **of the other term**, constitutes a state of serious imbalance, and at the limit

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⁴³(*) (November 6) In fact, there's an even more primitive group, which can be called the "**father-mother**" group. On this "omission", see the note "Our Mother Death - or the Act and the Taboo" (n° 113). The "engendering-conceiving" and "execution-conceiving" pairs, which I've included below in the (so-called "primitive") action-inaction group, fit in visibly more naturally in the "mother group" formed around the "father-mother" pair.

⁴⁴(*) (October 16) In fact, this "absence" is never total, it seems to me - in no thing is yin or yang present in a pure state, without the simultaneous presence of its complementary, however infinitesimal. The "imbalance" I'm talking about is therefore characterized, not by the total absence of one of the two complementary terms (something never achieved), but by a state of excessive **weakness** of that term. Another type of imbalance, or morbidity, occurs when **both** terms are "absent", or more precisely, present but very weakly. Thus, in the case of the "action-inaction" couple, a state of **agitation**, which doesn't "act" as such (except to perpetuate itself, to maintain confusion), while dispersing energy,

(when the "absence" in question is almost complete, and prolonged) a state that leads to the destruction of the thing (or being) in which this imbalance takes place, and even of himself and those around him.

Thus, a state of uninterrupted **action**, which does not alternate with sufficient periods of **inaction**, of rest, leads to exhaustion, illness and (ultimately) death - something which has been most topical lately, for me!⁴⁵ (**) But conversely, a state of excessive inaction leads to a weakening and sclerosis of the body's or psyche's capacities and functions (depending on the case), and ultimately, to destruction. In the case of my "incident-disease", moreover, I have a simultaneous example of **both** imbalances: excessive action of the mind, inaction of the body (and sufficient rest for neither. . .).

This "explanation", in this case of the "philosophy" of yin and yang imbalance, remains superficial, in the sense that it does not touch upon an inveterate cultural bias, valuing the term yang, action, in **opposition** to the term yin, inaction. Inaction is seen as a "negative" thing, not productive or interesting from any point of view, accepted at best as a stop-gap measure, which, alas, is imposed even on the best will in the world, since it is necessary to rest from time to time in order to continue to invest oneself in action (on pain, as I have just explained, of overwork and God knows what else. . .). In short, inaction is seen as the humble handmaiden of action - indispensable, alas, but otherwise unworthy of attention or esteem.

□ Bien entendu, une telle valorisation "officielle" de l'action au détriment de l'inaction, a a immédiatement comme p. 494

The consequence is to set in motion resistance mechanisms (which often remain hidden or at least very blurred), expressing themselves through an **opposite** valorisation: action, as a result, appears as something imposed by the hard necessities of life, like **work** in short, boring as can be, in the office or the factory or even in the fields, and exhausting in any case, even if it's not too boring. The real raison d'être of action is to earn a crust and make a living (that's the essential), and beyond that and above all, to have fun (during your working life), and a nice retirement and pleasant permanent leisure activities later on, when you're freed from the regrettable obligation of "work". This time, it's inaction (aka "leisure") that's more or less consciously valued, and it's action that's its humble servant. There is thus **a reversal of roles**, but always with the same imbalance: that which consists in **the antagonism** established by the interested party (under the pressure of cultural conditioning) between two essential aspects or poles of his life; an antagonism which is expressed and perpetuated by a state of despotic preponderance of one of its aspects, and servitude of the other.

It seems to me that, more often than not, the two attitudes and values overlap in the same person, one dominating the pavement at the conscious level, the other at the unconscious level. The superimposition of these two opposing imbalances obviously doesn't produce balance! Balance, on the other hand, flows naturally from an understanding of the true nature of action and inaction (even when such an understanding remains purely "instinctive", manifesting itself directly in balanced behavior, and in no way in verbalized "knowledge"). **In action in the full sense of the word, there is also inaction - in the very moment**, I mean, and not just "after", because you have to rest after action! This "inaction" within the "action", the "yin within the yang", is like a deep calm that serves as a foundation for a movement that would take place on the surface. It is manifested, for example, by the impression of perfect relaxation that emanates from a feline in motion, whether it's the first alley cat to come along, or a lioness with a powerful build... .

And **in true inaction**, even total **inaction**, **there is action**. So **sleep** is rich in its dreams that speak to us about ourselves, through which we live ^{another} □ more intense and delicate **life**, p. 495

can undoubtedly be seen as such a "default" imbalance (of yin and yang).

⁴⁵(**) On this subject, see the first two notes (n° 98, 99) of Cortège XI, "Le défunt (toujours pas décédé. . .)".

that we're often too sleepy or too pusillanimous to live in the waking life. And it's enough to contemplate a sleeping baby, or just to be roused from a deep sleep, to feel that even without dreams, truly good sleep is **work** in its own way: something that absorbs us completely, "replenishing" in short, an energy that has been dispersed and that we come to **replenish at** its source... . Once again, this is the "yang in the wine", without which yin itself would be destructive.

Similar considerations could surely be developed for **waking** inaction, outside sleep time. All we have to do is observe carefully, on the spot, any state we perceive as "inaction". You'll realize that in inaction, there is action, even the sterile cackling of a thought that continues to go round in circles, even though it has stopped working. But in truth, it's a misnomer to call this purely mechanical movement "action", a movement that continues purely because of inertia - because of the inability to stop the machine! And it's certainly not this inner agitation that will bring yin-yang harmony to "inaction", making it beneficial. On the other hand, this can be the case with various activities designed to fill leisure time (when these are nonetheless experienced as a state of inaction). But even in the state of complete rest of a convalescent state, let's say, there can be action, otherwise this rest or "inaction" becomes **sluggishness**, certainly not conducive to convalescence (i.e. the restoration of a disturbed equilibrium!). For example, this state of rest can give rise to attention to one's own body and its immediate surroundings (which are like a second skin. . .), an awareness or even a communion, which in itself has an authentic character of "action"; for there can be no doubt that **learning** is indeed an **act** (since it has an irrefutable **effect**: the appearance of knowledge. . .).

Looking at the fourteen couples I've included in the action-inaction group (and I'm sure we could find many more that fit in naturally), we can see that for all but perhaps one, it's the first term, "masculine", that is invested with prestige, with "value", according to the attitudes-reflexes.

and inculcated since childhood. It's the sign of the same inveterate imbalance in our culture'□the imbalance marked by the exclusive valorization of yang, to which I happened

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⁴⁶ (*). The same can be said for almost all the yin-yang pairs I've come across - a very striking fact indeed, which I'd never before taken the time to verify in such detail.

Among the pairs written earlier, the only one that seems to me to be an exception is the **passion-serenity** pair, given that in common usage, the word "passion" is often associated with the image of unleashing, violence, or if not **laissez-aller**, annoyingly bordering on the cloud of associations surrounding a word like "**turpitude**". As if by chance, sloppiness and turpitude refer to states of psychic imbalance characterized by an excessive **yin**, feminine preponderance! And symmetrically, following the same push-button mechanisms (which reveal our current conditioning, and by no means the nature of something like "serenity"), the word "serenity" is associated (as opposed to "passion") with the image of **self-control** - a quality, therefore, that is appropriately **masculine** in essence. (In fact, the yin counterpart of "control" is by no means "passion", but "abandonment").

What's happening here, then, is that as a result of a general confusion in people's minds about the nature of certain things, expressed by an equal confusion in the use of certain words, supposed to designate them, there is a confusion of the yang-yin couple "passion-serenity" with the whole of the two notions

release - control,

whose terms are yin-yang (but not a "couple", as the two terms have no desire to marry!). It seems to me, then, that the so-called "exception" to the rule (of valuing

⁴⁶(*) See note "Yang buries yin (1) - or muscle and guts", n° 106.

yang) is, on the contrary, a particularly interesting confirmation! And I wouldn't be surprised if the same were true of the other few examples I've come across, where in a yang-yin pairing, it's the yin term that seems to be valued.

In fact, I'm not at all sure that this distortion in worldview that I see in the civilisation, stemming from this systematic bias in favour of the masculine as opposed to the feminine.

- that this distortion, this imbalance are so much less in the Chinese tradition, □ or even in the p . 497

Chinese world (or, more generally, the "Oriental" world) today. There's no sign of this in everyday life, either through my Oriental friends or through the echoes I've heard of tradition and life in China or other Far Eastern countries - quite the contrary. Rather, it seems to me that a fine perception of yin-yang dynamism has been confined almost exclusively to the **practice of certain arts** - such as calligraphy, poetry, the culinary arts and, of course, the medical arts⁴⁷ (*).

It is the latter in particular, under the name of "Chinese medicine" and thanks to the spectacular successes of acupuncture, that over the past twenty years has come to be regarded as a prestigious discipline. Yet many people are still unaware that, in Chinese medicine, the alpha and omega of understanding the body, the circulation of energy in the body and its disturbances (which constitute the morbid states we call "illnesses"), lies precisely in a very fine dialectic of yin and yang. The fact that this dialectic "works", since "Chinese medicine" based on it is effective (including in many cases that escape the means of the Western panoply), can be seen as a kind of "proof" of the reality of yin and yang "principles" or "aspects" or "modes" (of apprehension, or existence) - that they are not pure speculations out of the hats of certain philosophers and other poets (not to say fumists).

We may well ask what is the meaning of such proof, and indeed of any "proof" whatsoever of the validity of such and such a worldview. Even supposing that the proof was convincing (i.e., that the interested party was willing to allow himself to be convinced), and even and above all, that the vision in question was valid. is profound and therefore beneficial - the best proof in the world is powerless to **communicate**

□ **une vision**, let alone a vision of the world. It does you good to be "convinced" mordicus p . 498

of a vision that remains foreign, misunderstood. In fact, it doesn't even make sense - or more precisely, the true meaning of his "conviction" is no more understood by the interested party than the vision he pretends to incorporate into his heavy cultural baggage.

When the vision is understood and assimilated, the very question of "proof" seems strangely preposterous. - a bit like proving that the sky is blue when you can see it's blue, or that the scent of a flower you love is good... .

18.2.3.3. (c) The half and the whole - or the crack

Note 112 (October 17) My first thoughts on the dual aspect of "feminine" and "masculine" came from a reflection on myself. It was around the beginning of 1979, at a time when I still didn't know the Chinese words "masculine" and "feminine".

⁴⁷(*) (October 21) I've left out the **divinatory art** of the **I Ching** or "Book of Changes", which today enjoys great popularity in certain circles in both Europe and America. The 64 "hexagrams" that constitute the basic "words" of the divinatory language of the I Ching are none other than the 2, ⁶ possible combinations of sequences of six yin and yang "signs", from pure yin (six repetitions of yin) to pure yang (six repetitions of yang). There seems to be a kind of fine alchemy of yin and yang combinations, which (it seems) had fascinated Jung. The interest of this alchemy (as a "collection of archetypes" in particular) seems to me a priori independent of its use in divinatory art, and of the credit one is willing to give to such use.

"yin" and "yang", and the existence of a kind of subtle "philosophy" of the incessant interplay of yin and yang, in the Chinese cultural tradition. I learned about this towards the end of the same year, I believe, from my daughter and especially from my son-in-law Ahmed, who was just beginning to take an interest in Chinese medicine, which he latched onto strongly in the years that followed. Most of what he told me overlapped and confirmed the vision I'd arrived at, which came as no surprise. If there was any surprise, it was rather in the few cases of "couples" where the "natural" yin-yang role seemed to me to be reversed, in the Chinese tradition. My reflex (strongly "yang" in this case!) had been a skin-deep conviction that this "reversal" must be due to a cultural distortion, without actually looking too closely⁴⁸ (*) - it was at one point where my past games on the feminine-masculine seemed far away, while I was engaged in an otherwise more personal meditation on my parents' lives and my childhood. It was months or years later, I think, that, through a certain amount of cross-checking, I realized that in some cases my apprehension of the yin and yang roles in such and such "couples" had remained a tad superficial; that I had hastily lumped together situations of a different nature that Chinese yin-yang dialectics were careful to distinguish (112'). Now, I realize that my apprehension of yin and yang is still relatively crude and static, especially when compared to the finesse required for the practice of certain traditional Chinese arts such as medicine (also closely linked to dietetics and the culinary arts), where this apprehension ends up becoming like second nature.

More than once, I've had the impression that among practitioners of these arts, whether Eastern or European, this finesse of apprehension remains fragmentary, in the sense that it remains, to a very large extent, carefully confined to the practice of the art. In everyday life, it acts more like ordinary "knowledge", simply superimposed on the "knowledge" of cultural (and other) conditioning, and remaining more or less a dead letter vis-à-vis the latter. To put it another way, I've had the impression that the vision of the world and of oneself, and the mechanisms of repression in the perception of reality, are in no way different in these "well-informed" people than in ordinary mortals.

This impression overlaps with another, which I had while perusing a couple of texts, written by Europeans supposedly "in the know", who: rest to give an overview of the traditional Chinese philosophy of yin and yang. (One of the authors is a well-known French orientalist, whose name now escapes me). The thing that struck me was that in these texts, yin and yang are presented as "**opposing**" (or "**contrary**") or even **antagonistic** principles (the latter term recurs several times in one of these texts), rather than **complementary**. This "opposition" or "antagonism" would have its typical expression in that which would take place between man and woman within human society, and within the couple instituted by society.

Antagonism between husband and wife is a reality in both East and West. It is deeply rooted in culture, so much so that it can sometimes appear as one of the (sometimes confusing!) aspects of the human condition, or even as the root of conflict in man or in human society. The reality of this antagonism is incontrovertible, and it certainly goes beyond the common clichés that try to exorcise it 500% as best they can. This "social" reality is the product of conditioning.

⁴⁸(*) This reaction of peremptory assurance towards a thousand-year-old tradition, which could have encouraged me to be more cautious, is the same one that, as a child, led me to reject the formula (quite complicated, my goodness!) $\pi = 3, 14 \dots$ taught by books, in favor of $\pi = 3$, which I had convinced myself by my own means. (See the note "Squaring the circle", n° 69.) It's true that with this story of yin and yang, I'd had ample opportunity to realize the extent to which the apprehension of the nature of the "feminine" and the "masculine", and of their interrelationships, is distorted by inveterate cultural distortions of considerable force. What I didn't realize, however, was the extent to which a precise and delicate apprehension of these relationships was also essential in the practice of certain traditional Chinese arts, and pushed to a degree of great finesse.

It's an immemorial reality, which very early on takes root in and structures the developing "I". And yet, beyond this reality, there is a deeper reality, coming from much further back, which is decisive in the love drive itself. It's the reality of a profound, essential **complementarity** between the sexes, where there's no room for any kind of "antagonism". It's also the reality that is clearly evident in all living species, with the sole exception of our own, where it is largely obscured by cultural antagonism, and thus by a state of **division** specific to man and human society.

The common romantic clichés, such as "Nous Deux", which dominate much of literature and the media, make a mockery of "complementarity", while casting a modest veil over the troubling male-female antagonistic aspect, or (at best) treating it as a kind of spicy accident, welcome to spice up a meal that's otherwise a little too bland or syrupy. As soon as you get beyond these reassuring clichés, you're immediately confronted with the reality of this male-female antagonism - a reality that's apparently universal, and, what's more, tough as nails, tough as weeds! But to start from this omnipresent and irrefutable reality, to institute a kind of cosmic antagonism of yin and yang, of "feminine" and "masculine", is to project onto the entire Universe the state of tearing apart, of profound division of human society and the individual, a disease therefore peculiar to our species. It's also perpetuating our own ignorance of **another** reality within ourselves (joining this cosmic reality of complementary harmony), a reality just as tenacious (or, to put it better, indestructible), but more hidden. This reality runs counter to the conditioning that tacitly establishes a de facto antagonism between woman and man, wife and husband, as well as between that in ourselves which is "woman" and that which is "man".

To tell the truth, this **dualistic** or **warlike** vision of the Universe, where one aspect of things is at constant war with an equally essential "symmetrical" aspect - this vision is in no way the fruit of **reflection**, which would "start" (as I just wrote) from the reality of conflict in the human couple and in human society, and then "deduce" (or "institute", as I wrote more aptly) it in the entire Cosmos. It's no more, no less, than the faithful, automatic expression of cultural conditioning, and it's in line with one of the 501 essential functions of this conditioning: **the maintenance of conflict, of division in the very person**, visibly, the maintenance of this instituted antagonism between "woman" and "man" in me would be impossible, or rather, this antagonism would already be resolved, **as soon as** I took the time to contemplate the Universe with the eyes I received at birth, and where I note that everywhere, except (apparently . . .) in myself and among my fellow human beings, the "feminine" and the "masculine" are your indissoluble complements; that it is from their marriage and union that harmony, creative force and living beauty are born in all living and "dead" things of Creation. On the other hand, if I claim to "see" "oppositions" and "antagonisms" everywhere in the Universe where they don't exist (and even though in doing so I'd be following a venerable tradition that goes back thousands of years), I wouldn't be using my eyes at all, but rather confining myself to **repeating** (like everyone else) what has been repeated from generation to generation since perhaps the dawn of time ; and, in any case, to obey the silent, imperative injunction of cultural consensus - the very injunction that has firmly established within me a division, a conflict that I would claim to rationalize (and thereby perpetuate) as a "cosmic necessity".

There's certainly a lot to be said about antagonism in couples, and more generally about female-male antagonism - and I trust my peers that much has been written on the subject, including some relevant stuff. This is not the place to dwell on this most interesting of themes, particularly on the particular form this antagonism takes in our patriarchal society. It seems to me that among those who have

Clearly, many hold the structure of society, reflecting and embodying the preponderance of men over women, to be responsible for this antagonism. They're probably right - and I suspect that in a society with a pronounced matriarchal tendency, we must find a similar antagonism, manifesting itself more or less symmetrically. What I would like to add, however, is that this causality appears to me to be **indirect**, that it seems to be exercised through the intermediary of a more hidden causality, touched upon in today's reflection. This more hidden and more essential cause of division in the couple is the state of division **within the person**, both woman and man, with regard to his or her own impulses (and in particular those of sex) and faculties. I see this as the real root of the antagonism between man and woman, as well as their **mutual spiritual dependence**,

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I mean the **lack of inner autonomy** of both.

This division within ourselves consists in the intimate and secret conviction, in both of us, that we are only **half**. One of the signs of this conviction is this diffuse and insidious feeling, never examined, of **cracking**, of **mutilation** perhaps, from which only the partner of the other sex could deliver us, temporarily at least. Behind the circumstantial airs of "macho" or "Circe" (and many others), everyone, men and women alike, find themselves in the position of a **beggar** vis-à-vis their potential or actual partner, of one who expects an ephemeral deliverance from the other's (more or less) goodwill, which he hopes will be complete, but which always turns out to be lame, from his pitiful state as a cracked, not to say broken, pot - **half a pot**, in short, looking for another half to glue him back together as best he can (and rather badly than well, as you might guess). . .).

This feeling of fracture, or rather, this **ignorance** of our true nature, of our fundamental **unity** beyond the physiological specificity linked to our sex - this deep division within us seems to me to be the product of social conditioning alone. There's no trace of it, at least in the first days and months of infancy. This conditioning is by no means reduced to valuing the "masculine" to the detriment of the "feminine", or vice versa. After all, if I feel, accept and am accepted as both "male" **and** "female", with a "background note" that can vary from one facet of my person to another, and which is by no means limited to the dominant (albeit very important) genitalia - then it doesn't really matter whether it's the "masculine" or the "feminine" that is valued around me. At the level of my sexual drive, my personal "valorization" would in any case tend to gravitate towards the sex opposite to my own (sorry, complementary I meant), without feeling inferior (any more than superior) in front of this being **different** in body, towards whom I'm drawn by a deep and imperious drive. Moreover, whether it's a question of gender or any other kind of value, the importance of the "value" or prestige attributed by social consensus (to oneself or to others) is relatively secondary, not to say minimal, in a person who is not (or not very much) affected by this feeling of "fissure" I'm talking about - in a person, therefore, in whom lives this spontaneous **self-confidence** that is not, in fact, a "flaw".

It's a manifestation of an intact knowledge of one's own nature.

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□ A sign, among others, that the "crack" or division⁴⁹ (*) in the person is not only The product of a In other words, it's the one who's supposed to be the "beneficiary" of this consensus that claims to "enhance" him, while (in a certain sense) it's breaking the backs of both him and his partner. We can see that this division is all the more acute, all the more violent, the stronger and more ruthless the repression of one sex for the "benefit" of the other. It could be said that the principle followed by "Society" (the source and instrument of repression) in establishing

⁴⁹(*) I'll refrain here from using the rather fashionable expression "castration", a term of great violence (superyang for that matter!), which has the added disadvantage of suggesting the image of an irremediable, irreversible mutilation, and thereby stimulating reactions of dismay, revolt or resignation likely to reinforce a state of blockage, rather than encouraging its evolution in the direction of a gradual resolution.

of repressive mechanisms is: "**divide and conquer**"! But this "division", created by the Consensus to break and enslave both men and women, is played out on **two levels at once**. The most visible picture is that of **division within the couple**, achieved⁵⁰ (**) by instituting a more or less tyrannical preponderance of one of the sexes over the other - of man over woman, or vice versa. One is supposed to reign over the other - and both end up as slaves⁵¹ (***). Because when the wife or husband is scorned, it's **both** of them who are scorned - sometimes by others, but more profoundly and above all, **by themselves**.

And here we come to the second, more hidden aspect of the game of division. This is the **division within the person himself**, the hidden springboard of the couple's division. It is accentuated by the latter, without however being reduced to it, and it is by no means produced solely by the valorization of one sex to the detriment of the other. Rather, it's the product of a silent, incessant **constraint**, exerted on us by those around us from our earliest years.

young years. This constraint pushes us to deny, on pain of rejection, an entire "side" of our identity.

our person (the □ "yin" side, or the "yang" side⁵² (*)), dismissed as ridiculous or unseemly, and in p. 504 in any case, as unacceptable.

18.2.3.4. (d) Archetype knowledge and conditioning

Note 112 ⁵³ (**) Thus, in the **matrix-embryo** and **vagina-penis** pairs, the distribution of yin-yang roles is unmistakable, and the yin term surrounds and contains the yang term. This had led me to hastily conclude that in the **container-content** pair it was the "content" that was yang, without being put on guard by the **form-ground, exterior-interior, periphery-center** pairs (where, as I had clearly sensed, the first term is indeed yang, as well as being the "container"). In fact, in the matrix-embryo and vagina-penis pairs, I had wrongly emphasized the "geometrical" or configurational aspect of the relationship between the two terms, a secondary aspect to the main one, which in this case determines the distribution of roles: **that which nourishes** is yin in relation to **that which is nourished**, which is yang, and **that which penetrates** is yang in relation to **that which is penetrated**, which is yin (as is **that which gives** in relation to **that which receives**).

My reflections on yin and yang, however limited they may be, have founded an intimate conviction in me that, beyond differences in individual apprehension about yin-yang role distributions (or, let's say, about the yin or yang "background note" in a given person), an apprehension highly subject to "cultural distortion", such a "natural" distribution (or "background note") does indeed exist. It is as irrefutable, "cosmic" and immutable (as far as the distribution of roles in universal-nature couples such as those discussed so far are concerned), as a physical law, or a "natural" relationship.

mathematical, even if it cannot be "established" either by experience (in the sense in which this term is understood in the practice of the natural sciences), or by a "proof" or even a "demonstration". This reality □ au ying et du p. 505 yang is apprehended by direct perception, which can be developed and refined (among other things) by sufficiently deep reflection.

It seems to me that one of the main effects of this kind of thinking is to take us beyond

⁵⁰(**) (October 21) At least on the surface. But as suggested above, if we go deeper into things, we realize that this division in the couple, maintained by the preponderance of the man over the woman, has a deeper "root", which I'll come back to a few lines later.

⁵¹(***) Slaves, moreover, who for nothing in the world would part with Their chains, which are dearer to them than life. . .

⁵²(*) In principle, and barring accidents, the sense of constraint pushes men to deny their yin side, and women to deny their yang side. The situation is more delicate for the woman, who is supposed to deny the very traits in her that are given prestige by social consensus, and which she would therefore feel encouraged to cultivate. She thus finds herself subject to two opposing pressures, and the task of structuring an "operational" identity for the unconscious is further complicated.

⁵³(**) This footnote is taken from a footnote to the previous footnote (see reference in the first paragraph of the previous footnote).

cliché reflexes, programmed into us by the surrounding culture, to regain contact with reality itself. This, it seems to me, is already present in deep layers of the psyche, as a kind of archetypal knowledge, beyond the reach of cultural conditioning. The role of reflection is to enable us to regain contact with this knowledge already present, and to carefully decant it from superficial "knowledge", i.e. from cultural conditioning.

The work I've begun in this direction has been important for my understanding of the world and of myself, and hence for my daily "doing" and the conduct of my life. This work (as on many other occasions) seems to me like a **first breakthrough**, like a door I've just pushed open onto a vast panorama, which I still have to explore. I've got everything I need to do it - but I don't know if I ever will⁵⁴ (*). Mathematics aside, there's no shortage of equally "juicy", even more personal and even more burning topics for reflection, which will undoubtedly take precedence over the deepening of a more general reflection on yin and yang. ...

18.2.4. Notre Mère la Death

18.2.4.1. (a) The Act

Note 113 (October 21) Three days have passed without writing any notes. My days have been absorbed by other tasks and events. One of these was the visit of Pierre, accompanied by his granddaughter Nathalie, who arrived last night. He plans to stay until tomorrow evening, and by then to read what's been written about the Funeral. It's likely to be a bit short, for a text that took me almost three months to write...

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The time I was able to devote to reflection, I spent continuing □ to play with "couples". yin-yang and the groups they form. It's a fascinating subject, combining the very special flavor of the investigation of a mathematical "structure", whose very nature gradually becomes clearer as the work progresses, with that of a reflection on the world and on existence. Each of the main yin-yang pairs represents a kind of "**keyhole**" (among an infinite number of others), revealing a certain aspect of the world, or of a corner of it. The "groups" of couples I've identified so far seem to correspond rather to different possible ways of apprehending things in the Universe, like so many **doors** opening onto it and showing it to us from so many different angles. Each of these "doors" has a large number of keyholes, perhaps even an unlimited number, through which to look - until perhaps we simply push the door open? For the time being, I've confined myself to detecting a good number of these holes (I've found well over two hundred), and sticking my eye to each one, if only for the space of a few moments, while realizing each time that there would be something to look at for a good while without wasting my time - quite the opposite, in fact! But I'm even more impatient to go and have a look at such and such a hole through which to look again, and also to go round all these doors and orientate myself as best I can how they are arranged in relation to each other, and perhaps also according to which "patterns" are arranged in one or other of these holes that made me detect their existence... .

Finally, the eighteen "doors" I'd detected a little over a week ago were augmented by three more, making a total of twenty-one, laid out in a diagram (which I'd described as "vaguely Christmas-tree-shaped"), now comprising a "trunk" of nine "vertices" (or "doors", or "gates").

⁵⁴(*) Just as I don't know if the kind of work I see opening up before me has ever been done before (the study, in short, of a kind of local and global "map" of the qualities of things in the Universe and their modes of apprehension, in the light of the harmony of complementary yin-yang). It's not a question of presenting a doctoral thesis on this or that, but of deepening an understanding of the world and of oneself, which can only be the fruit of personal work.

"groups", or "angles"), connected by vertical "edges" or "links", with on each side of the trunk six other vertices connected to it and to each other, so as to form the "branches"(*).⁵⁵ □ Somewhat comical, among thep . 507

three "new" groups that have appeared in recent days, one is the most obvious, the most primordial or primitive of all: it's the one that corresponds to the very first intuition of yin and yang as the "feminine" or "female", and the "masculine" or "male". It seems to me most strikingly expressed by the "**father-mother**" archetypal couple (in preference to "man-woman", which is part of the same group). This group is highly charged with sexual connotations, appearing in pairs such as "**beget-conceive**" or "**penis-vagina**", themselves part of the cloud of associations around **the act** par excellence, the Act-archetype: the creative embrace that transforms (potentially at least) the woman into a mother and the man into a father through the appearance of **the child**, the Work resulting from the Act.

These connotations of the love drive were constantly at the forefront of my thinking five years ago. What's more, they were given almost uninterrupted lyrical emphasis throughout the 130-odd pages of the famous "poetic work" into which the reflection had then been condensed, producing a wearying effect on even the best-disposed reader. It's surely a reaction of annoyance towards this double "deliberate intention", poetic and erotic⁵⁶ (*) in my only reference text for my reflections over the last few days, that I simply "forgot", among the famous groups of yin-yang couples, the one who of course opened the procession (and rightly so) in this text of woe.

The title of the work in question, "Eloge de l' Inceste", was a tad□provocative too, and of a nature to give a false idea of his intentions and his "message". In fact, these evolved quite considerably as I wrote - the poetic straitjacket didn't prevent the work from going deeper and decanting. My first and main aim was to probe a certain aspect (which I felt to be profound and essential) of the love drive, as I knew it from my own experience. It was primarily a question of the erotic drive in men, or more precisely: the "**yang**" drive, which corresponds to the "male role" in the game and in the act of love, but which is present with varying degrees of strength⁵⁷ (*) in women and men alike. For a long time, perhaps forever, I've known that this drive, by its very nature, is "**incestuous**": it's also the drive to "**return to Mother**", to return to the original womb.

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⁵⁵(*) (October 24) I'd be at a loss to predict whether or not yin-yang couples will emerge that don't fit naturally into any of the groups I've identified so far, i.e. whether there are **other** yin-yang groups or "doors" opening onto the world, or even an unlimited number of them?

The fact that I couldn't find another would in no way mean that there couldn't be an infinity of others, perhaps even an infinity of others that escape human experience, our means of perceiving the Universe. This reminds me that more than once in recent years, I've been struck by the intuition that, from the ant or the tiny aphid, to the mammals already close to us, every animal species has means of perceiving and apprehending the Universe that escape all other species, including our own ; so that, in terms of the wealth of sensory apprehension (let's say) of what surrounds us, our species does not "cover" or "contain" any other, any more than any other contains us.

The "no more than" I've just hazarded seems hasty, even overcautious, given that in terms of the richness and fineness of purely sensory perception, the evolution of our species would tend to go in the opposite direction, **to regress**. It seems to me that it's only at the level of the intellect, of the fineness of mental images, and in particular those linked to language, that we excel over other species. It's no coincidence that most of the yin-yang pairs that spontaneously came to my attention belong to this register, specifically "human", while only a handful have (among others) an obvious sensory connotation, such as shadow-light, cold-hot, low-high, and a few others.

⁵⁶(*) (October 24) This deliberate statement in form reflected an inner attitude, the choice of a certain role - the role of **apostle** of a message. On this subject, see the end of the section "The Guru-not-Guru - or The Three-Legged Horse" (n° 45), and the related note n° 43.

⁵⁷(*) (October 24) This presence is often more or less totally suppressed by powerful repression mechanisms. I have the impression that in men, this yang drive tends to predominate over the complementary y in drive, and that the opposite is true in women. But cultural conditioning, and the various ways in which it is internalized, both "positive" and "negative", interfere so drastically (and often complexly) with the play of original drives, that it's sometimes difficult to detect them behind sporadic, furtive and often degraded manifestations.

This great return is "staged" and relived in the course of the amorous game, culminating in an **annihilation**, an **extinction** of being, a **death**. To experience the fullness of the act of love is also to experience **one's own death**, like a "birth in reverse" that returns us to our mother's bosom.⁵⁸ (**)

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But it also means transgressing **two** extremely powerful **taboos** at once: the **incest** taboo, which excludes "the Mother" as an object of amorous desire, and the one too that (in our culture at least) separates and opposes, like irreconcilable enemies, **life** and **la mort**, **being born** and **dying**. Yet I already knew, that the act of love is **both** a **death**, accomplished in the orgasmic spasm, and a **birth**, a renewal of being, **emerging** from this death. ... like a new shoot delicately springs up from the nourishing earth, itself formed from the creative decomposition of beings that have been damaged in it. ...

It was during this reflection on the meaning of the act of love, five years ago, that I finally understood that "death" and "life" were the wife and husband of the same tightly entwined couple⁵⁹ (*), that eternal life was born of death, to be eternally abysed in it. Or, to put it better, that life eternally abyses in Death, to be eternally reborn from Her, the Mother, fertile and nourishing - She herself nourished and renewed ceaselessly by the eternal return to Her of the countless bodies of Her children.

And the human couple of wife and husband, lover and lover, when they live to the full the impulse that draws one into the other, is like a **parable** of these endless espousals of life and death: at the end of each night of love, the lover abyses and dies in the lover, to be reborn with her from this death in their common embrace... .

At the beginning of this same reflection, I visualized an essential aspect of division within the person, as a kind of "cut", a "**horizontal**" cut: that established by the taboo of incest, which "cuts" the child from the mother, just as it cuts life from its mother Death, and just as it also cuts a generation from the one that precedes it.

If I saw this cut first, it's probably because it's the very one I was exempt from. However, my life, like everyone else's, has been profoundly marked by this other great cut, which I saw later in the course of reflection and which I called the "**vertical**" cut: the one that separates, to set them against each other, the two "halves" of the feminine and masculine in each being, tolerating only one to the exclusion of the other. This is precisely what we've been talking about in this long digression on yin and yang, which I've been involved in for the past week or two.

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□ It now seems to me that this division ("vertical") is even more crucial than the other ("horizon-"), tale"), that in some sense it implies or "contains" it. After all, to **separate** the child from the mother, and life from death; to associate with death, as with the impulse that links the child to the mother, a feeling of **defilement**, **repulsion** or **shame** is also to **cut off** from each other, to set them against each other, the husband and wife in those two indissoluble and primordial cosmic couples: mother - child, death - life⁶⁰ (*).

⁵⁸(**) I'm convinced, moreover, that this content of the yang love drive is present in all living species and even beyond; that it corresponds to the same profound dynamic of all things in the Universe: that every creative process (or "act") is an embrace of yin and yang, of "the Mother" and Eros the Child, returning to and abyssing in her. From this "death" (or "birth in reverse") of the child returning to the Mother, emerges, as from a nourishing womb, the **fruit of the act**, the "work". It is the appearance of the "child", the **new** thing, through the act of death and renewal of the "**old**" that gives birth to it. In this cosmic dimension, the original sex drive has been present since time immemorial, long before the appearance of the human species and even before the appearance of life (in the biological sense) on our planet.

⁵⁹(*) (October 24) It's strange, then, that among the yin-yang pairs I'd noted a few weeks later, the "death-life" pair doesn't appear. Perhaps this was due to confusion with the related pairing "death - birth" (or better still, "dying - being born"), so that the former might seem to duplicate the latter.

⁶⁰(*) I've written the pairs here in "natural" yin-yang order, starting with the yin term, the "original" term.

On the subject of the "mother-child" couple, note that the term "mother" also figures in a second important archetypal couple, the primitive "mother-father" couple, giving its name to the group it describes. (The

Interestingly, these last two couples are not among those I had identified in the "Eloge".

The "death-birth" couple, on the other hand⁶¹ (**)'□ ^{more} directly linked to my love experience, is included. The couples

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"Mother-child" and "death-life" only came to mind in the course of my reflections over the last few days, among many others that had previously escaped my attention, one of the most interesting of which is "evil-good". This is one of those couples (like "death-life") that can be called "difficult", in the sense that such powerful conditioning makes us apprehend the two terms as antagonistic "opposites", rather than as inseparable complements. Clearly, these conditionings were stronger in me five years ago, when I wrote the Eulogy, than they are today. Yet there were already a good number of "difficult couples" in the Eulogy, including "chaos-order" and "destruction-creation" . .

In retrospect, a somewhat deeper understanding⁶² (*) of the nature of the various yin-yang couples, as forming a harmonious entity of inseparable complements, now appears to me as so many "thresholds" to be crossed in our journey of discovery of the world and ourselves. Such a "threshold" is all the more notable the more "difficult" the couple in question, i.e., the more its apprehension as a "couple" comes up against stronger inner resistance, an expression of cultural conditioning.

18.2.4.2. The beloved

Note 114 (October 26) Yesterday's reflection⁶³ (**) was a little difficult to get going. This is no doubt due to the many interruptions of the last few days. However, since the day before, there was something still warm inside me that I was anxious to put down on paper, if only in a few lines. Afterwards, I was ashamed to realize that it had been lost along the way, ousted by everything that came along! Today, I couldn't bring myself to part with it prematurely, as if by misunderstanding, before I'd even really got to know it.

In the recent reissue of "Zupfgeigenhansl"⁶⁴ (***), I leafed through this classic old song

In fact, the "mother-child" couple is a different group, the one I call the "cause-effect" couple). Moreover, the yang term "child", of this same "mother-child" couple, is also part of another archetypal "old-age-child" couple, close to the very interesting "maturity-innocence" couple. These two couples are part of the group I call "high-low", which is the richest (if only numerically) of all those I've detected so far. It contains many other remarkable pairs, such as **decline-essence, dying-birth, destruction-creation, forgetting-learning, finding-beginning**... . In enumerating these few couples, I had to go to great lengths to name them in yin-yang order, against ingrained habits. On the face of it, the new order looked a little zany, even bizarre - the world turned upside down! On closer inspection, however, we realize that this unusual order reveals **another** aspect of the relationship between the two terms, a complementary aspect to the usual one where (for example) "to be born" precedes "to die".
- whereas we've just seen that "dying", in a deeper sense, precedes "being born".

The same goes for the overall name of my reflection, "Harvest and Sowing", which is undoubtedly a yin-yang pairing (which I'm just discovering!). It's named again in reverse order to the usual yang-yin order, with harvesting supposed to **follow** sowing, not the other way round. Yet the name came to me without any ambiguity whatsoever, and without at any time even the idea that it might have been the reverse, "Sowing and Harvesting". It was being confronted with unwelcome harvests that each time drew my attention back to the sowing from which they sprang; as if the profound meaning and function of the harvest had been to stubbornly **bring me back** to the long-forgotten sowing of my own hand... .

⁶¹(**) Please note that in this "death-birth" pairing, the term "death" does not have the same meaning as in the "death-life" pairing: in the former it designates an **act** (synonymous with "death"), in the latter a **state**. In German, there are two different words: "Sterben" (without the rather cavalier connotation of "trépas") and "Todt". In French, I think it's preferable to refer to the couple as "mourir-naître", which eliminates the ambiguity surrounding the meaning of the term "mort".

⁶²(*) By this I mean an understanding that is not purely intellectual, but manifests itself concretely in a changed relationship to others, to the world or to ourselves, in changed ways of being.

⁶³(**) This is the reflection in yesterday's note (n° 116), which I have placed **after** today's.

⁶⁴(***) In Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag (1981).

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compiled and published around the turn of the century. I'd heard it had become impossible to find, but some German friends □ who were passing through my house had brought me a copy. That day (so the day before yesterday) I had

I had a quick look around before getting down to work, a bit like shaking hands with an old friend in passing. I came across the song "Wohl heute noch und morgen", which I skimmed through without really stopping, in a hurry to get back to my work. Still, something clicked. I sensed that these simple, seemingly naïve words were delicately touching something deep inside me - something, moreover, very close to what I had been trying so hard to evoke three days before. I was just about to rewrite my notes on the subject. Perhaps I had a vague feeling that the stanzas I had just gone through were more faithful and convincing messengers of what I would have liked to communicate, than my notes of preemptory brevity, written in the rush yet again towards something else, as if in passing, while the emotion of an immediate experience remained absent.

When I got up this morning, I tried to translate into French these stanzas, whose tune I didn't know, yet which had been singing inside me for two days. Surely it was a way of finding them better, of letting their flavor and melody penetrate me. To my surprise, it wasn't too difficult to find some of the rhythm and music of the German text in another language, which at first seemed reluctant, while remaining very close to the literal meaning. So here are the seven stanzas, rendered as best I could⁶⁵ (*).

"This day again and
tomorrow by your side will
be
but as soon as the third day dawns,
I'll be on my way."

"But when will you come again
m'amour, my sweet beloved?"
"When the snow falls on red roses
et quand pleuvra vin frais!"

"Roses do not snow and
wine does not rain
so, m'amour my sweet beloved
neither do you return!"

I lay down in my father's
garden, and a lovely
dreamlet came to me as I
slept.
white snow on me snowing.

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□ And when I awake, here is pure
emptiness pure nothingness -

⁶⁵(*) (October 29) The following version was revised over the following three days. In the evening we sang and I was able to learn the tune of the song. Most of the changes to the initial version were made to take into account the requirements of rhythm and tonal accent in the sung text. Even if it's necessary to divide the syllables appropriately between the notes of the tune, it can be sung with the French text, without at any point having to do violence to the tonic accent (as is unfortunately common in some recent French consonants).

it was the pretty red roses on top of
me blooming...

Come back boy and pass, all soft
inside the beautiful garden
wears a wreath of roses and
a goblet of wine.

With his foot he stumbled,
gentle to the pretty
monticulet
fell - and snow roses also
rained fresh wine. ...

There was a joy, a happiness inside me, as I groped for a way to render what I was reading, which with each passing moment became like a part of me. There was this gentle, bare beauty, at once calm and poignant, a grave beauty made up of joy and sadness intimately entwined. I don't think there are many people who aren't touched to some degree by a song like this, even though they'd rather not be - as so often we defend ourselves against an unexpected emotion, when something deep inside us that we didn't know existed suddenly resonates, and speaks to us in silence about what we'd rather not know.

It's the dream, above all else, that has the power to make that resonance in us which must remain hidden, ignored, that which must remain silent. Perhaps only the language of dreams has the power to touch those secret chords within us and make them sing in spite of ourselves. And when, for a moment, you have allowed them to sing, even if it's a song of pain or heavy sorrow, you suddenly feel light and as if new - **washed** clean, as if abundant water had passed through your being and dissolved and carried away all that in faith that is knotted and hard and old. ...

When the poet is about to strike one of those chords whose song unleashes the inner waters, he instinctively borrows the language of dreams, at once limpid and charged with mystery - a language of images and parables, which baffles reason by its apparent absurdity, and by its secret obviousness goes straight to where it wants to touch!

There's no need here for the word "death" to be uttered, or any other word that for the awakened mind would be related to it.

reports. Yet **she** is present, and her misty face is that of the Beloved. The distant, sleeping Beloved you left behind long ago, and yet so close - both snow and falling roses.

into snow and is born of the snows. ... The force that draws you in□It is like a very deep and powerful wave, p. 514
a wave coming from She who calls and bringing you back to Her. And the call is poignant sadness and the return is joy that sings in a very low voice, and joy and sadness are **one** and the same, and **are** this wave that carries you into the Beloved, with the unreplicated strength of childbirth.

And there was no need to evoke, even in a single word, this longing and the surge of desire for you, **the child** - for the "boy" that the Beloved calls to Her. All it took was for a dream to speak of Her sleeping in her father's garden, dreaming of snow and waking up to roses, for that long-forgotten wave to awaken in you too, responding to the longing of Her who dreams and wakes, calls and waits... .

18.2.4.3. The messenger

Note 114 This old Silesian song is one of many love songs, old and not so old, singing of the mysterious and poignant amalgam of the **beloved** and **death**. The one I

I've just transcribed is perhaps exceptional for the profusion of images charged with meaning, and for the wealth of associations it elicits. It's not my intention here to go through them one by one, after evoking one or two that struck me most strongly. When, yesterday and the day before, my thoughts returned to these hastily-read stanzas, it was not then in the sense of deepening an emotion, which at first remained epidermal. Rather, it reminded me of the extent to which the themes of love and death, or of the beloved and death, appear to be linked, as if by some mysterious spell! And beyond the theme of death on the beloved's face, they join that of birth - of awakening - roses out of sleep - snows, both mysteriously united in the poignant image of roses falling in snow, on Celle who is both dreaming and awakening, asleep in her father's garden.

The taboo may well inculcate the repulsion of death, its incompatibility with life as with love! You'd have to believe that it runs counter to some deeply-rooted knowledge, or an impulse as powerful as it is secret, for what must be separated at all costs to seem so tenaciously to want to come together, taking the circuitous routes of symbol and dream, through songs and myths handed down from generation to generation, century to century.

p. 515 No doubt many scholarly volumes have been written on the subject of these troubling amalgams. to exorcise them as best we can. *Nobstant de tels efforts, sûrement aussi, "quelque part" en chacun de nous, le sens profond de ces associations tenaces est perçu bel et bien - en Les moments, tout au moins, où* we don't deliberately close ourselves off to the emotion within us that welcomes these messengers, speaking to us about ourselves in the elusive and powerful language of dreams.

This "deeper meaning" is revealed to us anew, directly and with elemental force, by the experience of love, provided we dare to live it fully and listen to its obvious message. It speaks to us of the mystery of death and birth, indissolubly linked in the Act that transmits life and renews lovers.

No doubt I'm not the first person in whom this "deep-rooted knowledge" has risen from the obscure depths where it had long been exiled, to become fully conscious and permeate all the more strongly my relationship to death and life, to the world and to myself. I have the impression, however, that written and published testimonies of such knowledge on a conscious level must be rare. The only ones I've come across so far are three or four stanzas from Lao Tseu's Tao Te King⁶⁶ (*). On the other hand (and somewhat paradoxically), I also have the impression that the amalgam "love-death" must, at some point, have become a kind of romantic poncifix, a very safe "cream pie" to draw a tear - complacent from even the most reluctant eyes. It's a fact that the process, over time, has

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⁶⁶(*) (October 30) I came across these passages from the Tao Te King towards the end of 1978. It was a striking, entirely unexpected confirmation of things I had felt strongly about (some for a long time, others only recently. . .), and which I seemed to be alone in feeling this way. This "encounter" was experienced as a great goose, a silent exultation. This joy and exultation carried the gestation and writing of *L'Eloge de l'Inceste* over the next six or seven months. The conception took place in the days or weeks following this encounter. On a more modest or humble note, I've felt a similar joy in recent days, "recognizing" the emotion that had animated an anonymous poet (dead for centuries) when he sang of those roses falling in snow, born absurdly, miraculously from "lauter Nichts" - from "pure emptiness, pure nothingness"; or to put it better, in rediscovering, through my own intimate experience, this **same** emotion, a sign of the same knowledge. It's the same knowledge that can be found in the Tao Te King, over more than four millennia - with the difference that, in the Chinese text, this knowledge is expressed in the pictorial, but by no means symbolic language of a highly awakened consciousness, and not in the language of dreams (which is also the code-language of the deepest layers of the psyche).

The content I recognized in these few stanzas from the Tao Te King has obviously escaped the translators of the five or six different versions (in French, German and English) I've had in my hands. I'm not surprised. Such messages, expressions of an understanding that runs counter to millennia of conditioning, communicate their true meaning (beyond the words and images used to express it) only to those who already know it through what they have assimilated from their own experience, or to those in whom the work of assimilation is ongoing and who are already very close... .

has come into disrepute - so much so, alas, that even among people with delicate sensibilities, there is a tendency to confuse pure gold with its crude tin counterparts. Some see an old-fashioned or even ridiculous air, even where there is a keen perception of a hidden reality, and a delicate expression, foreign to all "fashion". Here, a consensus of "good taste" comes to the aid of all kinds of inner resistance, which automatically screens out the eruption of any vivid, authentic emotion, be it joy or sorrow, pleasure or torment, that comes to shake up the familiar routine.

It's the same mechanism that so often blocks the original force of the love game and its orgasmic outcome. Fortunately, the mere fact that they remain hidden, banished from the field of consciousness, in no way prevents the archetypes that drive the love drive from being present - from making what must disappear vanish, so that the meaning of the love game can be expressed and fulfilled, and the final act can be a creative act, a renewal. Often, however, a secret **fear** stands in the way of the very "pleasure" we think we're looking for, frightened as we are by the very presence of an unknown and formidable force, which risks (if we're not careful. . .) sweeping away like chaff the one in us who insists on keeping "control" at all costs. Such fear cannot tolerate that pleasure never approaches that threshold of poignant intensity where it is both pleasure **and** torment, united to each other in a long and intolerable embrace that seeks deliverance, to finally resolve itself and sink into orgasmic nothingness... .⁶⁷(*)

(October 27) I think I've understood the secret message of songs and dreams like "Ce jour encore et tomorrow... .", in the **essentials** they share. The question then remains: what is this force that

□pushes with such insistence to give voice to this "deeply rooted knowledge", older

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that our species; to express it against all odds, nobosting the vigilance of the surly, narrow-minded **Censor**, by taking the key to the fields and giving free rein to the symbolic language of dreams, with its unlimited resources?

If myths, songs and dreams breathe the same message with countless faces, it's also true that the prisoner to whom they're addressed never tires of hearing them! It's true that he's a willing prisoner, but he never **listens**. He's frustrated with air, space and light, yet reassured by the four walls that surround an existence devoid of any great surprises or mysteries, except perhaps death, which lies at the end, infinitely far away... . His prison protects him from **the Unknown** that lies beyond these walls, and which he pretends to ignore. It both frightens and fascinates him. It's because the Beyond its walls frightens him, that his prison-refuge is dearer to him than life itself. And yet it fascinates and attracts him, unwillingly, just as the messengers who come from far and wide to tell him about it attract and fascinate him. And sometimes he gives in to this unusual attraction, as long as it's in secret from the Censor-Supervisor General: while he lends an ear, he is nonetheless "thumbs up" - he hasn't heard anything, and above all, he hasn't listened to anything!

The question I was asking myself just now seems to have disappeared, swallowed up by a convincing image. It reappears, as soon as I remember the **effect of** the message - that **emotion** that comes before the message, and the **benefit of** that emotion.

But the truth is, **any** emotion that strikes a deep chord is a messenger from beyond the four walls, a messenger from the open sea. Even though we would strive to erase all trace of it the next moment, it is beneficial, it has already left its mark, like a delicate perfume - as if these dull walls

⁶⁷(*) (October 28) It's this same fear, manifesting itself as a kind of **refusal** of pleasure, which at the same time pushes us to **isolate** pleasure from the whole experience of love, reducing it to the finality of love (sometimes tacit, sometimes clearly expressed). "Love" is thus reduced to a "search for pleasure" - an exchange of courtesies, in short, between two partners, like inviting each other to dine in four-star restaurants, if not at the Folies Bergère. This "pleasure", fearfully kept on a leash, is just as foreign to the original impulse, as dry paint chips scraped off a painting by the hand of the Master would be to the painting; or as a hairdryer is foreign to the great offshore wind, laden with the perfumes of the sea and the land... .

or as if, through some unsuspected opening in the sanitized air, we could catch even the slightest whiff of the scents of woods and fields.

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□(October 28) Over the last fortnight or so, I've been reluctantly giving the matter some thought. It's a move in a direction I hadn't planned, with no apparent connection to the theme of L'Enterrement, or even (it might seem) to myself. I know deep down that this is not the case, that I continue to be involved in these notes as much and more than ever. Nevertheless, I'm torn between the desire to "get it over with", and the desire to delve into what is glimpsed day by day, to follow the most compelling associations.

- A desire that goes hand in hand with my concern not to let anything slip that might shed light on my "investigation" into the Burial. What seems most distant is sometimes also most intimately close. ...

The fact remains that for the past fortnight, if not ever since I resumed writing after my illness, I've had the impression (a little painful at times) of doing things "in a hurry", as if each new note were another parenthesis that I opened (in front of an imaginary reader who would cry for mercy) and that I had to close as quickly as possible! I'm sure it's this attitude, perhaps even more so than the unusual number of friends I've had over the last few weeks, that has led to my writing being hasty and a little jumbled at times. I've had to rewrite most of the notes I've written recently as I went along, retyping them on the net. This further slowed down progress, and kept my impatience to see the work move forward!

It's also true that these themes - which I sometimes pretend to want to deal with at once, as if they were "well known" and that I'd take the trouble to spell them out for the benefit of a reader who'd just "arrived" - are both too delicate and too far-reaching to bear such casual dispositions. I couldn't help noticing this as the pages went by, and "rectifying" the situation, by which I mean readjusting my inner attitude, under the weight, so to speak, of what I claimed to be able to tackle on the sly!

It reminds me that this long reflection on y in and yang, in which I've been engaged for almost four weeks and which is by no means finished yet, is in fact merely **the clarification of** an instantaneous intuition, which seemed to me quite simple, not to say obvious; an intuition that came "in flash" the day after May 12, when I had just written the first note on a certain "Eloge...".

Funèbre". When I took up the rest of this note, a month ago⁶⁸ (*), willing myself to follow this association of ideas, in preference to others which seemed to me of lesser interest' □¹ foresaw that it would engage me in another five or six pages at the most. Now I'm over sixty. ...

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Yesterday I pondered the meaning of the symbolic evocation of the links between love and death, or death and birth, or life and death - and the meaning, too, of the emotion such evocation arouses in us. What is the force at work in myth, or song, or dream, that drives them to "breathe into us without tiring of the same message with countless faces", - and what is the force in **us**, willing prisoners of reassuring prisons, that so often responds to them with this emotion, going ahead of the evocation and showing that it has "hit the nail on the head", that it has touched where it wanted to touch? And also: where does this strange power of dream language come from, language that evokes without naming, that communicates what no other language knows how to communicate?

Pursuing these questions also means delving deeper into the role of the love drive and the dream, and the profound links that bind them; each nourishing the other and nourished by it, each expressing itself, and communicating with the other, through a language that is common to them and that escapes the Censor. It is also

⁶⁸(*) In the note "Muscle and tripe (yang enterre y in (1))", n° 106.

further explore the role of archetypes and symbols in the love drive, and the role of "symbolic" satisfactions of the drive.

All this is taking me far beyond the limits of what I can reasonably hope to "fit" into this "digression" on yin and yang, continuing (it's about time I remembered) right in the middle of a certain Funeral Ceremony! I think it's time to leave this new "thread" there, and return to another "thread" left hanging three days ago⁶⁹ (*), which brought me back to myself.

18.2.4.4. (d) Angela - or farewell and goodbye

Note 115 □(October 30) For a day or two a few lines have been running through my head, from a poem written yp . 520
three years ago. I wrote it first in German, and the next day took it up again in French. It was the first two stanzas that had come to the fore - the third and last seemed to have faded from memory, except for the first line "Ein Kreis schliesst sich" - "A circle is perfected". (And apart from the last line, which repeated that of the first stanza). When I woke up last night, my thoughts returned to it again, and I finally got up to rummage through my papers. I found the poem with no trouble at all - every cloud has a silver lining! And here it is.

Dense, ripe,
heavy fruit
my life is bending
over backwards
in Her

The sweet, thick juices
soaked me
have blossomed
fragile milk flowers become
fruit and wine

A perfect circle -
from my lap
mounts softly
describes its orbs
and bends over to turn
in Her...

I think this is the only poem I've ever written in which the thought of death⁷⁰ (*) is clearly present. Here it appears under the name "She". In the primitive version of the previous day, it was evoked by the German word "Erde", earth. The German "translation" of the three stanzas is far from literal; the first came as follows:

Voll und schwer

⁶⁹(*) In the note "Le paradis perdu" (n° 116), placed after the present note (n° 114).

⁷⁰(*) I should rather write: the thought of my death. Two poems (each a few lines long) written in 1957, the year of my mother's death, are imbued with the presentiment of this death.

rei fe Frucht
neigt sich me in Leben
gen Ende
Der Erde zu

Die sussen Säfte
die mich durchtränken
haben geblüht
weiche Blilten und wurden Frucht und Wein

Ein Kreis schliesst sich
aus meinem Schoss
steigt Süsse
kreist
und neigt sich
gen Ende
der Erde zu...

□

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Finally, rewriting the original German version just now, I couldn't help but write it all the way through, so much so that the next two stanzas seemed to flow spontaneously from the first! For me, these three stanzas are a love poem (in fact, I've hardly written any poems other than love poems). If this one is addressed to anyone other than myself, it's to **Her** - to She who waits in silence, ready to welcome me...

On the same day, I had written two other poems, one before and one after. They were addressed to a flesh-and-blood "beloved", Angela, "l'Ange" - a tall, slender, blonde girl, very much alive, whom I'd met the week before, on the hot summer road where she'd been hitchhiking. In an hour or two we'd had time to say a lot to each other, and we'd parted on that note. I would have liked to give her the poems she had inspired, including another one written on the very evening of the day I had met her, and yet another (always in German, our common language), which came the day after the "three (almost) at once". And I wish we'd loved each other too... . But I lost track of her, just as she must have lost mine.

One thing the poems inspired by this encounter have in common is that each is either very strongly "yang" or very strongly "yin". They are some of the most intense I've ever written, and each came in one go, almost without retouching - as if they'd been there all ready and waiting only for the signal of this encounter to take shape in tangible words.

At first glance, it may seem strange to find among these poems charged with intense erotic tension, this other poem in autumnal tones, about to enter the long sleep of winter. There was, in those lonely days, an intense perception of life, amplified by erotic emotion and by the profusion of archetypal images that underlie it - and at the **same time**, the serene detachment of a life fully lived, nearing its end, ready to "return to Her".

Such dispositions of communion with death, our silent Mother, felt as a friend and very close, are surely favored by a state of great fatigue of the body, bringing us back to simple and essential things: our body, love, death... . I was just coming out of a "long period of mathematical frenzy",

which I have already mentioned in the introduction to *Récoltes et Semailles*⁷¹ (*). I was just beginning to recover from unp. 522 state of physical exhaustion in which this somewhat demented period had left me. It had just come to an end (as suddenly as it had come) under the impact of a dream-parable of lapidary force, which I kindly then listen to the message⁷² (**). These were days of availability, of listening - a "sensitive period" of an in-between wave: behind me a long and ample "mathematical" wave, and in front of me a no less ample "meditation" wave that was already announcing itself... . It would gain momentum ten days later, with another dream, the account of which opens the introduction to *Récoltes et Semailles*, this vision of myself "as I am".

These were weeks of intense inner work, of silent gestation, of change. And these love poems, different in tone from any I'd written before, are a fruit and a testimony of this intensity, this plenitude.

They're also the last love poems I ever wrote. Perhaps there was a prescience in me that this was the last time I would be in love, and that the great fireworks of songs for the beloved would unfold! A prescience that these poems addressed to an unknown girl, whose beauty I could feel intensely without having known her, were at the same time a farewell to love songs and to the women I had loved.

- a farewell to my passion for love, which was about to be consumed in this sparkling spray, and which was about to leave me. And, more secretly and profoundly still, that it was a farewell (or a goodbye, perhaps) to **all** women, merging and becoming **One** under a new face. A more distant face perhaps, drowned in mist, at the other end of the road - but at the same time very close, and very sweet. ...

18.2.5. Refusal and acceptance

18.2.5.1. (a) Paradise lost

Note 116 □(October 25)⁷³ (*) Again three days have passed without my finding the time to continue on my momentum. The first day, Monday, was taken up mainly by a visit from Pierre and his two-year-old daughter Nathalie, whom I saw off late in the evening to catch the night train to Orange. In a few days' time, I'll be able to take stock of what I've gained from this visit - a visit I wasn't counting on any more. . . For the moment, I'd prefer to continue my rambling reflections on yin and yang. p. 523

This reflection may seem like a philosophical digression, suddenly bursting into a certain investigation where it would have no place - except that it emerged unannounced from some vague associations of ideas around a certain Funeral Eulogy. ... However, I feel that it is precisely with this "digres- sion" that I'm beginning to go beyond the stage of uncovering all the "**raw facts**" that make up *L'Enterrement*⁷⁴ (**), to finally approach, if only a little, the **forces** at work behind the "facts".

⁷¹(*) See "Dream and Fulfillment", especially page (iii). The "period of frenzy" in question extends from February to June 1981. It is also that of the "long march through Galois theory" (see "Galois' legacy", n° 7). It leads into a long period of meditation on my relationship with mathematics (see the sections "Le patron trouble-fête - ou le marmite à pression" and "Le Guru-pas-Guru - ou le cheval à trois pattes" n° s 43 and 45). This runs from July 19 to December 1981. The poems to Angela (and the poem to "Elle") are dated July 8 and 9 (except for the very first, dated July 1).

⁷²(**) See the beginning of note no. ° 45, quoted in the previous footnote.

⁷³(*) (November 1) This note predates the two preceding ones, written between October 26 and 30, which form a direct continuation and deepening of the one that immediately precedes them, "L'Acte" (n° 113, October 21). The present note, "La moitié et le tout - ou la fêlure" (The half and the whole - or the crack), is more closely linked to the end of the preceding note of October 17 (n° 112). From this point onwards, the reflection had split into two parallel tracks: one (on the feeling of death and its link to the love drive) continuing in the three notes (presented as consecutive) 113, 114, 115, and the other initiated with the present note n° 116.

⁷⁴(**) (November 14) This assertion, made "in the heat of the moment", has not been carefully weighed up, and is only partially founded. For a more detailed and nuanced overview, see the note "Rétrospective d'une méditation - ou les trois volets", d'un tableau", n°

acts and behaviors that seem strangely aberrant... . It's surely no coincidence that it was precisely through this "digression" that I was also led, without having planned it, to involve myself in a deeper way than at any other time in Harvest and Sowing. This is one of the unexpected fruits of the recent illness-episode, which occurred at a time when I was about to bring the seven-week investigation to a swift conclusion... ..

This "digression", then, in which some will see a kind of intimate confession, and others a metaphysical speculation, is for me (more than any other part of Harvest and Sowing) at the very heart of Burial, at the **heart of the conflict**. It's only the optics that have changed, the "point of view" from which the thing is seen. is looked at - but suddenly, changed so drastically, that the thing we'd just been examining seems to suddenly disappear!!! I think it won't be long before we □recover the contact that might have seemed lost in road, with the news item l'Enterrement.

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But we can also forget about the news item, whose main merit will then have been to encourage "digression". . .

Part of yesterday was spent retyping the draft of the previous note, written four days ago, which I finally named "Our Mother Death - or the Act". Much of this draft was quite heavily crossed out, a sign that the wording had remained a little muddled, while some important and delicate themes had crept into the reflection a little "by the by", in the stride towards something else. To tell the truth, when I began this note, I was mainly intending to pick up the thread of the previous note, entitled "The half and the whole - or the crack", written just a week ago. But in the end, this thread remains unfinished, and it's about time I picked it up again.

For this note too, I had to retype a large part of the text, essentially for the same reasons, rectifying clumsiness and obscurities along the way. This is the beginning of a reflection on the **division in the couple**, intimately linked to the **division in the person**, and pi us precisely to what I called (in the "Act" note of four days ago) the "vertical cut": that which "cuts", or subtracts, one of the yin or yang "halves" of the original "whole" within us.

At a level which now remains that of an intuitive, non-verbalized understanding, I "understand", it is "clear" to me, that it is the division within the person himself (a division created from scratch, it would seem, by conditioning) which is the root cause of the omnipresent conflict in human society; be it the conflict within the couple or the family, or the conflict within larger groups or that which sets such groups against each other, right up to the armed confrontation of peoples and nations against each other. The conflict within a couple, which pits two antagonist-types against each other, distinct and easily recognizable as such, could not without reason appear as **the** fundamental parable, as **the** elementary, irreducible case of conflict in human society. The "point" of the "Crack" reflection was

above all, to bring the case of conflict within a couple back to that other more fundamental, even more "elementary" conflict: that of conflict within □each person himself, which pits one "part" of himself against another part.

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In the light of this reflection of seven days ago, it was natural to think first of the conflict between the yin and yang "parts" within us, one of the two being accepted and duly put forward and inflated, the other more or less completely rejected and repressed. I was aware, however, that there were other antagonisms within the person, linked to taboos other than that of **the univocity of sex**. It's true that this last taboo, just as strong as that of incest, is even more insidious because of the obviousness with which it is clothed, which seems to obviate the need even to formulate or name it, so much so does it seem to go without saying! Although I haven't yet taken the time to verify it step by step, I have the impression (since the reflection on the Praise) that this taboo is the most crucial of all; that the division or "cut" it institutes in the person is the most important one.

the ultimate root of each of the multiple aspects of inveterate division in the human person. Carefully clarifying the extent to which this is the case would surely be a most attractive starting point for a "journey of conflict discovery". This is not the place to launch into it, however - not to mention the fact that, as far as the journeys ahead of me are concerned, I can think of more burning starting points than this... .

In retyping the text of this note "The half and the whole - or the crack", I realized that in writing it, I hadn't thought to explain in the slightest **why** I saw conflict within the person as the root cause of conflict within the couple, and of conflict within society. As I said earlier, this is one of the things I've "understood" (without ever having had to "explain" it to myself), which have been taught and confirmed by the silent and eloquent language of a thousand little everyday facts, over the days and years⁷⁵ (*). I'm not saying that it's pointless to spell out or "explain" here the "why" and the "how", whether in a few pages, or in imposing volumes perhaps. And no doubt a few pages on the subject, here, would be no more or less "out of place" than any other page on yin and yang and conflict, which has already found its place in these notes. I'm sure I'd learn lots of things, like I'd also learn more by pursuing this other theme of reflection, on the conflict instituted in us between yin and yang, and yang as the ultimate cause of division within us. □ One of these themes visibly extends p. 526

the other, which makes both even more appealing! However, that's not the direction I'd like to pursue right now, if at all. It's not the "thread" I've been wanting to pick up for a week now, and which is still unresolved.

When I finished the reflection in this note⁷⁶ (*), a week ago, I suddenly felt very happy and delighted: the reflection had unexpectedly reconnected with something important, which I had somewhat lost sight of in the previous days: **acceptance**. It was through the negative that this contact was re-established, by virtue of the word that ends this reflection like an unexpected climax - the word "**unacceptable**". It's because a whole "side" of us is rejected as "unacceptable" by those around us, and first and foremost by our parents who set the tone (or by those who take their place, when parents fail) - it's through this **non-acceptance** that conflict sets in within us. The conflict and division within us is nothing other than our **abdication** of a repudiated part of ourselves - the abdication of our undivided nature. This abdication is the price we pay, the price we **must** pay, to be "accepted" both in our own right and by others.

by those around us. This "acceptance" is not acceptance in the full sense of the word, acceptance of who we really are. It is, rather, □ the **reward** for our submission to p. 527

This is the reward for a **deformation** and **mutilation** of our being, just as those around us have undergone from an early age.

In the reflections in the previous notes, there was mention of acceptance of repeated games, and both times the ac-

⁷⁵(*) This "understanding" or conviction is not really contradicted, it seems to me, by the observation I've made many times, that the division in the couple formed by mother and father, and the antagonistic attitudes that express it, leave a deep mark on the child, and often dominate adult attitudes and behaviour. It is surely fair to say that, to a large extent at least, the division within us is the mark and legacy of the division that, in the days of our childhood, pitted our mother against our father. So the question of whether the division in the person is more fundamental or "elementary" than that in the couple, or vice versa, may seem a little like deciding whether the chicken comes out of the egg or the egg out of the chicken!

I'm convinced, however, that in a couple where one of the spouses is "one", not in conflict with himself or herself, and even if his or her spouse maintains an antagonistic attitude towards him or her, the conflict would **not** be transmitted to the couple's children. The reason for this belief, I believe, is that the child in such a case would be totally **accepted** by one of the parents. The appearance of division in the young child seems to me to be no more and no less than the effect of the **rejection** of a part of his being by those around him, and first and foremost, by **both** parents.

⁷⁶(*) The note "The half and the whole or the crack", n° 112.

ception appeared as a crucial thing, the first time being in the note "Innocence (The marriage of yin and yang)" (n° 107), where I take up an observation that goes back to a meditation four years ago: that the blossoming and full flowering of an undivided force in me could take place in the context of from a family torn apart by conflict and latent hatred, **simply because I was fully accepted by my parents** and those around me, conflict didn't take root in my being until later, after the age of five, in a much more "peaceful" environment than my birth family. Conflict between close relatives was certainly far from reaching (in my day at least) such exacerbated (if veiled) intensity as in my family of origin. And yet, in my family of origin, I myself remained **outside the conflict**. Even when I sometimes took sides, it wasn't a heartbreak, it was the spontaneous expression of an undivided being, who had never known the bite of rejection by his own kind, or the fear of rejection.

I realize now, with half a century's hindsight, that even in my new environment, this force of innocence in me exerted a radiance, a kind of fascination I'd say; like that of a **lost paradise**, infinitely far away, for which we might be nostalgic for a lifetime, and which suddenly calls out to us through the voice and gaze of a child. It won me strong and lasting affections, which followed me into my adult life, and right up to the death of those who loved me in this way⁷⁷ (*). But **at the same time**, it was obvious that this force **could not be tolerated** - any more than one tolerates it in a tidy pleasure garden, in a vigorous, exuberant tree or bush that one thinks one loves, while stubbornly pruning it into the shape of a cube, cone or sphere. ...

According to my reconstruction of events⁷⁸ (**), this force held out for perhaps two, two and a half years, before plunging deep, relegated into the underground, after I had finally decided to be and do what everyone else was doing: all muscle all brains, you guessed it, and never mind the guts - and be left in peace! I ended up following suit, **rejecting** and denying (while ignoring) everything that needed to be rejected and ignored, thanks to the unwavering consensus of all the adults around me. And also by the consensus of my parents themselves, who had almost given up, living their true love as far away from their children as possible... ...

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18.2.5.2. (b) The cycle

Note 116 (November 1) I'm resuming the thread interrupted exactly one week ago, when I unexpectedly (on October 26) launched into a kind of "poetic digression" on the feeling of death in love and in the song of love.

I've just reread the previous pages from October 25 and retyped the last one. I seem to see a circle that began two weeks ago with the note "Ecllosion de la force - ou les épousailles" (n° 107). This trace ends with the preceding pages, which repeat and amplify the final "climax" of the note of October 17, "La moitié et le tout - ou la fêlure" (n° 112). This climax, or "final word", which brings that day's reflection to a close, is summed up in the categorical imperative of the final word, "**unacceptable**".

Among the bewildering multitude of conditioning of all kinds that have shaped our lives, this fine word seems to me to perfectly encapsulate **the** decisive cause of division within us: it's the **non-acceptance, the rejection** of ourselves, in the first years of our lives⁷⁹ (*). It takes the form of non-acceptance, of the rejection of certain forces and impulses within us, which are an essential part of our being, of our power.

⁷⁷(*) I see seven people who have given me their affection in this way, only one of whom is still alive today.

⁷⁸(**) I made this reconstruction of the key events of my childhood in March 1980.

⁷⁹(*) My own case was exceptional in this respect, as I was only exposed to such attitudes from my immediate entourage from the age of six.

to know and create. Their repression, taken into our own hands by a worried and implacable inner Censor, is a mutilation of this power within us. Its effect is often to paralyze our creative faculties⁸⁰ (**).

□ This unacceptable power, or these "faculties," are also nothing other than the humble ability to be ourselves. p.

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It also means living our own life, through the humble and full use of our own faculties, rather than a stereotyped, programmed life, driven above all (and often exclusively) by reflexes of **repetition** and **imitation**. These enclose us and isolate us like a heavy, stiff, impermeable shell from which we would never part⁸¹ (*).

The shell is built up from our earliest years, growing thicker as the years go by. Its initial function was undoubtedly to protect us from aggression (often well-intentioned) by those closest to us, and to ensure a more or less benevolent tolerance on their part. But this shell doesn't just protect us from the outside world - it also has, and perhaps more profoundly and essentially, the function of isolating us, of protecting us from **ourselves**: from that knowledge and strength within us, declared "unacceptable", having no place, by the mute consensus that rules around us. It was in our childhood, and has become more and more over the years, a **two-sided** shell, one "outer", the other "inner". They protect the "me", the "Boss", on the one hand from the aggressions he fears from the outside world (and he tends to become more fearful with each passing year!), and on the other hand and **above all**, from the disturbing and inadmissible fantasies and incongruities of the "Worker"; the dirty **brat** to put it better, unpredictable or possible, worrying still even though he's kept at bay by a triple layer of thick horn, guaranteed to resist fire and water... .

(November 2) After the note "Innocence" (n° 107), highlighting the role played by my acceptance by my immediate entourage in my early years, there was a second moment when "acceptance" and "non-acceptance" were at the center of reflection. It was in "Acceptance the yang in the yin," (note n° 110), where I make a partial assessment of the changes that have taken place in me since the day a "reunion" with the child king. They are moving towards a gradual "return" to a "state of childhood".

□ This return is by no means a "regression" to a previous state, which would have the virtue of erasing the traces in me, p. 530

the traveler, of the path that was once mine. It's only through **maturation**, the fruit of inner work, that we can regain contact with an innocence that seemed to have disappeared, with a child in us that seemed long dead and buried. And there's no maturing that isn't also a return in some small way - a return to the child, and to the simplicity, the innocence of the child. This is how a life fully lived is like a circle still "perfecting" itself; it's old age returning to childhood, it's maturity returning to innocence - and ending in a death, perhaps, that prepares a new birth, as a winter prepares a new spring... .

In this sort of "balance sheet" of an unfinished road back, it became clear that the "final word" was **acceptance**, just as the final word of my path of rupture, of the path of departure, was that of **non-acceptance**, rejection, refusal. My maturation was nothing other than the process, the inner work, by which I gradually accepted, welcomed, the things in me that for a long time I had refused, eliminated as best I could, ignored.

This is by no means a "backtracking", a path travelled once that I would retrace again in the opposite direction; a "regression" therefore, to use the expression from earlier. Rather, it's like the upper arc of a cycle, extending and continuing the lower line already traced, **born** from it, which has become like its

⁸⁰(**) (November 2) Often, and more ostentatiously, it manifests itself in "blocking" effects - the inability both to "function" in such and such a situation in which we are engaged, and to disengage ourselves from this dead-end situation. ...

⁸¹(*) Apart from the hours of sleep and dreaming, when the carapace becomes lighter: sometimes even disappears. ...

and the springboard for new momentum. ...

(November 3) Yesterday's notes ended with an unexpected image, springing from reflection without my having called for it. I greeted it with some reluctance at first, out of concern that the vision of reality that the image in turn immediately suggested might be artificial; that the image might "force my hand" and make me say things that would be "far-fetched". But once the last lines had been written and I'd stopped to think about them for a moment, I knew I'd put my finger on an unexpected and important aspect of a certain reality; an aspect I may know about, but haven't fully assimilated, an aspect I tend to neglect or forget.

p. 531 □ I've tended for many years (118) to value what goes in the direction of "acceptance", and, on the contrary, to see in a mostly negative light what goes in the direction of "refusal". Although perhaps not always clearly expressed, I felt that these two attitudes, acceptance and refusal, were "opposites", one of which would be "good" for myself and for everyone, and the other "bad".

In this informal way of apprehending things, I remained trapped (without realizing it, of course) in the age-old "dualistic" vision of things, the one I had also previously called the "warrior" vision, which opposes as antagonists things that a deeper vision reveals to us as **complementary** and inseparable **aspects of the** same reality. When I began (on October 25, ten days ago) the present reflection on Acceptance and Refusal, I had just realized that these are the wife and husband of one of those famous yin-yang or "cosmic" couples we've been talking about for the past month - since the beginning of this "digression" on yin and yang. So I anticipated that this aspect of things would come to the fore. Over the past couple of days, it may have seemed as if we were moving away from it. But now, the lines that conclude yesterday's reflection, with the image of the two arcs of the same cycle extending each other, have unexpectedly brought me back to this initial intuition, which had remained unexpressed.

I've tended to see the **rejections** that dominated my life from my eighth to my forty-eighth year in a predominantly (if not exclusively) **negative** light: as a sometimes crushing **weight** that I dragged around for quarter-century years of my life, and which I finally got rid of (or rather, **started to** get rid of) over the past eight years. This "day" began to reveal itself to me after the discovery of meditation and the "reunion" with the "child" in me. This was precisely the moment when I began to discover the process of refusal in my life, expressed in a kind of "superyang conformism". This aspect of things is by no means imaginary. To perceive it where before there had been a kind of "blank", a total emptiness, has been one of the fruits of the maturation that has continued over these eight years. Yet there is another aspect of the same reality, no less real and important, the "positive" aspect of the **"powerful principle of action"**. This aspect appears for the first time (and very discreetly) in the October 5 meditation "Yang buries yin - or the Superpère" (n° 108), when I write:

□ "The "I'll be like them" (and not "like me") also meant: I'm going to "bet" on "the head", not worse in me than in anyone else, after all, and 'beat' them with their own weapons!"

p. 532 It was this motivation that was the driving force behind my disproportionate investment in mathematics from 1945 to 1969 - the force that fuelled a quarter-century's worth of discoveries⁸² (*). Whether one chooses to view such investment in a "positive" or "negative" light, what's clear is that there was indeed **momentum**, intense **action**. On the learning side of life, there was that "sometimes crushing weight", never examined, so to speak.

⁸²(*) It was, more precisely, the egotic component of this impulse, the **egotic** "factor" of this "living force".

not to say total stagnation - and yet this same "weight" at the same time fuelled a surge of knowledge, gave it its living strength.

Since my "departure" in 1970, I've tended to downplay, and sometimes deny, the "value" that should be attributed to such an impulse, in the direction of a so-called "scientific" discovery and understanding of the outside world. I've tried several times in the course of Harvest and Sowing to identify the common aspects of such discovery and self-discovery, and how they differ⁸³ (**). It's certainly true to say that the impulse to discover in a scientific direction (be it biology, or "psychology". . .) leads us away from ourselves and an understanding of ourselves. When the role of such an understanding is fully understood, we might be tempted to see the impulse to scientific discovery (and any other that "distances us from ourselves") as an "evil", or at the very least, an "obstacle" to maturation, and hence to full self-fulfilment (at least in the case, which has been mine for a long time, where this impulse mobilizes most, if not all, psychic energy). Yet it's also true that **everything** we experience is raw material for learning about life and ourselves. It's a **material that it's up to** us to allow to transform into knowledge, by allowing a process of maturation to begin and continue within us. That's also why I don't regret anything I've experienced, seeing in the end that "it's all good, and there's nothing to throw away"; including the deserts of long periods of spiritual stagnation, which were the main reason why I'm so happy with my life.

price I paid without skimping (and with my eyes closed. . .) for my inordinate investment in a passion
 ☐devouring

. Now I see that these very deserts had something to teach me, that only they can- p . 533
 be could teach. I couldn't have done without it - at the very most, I might have been able, after a few years, to start this "second arc" of the cycle, which I'd been putting off for several decades.

It was on this day, too, that it became clear that the acceptance of myself and of others, which was born and developed in the years of my maturity, was "nourished" by the refusals that had marked the longest part of my life - this "lower arc" of the cycle evoked yesterday, and its "nourishing foundation". Certainly, in the first six years of my life, there was indeed a total acceptance of myself, which had in no way needed previous "refusals" to be, and to unfold and assert itself. On the contrary, it was able to blossom precisely because it was not countered, not trimmed by the scissors of a certain refusal. But this "acceptance" that was in me as a child is not **"the same"** as that of my mature years. It lacked a dimension that the mere acceptance of me, by those who had surrounded my childhood, could not have given it. It was a **knowledge of refusal**, of the rejection of myself (or a part of myself) by others, or by myself. This knowledge came to me through the experience of rejection, and also through the experience of contempt, which is one of its many faces.

Perhaps some people are born with a knowledge, an understanding of refusal, that enables them to remain **one**, innocent and knowing, despite the refusals to which their childhood is exposed. I am well aware that this was not my case. I could not do without the experience of refusal and contempt by others and myself, as a breeding ground for the blossoming of an understanding (however imperfect) of refusal and contempt.

18.2.5.3. (c) Spouses - or the "Evil" enigma

Note 117 I've just probed an unexpected aspect of the relationship between refusal and acceptance in my own life, which had appeared unexpectedly in yesterday's reflection. The "refusal" in question here is not, however, a refusal in the full sense of the word; I mean, a fully assumed refusal - not by a long shot. This refusal was also a

⁸³(**) See in particular "Desire and meditation", "The forbidden fruit", "The solitary adventure", n° s 36, 46, 47.

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long **flight** in the face of the thing refused. It consisted in **not seeing it, ignoring it**, and thereby, to a certain extent, making it disappear from the field of my conscious apprehension and also, from the field □ visible to others. It

was both the cause and the outcome of a state of disharmony, of imbalance - in this case, a "superyang" imbalance, which marked my adulthood, and certain crucial mechanisms of which remain in action to this day. This "refusal" therefore in no way appears here in a role of symmetry, or even yang-yin complementarity, opposite the "acceptance" (of myself and others) mentioned earlier. The latter, on the contrary, is part of a process of self-awareness, aimed at re-establishing a disturbed harmony. It's an acceptance in the full sense of the word - and not just another flight, in the opposite direction to the flight sometimes called "refusal".

There is, however, a more obvious relationship between "refusal" and "acceptance" than the one probed earlier. It appears when both are taken "in the full sense of the word". They are then **simultaneous** and complementary aspects of the same harmony, of the same fully-assumed attitude (whereas sometimes they were two **consecutive** aspects of a path or progression, passing through a state of imbalance, of disharmony, on the way to renewed equilibrium). From this point of view, there is no such thing as "true" acceptance, which would exclude or close itself off to refusal. And there is no "true" refusal that is not born of acceptance, that is not a tangible manifestation of it; that is not one of the two "faces" - the "yang" face - of the same indivisible thing that comprises two, and whose "yin" or "mother" face is acceptance⁸⁴ (*).

An "acceptance" that excludes refusal is not acceptance, but complacency (to others or to oneself, or both), or complicity or connivance (when it comes to the "acceptance" of others).
trui). Total acceptance of a being, whether oneself or another, in no way implies approval.

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□ unconditional approval of his actions, habits and inclinations. Such unconditionality is in itself an **escape**, a refusal to acknowledge (often eloquent) reality, and by no means an acceptance of it. Far from creating a "force field" conducive to renewal, to reconnecting with a forgotten unity, it reinforces inertia, and helps to keep us in a rut.

A refusal that is not at the same time an opening, that is not also like a hand (or "a perch") extended to others, or like a start that marks a point of rupture and renewal in one's relationship with oneself.

- such a "refusal" is truly a cut, which "cuts" and isolates both the one who refuses, and the one who is refused. It is yet another flight from a reality felt to be unpleasant, even disturbing, fraught with threats to our well-established lives, to our conveniences - a reality we believe we can escape from with a slashing blow: "there's no point"... . And yet **it is!** And our imperative "refusal" in no way prevents things from being what they are, even at the risk of displeasing us. On the contrary, just like the complacency of automatic approval, such a refusal reinforces inertia against creative change, and is like a **verdict**: unacceptable you are, and such you will remain... .

I don't pretend to realize in myself the harmony of fully assumed acceptance and rejection. On the contrary, I know I can't - and I'm not sure I've ever met anyone who could. To achieve it is also to have solved, in my own person, the great enigma of "evil": of iniquity, of lies, of wickedness, of spinelessness, of contempt - and of the suffering of those who are "evil".

⁸⁴(*) It's interesting to note that this "natural" distribution of yinyang roles in the acceptance-rejection couple (expressed in French by the feminine and masculine genders of each term of the couple) is **reversed** in the image that had spontaneously presented itself to me at the end of the previous day's reflection. That there can be such reversals is hardly surprising - just as in a lover-lover couple, where the love relationship is undefined, there are bound to be moments when the roles in the love game are reversed, giving free rein to the "yang" erotic impulses in the lover and the "yin" erotic impulses in the lover. I talk about the importance of such occasional role reversals in the note "Acceptance (the yang in the yin)" (n° 110, last paragraph of the first part of this note).

stricken and speechless. It is also, surely, to have fully understood the "good" that lies in what an inner awakening so often designates as "evil".

To refuse war, while seeing and accepting that it is everywhere and in everyone; that the very people I love carry it within them and propagate it, just as I myself have taken it up, carried it, propagated it and passed it on. To refuse war, while accepting that it exists, while loving its countless blind soldiers. This and nothing else, surely, is what it also means: to have come out of the war, to have emerged from the conflict - to have stopped propagating war.

18.2.5.4. Yang plays yin - or the role of Master

Note 118 □ (November 4)⁸⁵ (*) The appearance of this "tendency"⁸⁶ (**) was in the early '70s, i.e. in the years following my "departure" from the mathematical scene. Under the influence of an environment and friends quite different from those before, there was a drastic turnaround in all "values".

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of which I was a member. With hindsight, I can describe this shift as a passage from a "superyang" or "patriarchal" value system, to an almost opposite one, with a strong "yin" dominance - a "matriarchal" system. Among the influences that played a part in this reversal were sporadic readings of

Krishnamurti - on this subject, see the note "Krishnamurti - or liberation become hindrance" (n° 41).

If I then allowed these influences to play a part, which were to lead me to such an "ideological" turn, it's undoubtedly (without realizing it at the time) that there was a deep and urgent need for renewal within me, and first and foremost, the need for liberation from the weight of inveterate "superyang" attitudes. This same need had surely already come into play in 1969, when in the midst of intense and fruitful mathematical activity, I suddenly "dropped out" of maths to take an interest in biology⁸⁷ (***); then the following year, leaving (with no spirit of return) the mathematical scene and even scientific research. There was then a sudden and drastic change of environment and activities, to which I've had occasion to allude several times during "Fatuity and Renewal" (the first part of Harvest and Sowing).

However, it would be inaccurate, or only partially true, to consider these spectacular changes of environment, activities and finally "values", as a "renewal", a "liberation". I've already said I've made this point quite clear in the section entitled "Rencontre avec Claude Chevalley - ou liberté et bons sentiments" (n° 11). In the more penetrating light of the present reflection on yin and yang, I can say that the change that appears to be the most significant of all, that of yang values evacuated (even before myself, let alone examined) in favour of yin values - this change, however, in no way altered the structure (superyang) of the "I", and at most somewhat tempered the attitudes of the "I".

and behaviors that followed. It's true that my understanding of the outside world □ s'était consid-

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But this transformation remained fragmentary, limited almost exclusively to the intellectual level, that of "options". It could not have been otherwise, precisely as long as this transformation was limited to my vision of the "outside world", in which my own person did not figure, or figured only incidentally or superficially, above all through my "social role" and its ambiguities and contradictions. No more than in the past, I had not the slightest suspicion that in **my own person**, there could be ambiguities and contradictions! On the contrary, I was driven by an unshakeable conviction that **my** person was free of all contradictions (even though I was beginning to discern contradictions in others, all around me),

⁸⁵(*) This note is taken from a footnote to the "Cycle" note (n° 116). See the reference at the beginning of the November 3 notes.

⁸⁶(**) The tendency to value "acceptance" as opposed to "refusal".

⁸⁷(***) I first became interested in "molecular biology", under the influence of my biologist friend Mircea Dumitrescu, who introduced me to this fascinating world.

that there was a perfect match between my conscious desires and my conscious knowledge of things on the one hand, and my unconscious (if there was one in my case, if it wasn't a mere carbon copy of my conscious. . .).

The first crack in this conviction only appeared in the spring of 1974, when I finally understood that something must be wrong with **me** too, and not just with others, as the cause of this inexorable deterioration in my relationships with all those close to me (to which my life then seemed to have been reduced, throughout my adult life). The effects of this salutary crack remain limited, in the absence of a genuine **curiosity** about myself, which would have been a feast to dig into, to look at what was behind it, and to see in the process the collapse of a heavy edifice, made of abracadabra illusions and never examined... .

This stubborn blockage of a natural curiosity surely stemmed above all from the fact that I had never before encountered such curiosity in others, which might have made me suspect that in life as in maths, whenever a problem presents itself, there's plenty to look at and, in the process, learn lots of unexpected and very useful things - in other words, that there was such a thing as **self-discovery**. I had been reading Krishnamurti at the time, and had come to realize that some of the things he said were deep and important. So I tended to take him at face value all the way. 88□

p. 538 I had more or less tacitly adopted the Krishnamurtian(*) worldview .

I'm talking about, this baggage has indeed acted as a "hindrance" to true liberation, to renewal in the full sense of the word. I explain myself on this subject in the aforementioned note (which I've just reread), where I try to pinpoint the role of the "Teachings" (of Krishnamurti) in my own itinerary. The first "awakening" in the full sense of the word came only two and a half years later, with the discovery of meditation. It was also the discovery of self-discovery; that there is an **unknown thing** that is "me", and that I have the power to penetrate this thing, to know it. This crucial discovery was made at a time when all teaching (whether capitalized or not) had been forgotten. It was also the moment when, for the first time, the "edifice", built of received ideas and "teachings" of all kinds, held together by immense inertia, collapsed - and the moment when an active curiosity appeared, often mischievous, and always caring.

It was after this turning point, with the blossoming within me of a curiosity about myself first and foremost, and about "life" in addition and as a natural fruit, that I was able to see both Krishnamurti and his message with new eyes. With hindsight, I was able to appreciate the richness of the message, and at the same time discern its limitations and shortcomings, as well as certain fundamental contradictions in the Master ("the Teacher", for his disciples and followers). The most serious of these shortcomings and contradictions seems to me to be the one I've just touched on again: the absence of any curiosity in the Master himself. There's nothing in his writings to suggest that, in those distant days, this vision was **born** in a **person** - a person caught, like you and me, in the net of ready-made ideas and contradictions never spotted; that the vision was **decanted from error** in the course of intense, sometimes painful **work**, against the current of

p. 539 immense forces of inertia; that the stages of this work, or the "thresholds" crossed in the course of these labors, were so many unexpected **discoveries**, each overturning a whole set of inveterate ideas'□ **perpetuated** by

⁸⁸(*) (November 5) The effect in my life of this "adoption" of a vision, becoming a kind of cultural baggage, has remained most limited. My attention was drawn to certain aspects of reality that had previously escaped me entirely, but without any in-depth work of sorting and assimilation, with the power of renewal. If Krishnamurti was important in my itinerary between 1970 and 1976 (between my "departure" from the mathematical scene and the discovery of meditation), it was not so much because of the "baggage" I borrowed from him, as because he had become (unbeknownst to me, of course) a tacit **model**, to which I conformed without wanting to appear to do so - the model, in short, of the "Guru-not-Guru", of the Master who denies himself to be one.

the universal mechanisms of imitation and repetition⁸⁹ (*).

All these things, the child one day knew them, and even experienced them, having lived them intensely. But the Master has forgotten them, and never remembers. Rather than being a child, who passionately discovers and **learns**, and transforms himself in the process, he wanted to be the unchanging **Master** who **knows**, of unchanging infused science, and who devotes his life to spreading his **Teachings**, for the benefit of ordinary mortals. He made himself what his followers and disciples, those who believed in him, wanted him to be: the embodiment of a static, repetitive and therefore reassuring message, the apostle of a new ideology. A **Guru-not-Guru**, in short, like myself (emulating his example, perhaps⁹⁰ (**)) once was... .

(November 15) I have named the preceding note (from November 4) "Yang plays the yin - or the Master". As befits a meditation on myself, the main name of the note concerns my own person, referring to a certain "game" I played, however, for a few years after my departure from the scientific world in 1970⁹¹ (***). As for the second name "The Master", it can be interpreted indifferently as referring to myself, through a designation of the role or pose I held in this game of "yang playing yin", or to that of Krishnamurti, who served as my tacit model.

In fact, the values that emerge from Krishnamurti's books are almost exclusively yin values. When I first read Krishnamurti (in 1970 or 1971), it was the first time I'd seen such values put forward, and the limits and flaws of my (and "everyone else's", with variations) yang vision of the world identified with penetration. This must have been the reason for the very strong impression this reading of a few chapters made on me. Six or seven years later, I also had the opportunity to read Mrs. Luytens' fine biography of Krishnamurti. It confirmed a

certain impression of his person that already emerges from his books (nobosting the fact that he never appears in them in person). Today I would express it by saying that the basic tone in his temperament is □ strongly yin. p. 540 What's more, throughout all his writings, we see, like a constant leitmotif, the emphasis on yin qualities, attitudes and values, and the devaluation (explicit or by omission) of yang qualities, attitudes and values.

Krishnamurti's life and teachings thus embody the quite exceptional attitude of "**yin buries yang**", which runs in the opposite direction to the by far more common attitude of "yang buries yin", of which my own life (until my forty-eighth year at least) offers an equally extreme illustration. Krishnamurti's "superyin" options⁹² (*) have the great merit of running counter to the basic values of the surrounding culture. Nevertheless, they seem to me to be no less repressive (of one part of him by another part) than mine have been.

There is, however, a very pronounced and striking "yang" aspect to Krishnamurti's life, which was undoubtedly first imposed on him by the role of figurehead, of (future) "spiritual master", decided upon by his prestigious theosophist tutors when he was still a child. Subsequently, after the great turning point in his life marked by discoveries that radically altered his vision of things (discoveries that became by

⁸⁹(*) (November 5) These mechanisms are clearly part of the basic mechanisms of the psyche, in both humans and animals. They pre-exist all conditioning, all learning (such as that of language by the young child, and that of almost all the acts of daily life), which could not be established or carried out without them. They were no less present and efficient in the young Master-to-be than in anyone else.

⁹⁰(**) (November 5) Decidedly, the dubious nuance of this "maybe" is out of place! See the penultimate footnote written today.

⁹¹(***) The moment of the discovery of meditation, in October 1976, marks a sharp decline in this game, which continues as best it can, in a more discreet register, until 1981, when it is finally detected and defused. On this subject, see the section already quoted "Le Guru-pas-Guru - ou le cheval à trois pattes", n° 45.

⁹²(*) These "options" undoubtedly go back to his childhood, and more precisely to his first contacts with his theosophical tutors.

The role of "master", or "guide", was (it seems) entirely internalized, and taken over by the propagation of a doctrine that was personal to him, and not taken over from his theosophist masters. This propagation represents an intense, even exhausting activity. It hardly seems to me to be in keeping with a **balance of** yin and yang, but rather a **constraint** imposed on an eminently contemplative temperament, by an "ego" as strong and invasive in the master as in anyone else. Seen in this light, the present note "Yang plays yin", which deals mainly with Krishnamurti, could also be called "**Yin plays yang**".

Thus, on two different occasions and in two different ways, I have played "games" in my life that are like an **inversion of** the attitudes that dominated the life of the person who, at a certain point in my life, was to become the tacit model of my (equally tacit) brand image, and of certain attitudes.

p. 541 and poses within me. But through styles of expression that are inverses of each other, I now recognize an obvious kinship. One is in the presence of **repression** (unconscious, it goes without saying), general⁹³ trice of a disruption of the natural balance of yin and yang⁹³ (*). The other is to be found in the choice of a **role**, and in the **weight of this role**, its effect of slowing down, even blocking, in a blossoming, in a maturation, in the progression of an understanding or knowledge. This role (or pose) was the same for me as it was for my role model, from whom I may have simply borrowed it as it was. This is the **role of the Master**.

18.2.6. Yin and yang mathematics

18.2.6.1. (a) The most macho of arts

Note 119 (November 5) I've been meaning to talk about yin and yang in mathematics for some time now. The two aspects of yin and yang in mathematical work, or in an approach to mathematics, only became apparent to me in the course of my reflections on yin and yang over the last few weeks. I foresaw that probing this dual aspect to some extent in these notes would be the most natural way of "getting back to my sheep", in these notes which are supposed to be a retrospective on "a mathematician's past".

What's been clear to me from my first thoughts on yin and yang (five years ago) is that "doing maths" is perhaps **the most yang**, the most "masculine" of all human activities known to date. In fact, any entirely intellectual activity, such as scientific research in particular and, more generally, any activity commonly described as "research", is a very strongly yang-dominated activity. I was going to write: "marked by a strong yang imbalance", and this is indeed the case when this activity absorbs almost all a person's energy. This yang predominance (or imbalance) is evidenced by a number of yin-yang couples, where it is clear that it is the yang term above all, not to say exclusively, that is "present" in intellectual work. I'll just mention a few, all of which belong to the same "group" (or "door to the world"), which I call the "vague - precise" group. (NB in this last couple and those that follow, the term yin comes first).

- sensitivity - reason (or intellect)
- instinct - reflection
- intuition - logic
- inspiration - method
- vision - coherence

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⁹³(*) We're certainly in very good company!

- the concrete - the abstract
- the complex - the simple
- the vague - the precise
- dream - reality
- indefinite - definite
- the unexpressed - the expressed
- the informed - the trained
- the infinite - the finite
- the unlimited - the limited
- the whole - the part
- global - local (or parcel-based).

I've just gone through my yin-yang repertoire, and come up with a whole bunch of other pairs that give a sense of the superyang character of pure intellectual activity. I'll just mention the first of all those I thought of earlier: the **mind-body** pair.

Having said this, it seems to me that among the various types of intellectual activity, mathematical work represents the ultimate extreme-yang. This is undoubtedly due above all to its character of extreme abstraction, the fact that it is, to a very large extent, independent of any "support" by sensory experience and reasoned observation of the external world, the world in which we live and in which our bodies move. This extreme abstraction distinguishes mathematics from all other sciences, and mathematical work from all other intellectual work, making it a science or work "of pure reason". In contrast to the experimental and observational sciences, it is also the only science whose results are established by **demonstrations** in the most rigorous sense of the term, following a rigorously codified and in principle infallible **method**, the so-called "**logical**" **method**, to arrive at **certainties** that leave no room for doubt or reservation, or for the possibility of exceptions that would have escaped the cases observed so far. These are the extreme-yang features of mathematical work, and mathematical work alone.

Certainly, these traits had a way of attracting me from childhood, me who had opted for "the head" and for "the head".

the extreme yang!⁹⁴ (*) Particularly after the experience of war and the concentration camp, faced with discriminations and prejudices that seemed to defy even the most rudimentary reason, what fascinated me most was

in mathematical activity (from what little I knew of it □ during my high school years), it was this **pou-**

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I could see that, by virtue of a simple demonstration, I could win over even the most reluctant of people, in short, **force** their assent, whether they were well-disposed or not - provided only that they agreed with me to the mathematical "rules of the game". When I first came into contact with school mathematics in 1940 at the Lycée de Mende (where I was able to attend, despite being interned at the Rieucros camp five or six kilometers away), I seemed to know these rules, to feel them instinctively, as if I'd always known them⁹⁵ (*). Surely, I felt them better than the teacher himself, who unconvincingly recited the usual platitudes about the difference between a "postulate" (in this case, Euclid's, the only one he and we had ever heard of...) and an "axiom", or "**the** demonstration" of the three "cases of equality of triangles", by following the textbook like a First Communion pupil would follow his breviary.

Five years later, seduced by the sudden prestige of atomic physics, it was for studies in

⁹⁴(*) Except, however, for the military and warlike variant, with parades, uniforms, standing to attention with a bulging torso, and impeccably organized massacres and mass graves. ...

⁹⁵(*) These first contacts took place shortly after my childish reflections on squaring the circle, referred to in note no. ° 69.

physics that I first enrolled at the University of Montpellier, with the idea of learning about the mysteries of the structure of matter and the nature of energy. But I soon realized that if I wanted to learn about mysteries, I wouldn't be able to do it by taking courses at university, but by working on my own, alone, with or without books. As I didn't have the flair, nor the equipment, to learn physics that way, I put it off until a more propitious time. I then started doing maths, while following a few courses "from afar", none of which could satisfy me, nor bring me anything beyond what I could find in current textbooks. But I still had to pass my exams. ...

18.2.6.2. (b) The beautiful

Note 120 (November 6) Looking back over yesterday's notes just now, I was able to confirm that I had made-

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tention to avoid a certain confusion between mathematical **work**, a very yang-dominant activity, and "mathematics". It's surely no coincidence that in both French and German, the word for it is feminine, as is "**la science**", which encompasses it, or the even broader term "**knowledge**"⁹⁶ (*), or also "**substance**". For the mathematician in the true sense of the term, by which I mean the one who "does mathematics" (as he would "make love"), there is no ambiguity about the distribution of roles in his relationship to mathematics, to the unknown substance that he therefore knows, that he knows by penetrating it. Mathematics, then, is as much a "woman" as any woman he has ever known or even desired - whose mysterious power he has ever felt, drawing him into her, with a force that is both gentle and unrelenting.

I first became aware of the profound identity between the impulse that drew me to "women", and that which drew me to "mathematics", a few months before my encounter with the stanzas of the Tao Te King that were to set me off on the Eloge de l'Inceste (and, along the way, on my first systematic reflection on the "feminine" and the "masculine", whose Chinese names "yin" and "yang" I didn't yet know). That was six years ago, when I wrote a two-page text entitled "En guise de programme" (by which I meant: for the (C 4) "Initiation à la Recherche" course, of which this text constituted an introduction, or more exactly a declaration of intent about the spirit of this "course". After writing this text, which came to my pen most spontaneously, I was struck by the abundance of images springing from one another, charged with erotic connotations. I was well aware that this was no accident, nor the result of a simple literary intention - that it was an unequivocal sign of a profound kinship between the two passions that had dominated my adult life. Without thinking at the time of deepening the matter through systematic reflection (which would appear only a few months later, when I wrote the Praise), or even (I think) of formulating clearly for myself what was suddenly perceived, I think I can say that in that moment I learned, without fanfare, something important - I had "discovered" something⁹⁷ (**), something that had entirely eluded me before.

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Of course, like everyone else, I'd heard of Freud and libido sublimation and all that, but that's beside the point. Even tons of books on psychoanalysis and whatnot can't do the trick. to spare such moments, when all theory, all "baggage" is forgotten, and suddenly some□que thing "clicks!". It's at moments like these that our knowledge of things is renewed. It has nothing to do with

⁹⁶(*)On the other hand, "**le savoir**" is masculine, and is indeed "l'époux" in the yin-yang couple "la connaissance - le savoir". The German is less clear-cut here, since both "Kennen" and "Wissen" are **neuter** (as substantivized verbs).

⁹⁷(**) It was then a "discovery" in the "yin", "feminine" mode - which takes place by welcoming new knowledge into ourselves, in a state of silent openness to what comes to us. Such moments have been rare in my life, I think. In any case, the moments of discovery I remember are almost all yang, "masculine" in tone.

read books, listen to lectures, i.e.: increase knowledge⁹⁸ (*).

When I think of "mathematics", I certainly don't mean the totality of **knowledge that** can be described as "mathematical", recorded from antiquity to the present day, in publications, preprints or manuscripts and correspondence. Even if you eliminate the repetitions, that's probably a few million pages of compact text; a dozen tons of books perhaps, or even a few thousand thick volumes, enough to fill a spacious library: nothing to get a hard-on about, quite the contrary! Talking about "mathematics" only makes sense in the context of a **vision**, an **understanding** - and these are essentially personal, not collective. There is as much "mathematics" as there are mathematicians, each of whom has a certain personal experience of it, more or less vast or limited, one of the fruits of which is his own understanding, his own vision of "mathematics" (the one he has known), always more or less fragmentary. It's a bit like "**the** woman", which may seem to some as

a mere abstraction, or as a hollow formula and yet has a deep, powerful, irrefutable (for me at least) "reality", of which every woman met or known is an embodiment and represents p. 546

one aspect; and the **same** woman in another's experience undoubtedly represents yet another incarnation, yet another aspect.

My intention here is in no way to confront the difficulty of "integrating" this vast multiplicity of experiences, understandings and visions of "mathematics" into a totality, a unity - and this, moreover, at a time when we are witnessing (it seems to me) a kind of relentless "divergence" in mathematical production, and when no mathematician can flatter himself that he knows, even if only in outline, the totality or essence of what has been accomplished in our science. Rather, my aim was to examine the interplay of yin and yang in mathematical **work**, i.e., in the relationship between the mathematician (or any mathematician, starting with myself) and "mathematics". The thing under scrutiny, then, is "the mathematician" or "that mathematician" (in his or her relationship to mathematics), rather than "mathematics" itself.

18.2.6.3. (c) Desire and rigor

Note 121 (November 7) At the level of our intellectual faculties, of reason, to "know" something is, above all else, to "**understand**" it. And in a work of discovery that takes place in this register of our faculties, the impulse to know that drives the child in us (independently of the motivations of the "I", the "Boss") is the **desire to understand**. This is perhaps the main difference between the drive for intellectual knowledge and its elder sister, the drive for love. This desire to understand pre-exists any "method", scientific or otherwise. The latter is a tool, fashioned by desire to be used to

⁹⁸(*) This observation is not contradicted by the fact that it is quite possible, and even probable, that this "awareness" (the passage to the conscious level of something perceived in the unconscious) was facilitated by the existence of the Freudian consensus, of which I had heard without it really making me feel either hot or cold. Knowledge can encourage the emergence of new knowledge, but it's much more common, it seems to me, for it to nip in the bud any hint of emergence - in the same way that ready-made "answers" nip in the bud the emergence of a (good) question. ...

It's remarkable that, while "everyone's heard" a little about the role of the erotic drive in creativity (artistic or scientific, let's say), there was no trace of it in the consensus that prevailed in the circles to which I belonged at one time or another. And yet, there was no shortage of striking facts that could have tipped me off a long time ago. Up until three years ago, periods of intense creativity in my life, and especially periods of inner renewal, were also marked by a powerful influx of erotic energy. Nevertheless, my mathematical activity has never been accompanied by conscious erotic images or associations. But I do remember being somewhat disconcerted, in the '50s, during a work session of the Bourbaki group, by a colleague and friend who mentioned to me, as the most common thing in the world, a peculiarity in his mathematical work: when he had reached the end of a difficult task, he felt an imperious urge to make love (with or without a partner) - and this all the more strongly the more satisfied he was with what he had just done.

its ends: to penetrate the unknown accessible to reason, for the purpose of understanding. Knowledge is born of the desire to know, and therefore of the desire to understand, when it is reason that wants to know. **Method**, as an instrument of desire, is by itself powerless to give birth to knowledge - any more than the forceps of a doctor, or even the expert hands of a midwife, give birth. But they can sometimes usefully assist the birth of the newborn, when the time is ripe and they know how to come at the right moment... .

Many, if not all, high school and university students must feel the rigor of mathematics.

p. 547 tic, preached to them by sullen masters, as a kind of a priori entirely external to their humble selves, incomprehensible and arbitrary, dictated by a peremptory and impitoyable God to a Euclid promoted to Grand Censor-in-Chief, with the mission of making countless generations of schoolchildren pale at the task of swallowing Culture with a capital C as best they could. I must have been one of the few not to have passed through this stage in my relationship with school mathematics - to have instinctively sensed, from the very first encounter and within the narrow confines of a sixth-grade math book, the original function and meaning of rigor: that it was a flexible and astonishingly effective instrument in the service of an understanding of those things called "mathematics" - things that reason alone can fully know. This "rigor" is also like the soul and nerve of what I called, in the reflections of the day before yesterday, "the rules of the mathematical game", and what earlier I called "the method". Having only glimpsed them, it was as if I had always known them - as if it were my **own** desire that had delicately, lovingly shaped them, like a key that had the power to open up for me an unknown, mysterious world, whose foreboding richness would prove inexhaustible... . And it was my own desire that continued to refine this tool throughout my high school and university years, before any encounter could lead me to suspect that somewhere there were **fellow human beings** - people who, like me, found pleasure in probing the In-known that this key, apparently unknown to all (including my teachers), alone had the power to open up⁹⁹ (*).

18.2.6.4. (d) The rising sea. . .

Note 122 (November 8) It's been three days since I started thinking, in principle, about "yin and yang in mathematics", and I have the impression that it's still going on, even though I'm partially absorbed in other occupations and tasks. By dint of preliminaries, I still haven't come to the point I wanted to make from the start: that in my own [□]mathematical work, it's the **yin** note, "feminine", which dominates!

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I realized this a few weeks ago, on the bangs of the present reflection on yin and yang, and in connection with the "association of ideas aroused by the three-part Funeral Eulogy", which was the starting point for this long digression (see the beginning of the note "Yang buries yin (1) - or the muscle and the gut"). To tell the truth, this association of ideas (to which I'll return later) was more or less based on the intuition that my approach to mathematics was strongly yang-dominant. This intuition was quite natural, since it was my superyang options that had motivated my long-term investment in mathematics. However, this intuition, or more precisely, this idea, was wrong - all it took was

⁹⁹(*) Still, the little math I'd learned in high school and university might have been enough to make me realize that, in the past at least, there must have been people like me, those in fact who were called "mathematicians". Mr. Soula (one of my professors at university) had told me about Lebesgue, who would have solved the last open problems in mathematics, including measurement theory (which I'd been working on since leaving high school in 1945). But in those years (1945-48), my desire to clarify by my own means the questions I had been asking myself was so exclusive, that it excluded any kind of curiosity about the existence, work or person of mathematicians past or present.

that I take the time to examine it a little and realize that the opposite is true.

For a surprise, it was: a surprise! I didn't mention it "on the spot" in my notes, so as not to cut off the train of thought as I tried to work out how I perceived yin and yang and the philosophy that emerged for me. But here we are at last!

This misconception about the nature of my approach to mathematics must have crept into me, unexamined and as a matter of course, from the time I started paying attention to the yin-yang aspect of things, five or six years ago. It must be a residue of my yang, virile brand image - a residue that has continued to linger there, out of sheer inertia, because I haven't bothered to sweep it up. ...

Perhaps the reader will have the impression that I'm taking him for a ride, given that as recently as three days ago, I explained at length that mathematical work was the most superyang of superyang activities - that in the relationship to mathematics, mathematics was "the woman", and the mathematician as an enterprising lover - and now, all of a sudden, I raise the question of whether, in the case of my humble self, my work or my "approach" is yin or yang, and conclude (as the most natural thing in the world) that it's yin, who'd have thought! If there's any apparent confusion here, it stems from a lack of understanding of this universal fact: that in everything, be it the most yin or the most yang in the world, the dynamics of yin and yang are at play, through the marriage of the two original forces. Thus fire, the most yang of all things and the very symbol of yang, is yin in some of its aspects (this is the "yin in yang")' □ and conversely water, which is the very symbol of yin, is yang in some of its aspects and p. 549 functions (it's the "yang in the yin"). There's no need to develop these two particularly instructive examples here - Surely, the reader intrigued by these observations (which may seem peremptory or sibylline) need only follow the associations of ideas with fire and water, to discover for himself the reality of yin in yang, and yang in yin. And if he's a mathematician, or just familiar with intellectual work (even if he's not a mathematician, or even a scientist), he'll have no trouble discerning the existence of complementary yin and yang modes of approach to any kind of intellectual work, however "yang" it may be in comparison with other, less fragmented types of activity.

A possible starting point would be to go back to the fifteen or so yin-yang couples mentioned at the beginning of the reflection three days ago¹⁰⁰ (*), when I noted that for each of these couples, it was the predominance of the yang term that took place in intellectual work (especially mathematical work), when we compare such work with other types of activity, such as making love, singing, painting (a picture or a wall, for that matter), gardening and so on. This doesn't alter the fact that, if we stay within a given activity such as doing maths, let's say (all things yang, it's understood), we can distinguish a balance (or sometimes, an imbalance) of either yin or yang traits, varying from one mathematician to another and sometimes, within the same mathematician, from one job to another.

For example, in some works it is the **logical** structure of the theory developed that is emphasized, in others it will be the **intuitive** aspects, there is an imbalance, manifested in the reader or listener by a familiar feeling of **unease** (and sometimes in the author too), when one of these indispensable aspects is grossly neglected, to the "benefit" of the other. (When both are grossly neglected, we throw the book in the garbage can, or leave the room slamming the door!) When each of the two aspects is strongly present, whether explicitly or between the lines, this manifests itself in a very familiar feeling of unease.

also familiar with harmony, beauty, balance and satisfaction. So it is, irrespective of "basic □ tone" that dominates the approach taken, whether that tone is in the "logical", or "intuitive" (or p. 550

¹⁰⁰(*)See "Le plus macho des arts", note n° 119.

also "structure" or "substance"). There's no need to expand on this instructive example, to describe where the problem lies (i.e., to identify the "malaise" referred to earlier), when one or other of the two aspects is neglected; the reader already knows this from his or her own experience! Similar observations are bound to emerge for most of the yin-yang couples considered three days ago. Perhaps even for all of them, even if some are more delicate than the intuition-logic pair, and will undoubtedly require more in-depth examination to be fully understood.

I now had to try and make this fact a little more explicit, or rather "get it across" - that in my way of doing maths, it's my "feminine" yin traits, more than my "masculine" ones, that are running the show. If the idea here was to take this impression to its logical conclusion, testing it in as many ways as possible, the natural thing to do (which did occur to me yesterday) would be to go through the yin-yang pairs I'm aware of, those that might represent (among others) an aspect or mode of apprehension of intellectual work (there must be about fifty of them, I suppose), and see for each of them which of the two "spouses" of the pair predominates in me. I anticipate that in every case, one of the two will, on examination, prove to be predominant.

So, in the intuition-logic pairing, I notice at first glance that both aspects are strongly present in my mathematical work. This is a sign of balance and harmony, among other signs pointing in the same direction. As befits a yin-yang couple, for me (in my work, I mean), the two spouses are truly inseparable - the logical structure of a theory develops step by step and in conjunction with the deepening of an **understanding of the things it deals with**, i.e., also in conjunction with the development of an ever finer and more complete **intuition of them**. Perhaps in my published works, in keeping with the canons of the mathematician's craft, it is the yang aspect, the "structure" or "logic" or "method" aspect, that is most apparent, most obvious to the reader. Yet I'm well aware that what drives and dominates my work, what is its soul and *raison d'être*, are the mental images that are formed in the course of the work to apprehend the reality of mathematical things.

p. 551 ☐ Certainly, I've never skimmed when it comes to identifying, as meticulously as possible, by means of the language. It is in this continual effort to formulate the unformulated, to clarify what is still vague, that the particular dynamic of mathematical work (and perhaps also of all creative intellectual work) may be found. It is in this continual effort to formulate the unformulated, to specify what is still vague, that perhaps lies the particular dynamic of mathematical work (and perhaps also, of all creative intellectual work) - in a continual dialectic between **the** more or less unformulated **image**, and the **language** that gives it form and, in the process, gives rise to new, more or less blurred images that deepen the previous one, and which in turn call for a formulation to give them form. In fact, it's this perpetual effort to use language to define, as precisely and perfectly as possible, what at first appears as an indefinable and unformed "presentiment", as an informal "feeling", as an image shrouded in mist. ... it's this work that, since my childhood and still today, fascinates me the most in the work of mathematical discovery. But if the "effort" here always seems to be on the "language" side, i.e. on the formulation, structure and logic side, which form the key ingredients of the mathematical **method** ; and if (by force of circumstance) **this is where** the visible aspect of a mathematical **text** (or at least its fruits) is to be found, this doesn't mean that (for me at least) this is not where the soul of mathematical understanding lies, nor the driving force or motivation behind mathematical work. I believe that very few of my works have reversed this relationship, that I have developed a "formalism" by allowing myself to be guided solely, or above all, by its internal logic, by desiderata of coherence, or by other aspects of the formalism itself, rather than by a content, by a substance, manifested in images, intuitions of a "geometric" nature.

trique". In any case, all my life I've been unable to read a mathematical text, no matter how trivial or simplistic, when I can't give it "meaning" in terms of my experience of mathematical things, i.e. when it doesn't arouse in me the mental images, the intuitions that would give it life, just as a living flesh of muscles and organs gives life to a body, which without it would be reduced to a skeleton. This inability sets me apart from most of my mathematician colleagues, and (as I've already mentioned) it's what often made it difficult for me to fit into the collective work of the Bourbaki group, particularly during the joint readings, where I was often left behind for hours on end, while everyone else followed along at ease.

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□ I have just followed some associations of ideas about my mathematical work, linked to the "intuition-" couple. p. 552

logical", and to a few neighboring couples who introduced themselves in the wake of this one; the informs

- the formed, the undefined - the defined, the informal - the formulated, the vague - the precise, inspiration - method, vision
- coherence. ... It would surely be instructive to review one by one (as I had been thinking of doing) all the possible and imaginable "couples" in relation to intellectual work, and probe for each one in what way and to what extent either of the two spouses is present in my mathematical work, and whether or not one of the two seems to "set the tone", and which one. Over and above a more delicate apprehension of the particular nature of **my** mathematical work, such "piecework" will surely deepen my understanding of the nature of mathematical work in general, and also my apprehension of each of the couples thus reviewed. But such systematic work would obviously take me too far, and would go beyond the reasonable limits of the present reflection. It seems more natural to me to try and find here, and "pass on" if I can, the associations of ideas and images that have convinced me (without having to go any further) that in my mathematical work, it is indeed the "feminine" traits of my being that tend surreptitiously to set the tone, and thus to find a kind of unexpected "revenge" (where one would least have expected it!) for the repression they had to endure in other spheres of my life.

Take, for example, the task of proving a theorem that remains hypothetical (to which, for some, mathematical work would seem to boil down). I see two extreme approaches. One is the **hammer-and-chisel approach**, where the problem at hand is seen as a large, hard, smooth walnut, whose interior needs to be reached, the nourishing flesh protected by the shell. The principle is simple: place the cutting edge of the chisel against the shell, and strike hard. If necessary, repeat the process in several different places, until the shell breaks - and you're happy. This approach is especially tempting when the hull has asperities or protuberances, through which to "take it". In some cases, such "bits" are obvious, in other cases, you have to carefully turn the nut over in all directions, prospecting carefully, before finding a point of attack. The most difficult case is when the shell is perfectly round and uniformly hard. No matter how hard you tap, the chisel's cutting edge slips and barely scratches the surface - you end up getting bored with the task. Sometimes, though, you manage to do it, by dint of muscle and endurance.

□ I could illustrate the second approach, keeping the image of the walnut that needs to be opened. The first p. 553

The parable that came to mind earlier is that you dip the nut in an emollient liquid - why not just water? From time to time, you rub it so that it penetrates better, and for the rest, you let time do its work. The shell softens over weeks and months - when the time is ripe, a squeeze of the

just hand it over and the shell opens like a ripe avocado! Or let the nut ripen in the sun and rain, and perhaps also in the winter frosts. When the time is ripe, a delicate sprout emerges from the flesh and pierces the shell, as if playing with itself - or to put it another way, the shell opens up on its own, allowing it to pass through.

The image that came to me a few weeks ago was even different: the unknown thing we're trying to get to know appeared to me as some compact expanse of earth or marl, reluctant to be penetrated. You can go at it with pickaxes or crowbars or even jackhammers: that's the first approach, that of the "chisel" (with or without a hammer). The other is the **sea**. The sea creeps in insensitively and noiselessly, nothing seems to break, nothing moves, the water is so far away you can hardly hear it... . Yet it eventually surrounds the restive substance, which gradually becomes a peninsula, then an island, then an islet, which is eventually submerged in its turn, as if it had finally dissolved into the ocean stretching as far as the eye can see. ...

Readers who are at all familiar with some of my work will have no difficulty in recognizing which of these two modes of approach is "mine" - and I have already had occasion in the first part of *Récoltes et Semailles* to explain myself on this subject, in a somewhat different context¹⁰¹ (*). It's the "sea approach", by submersion, absorption, dissolution - the one where, if you're not very attentive, nothing seems to happen at any moment: everything at every moment is so obvious, and above all, so natural, that you'd almost scruple to write it down in black and white, for fear of seeming to combine, instead of tapping a chisel like everyone else... . Yet this is the approach I've instinctively practised since my youth, without ever really having had to learn it.

This was also, in essence, Bourbaki's approach, and my encounter with the Bourbaki group was providential in this respect, by confirming me, by encouraging me to **be** in this "style" that was spontaneously mine, and in

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otherwise I risked finding myself more or less alone of my kind¹⁰² (*). It's true that this situation (being alone of my kind) had long been familiar to me, and didn't bother me that much. As for whether my instinctive approach to mathematical work was going to be "efficient", i.e. above all (according to the criteria in force, and especially for judging a beginner mathematician) whether I was going to be able to solve "open questions" that nobody had yet been able to answer, I couldn't know in advance, and I didn't worry too much about it. My natural inclination was to ask my own questions, rather than trying to solve those that others had asked themselves. In fact, it's mainly through the discovery of new questions and **notions**, new **points of view** and even new "**worlds**", that my mathematical work has proved fruitful, even more so than through the "solutions" I've been able to provide to questions that have already been asked. This very strong impulse to discover the right questions, rather than the answers, and to discover the right notions and statements, much more than the demonstrations, are also strong "yin" traits in my approach to mathematics¹⁰³ (**). That's why I'm particularly sensitive when I see the best of what I've contributed to mathematics being treated casually or with disdain by some of my students, i.e. by the very people who benefited from it in the first place.

In any case, it was only in retrospect that I realized that my natural approach

¹⁰¹(*) See "Dream and demonstration", n° 8.

¹⁰²(*) In this extreme-yin approach, I tended to go further even than most of my friends in Bourbaki were willing to go. This is probably one of the reasons why I ended up leaving the group towards the end of the '50s.

¹⁰³(**) Incidentally, I have the impression that it's no different for any other research work I do, including what I call "meditation".

of mathematics also "worked" when I felt attracted, inspired by a question that others had asked when, in short, it "clicked" and at the same time the question became "mine". If I tried to draw up a more or less exhaustive list of such cases, I suspect it would be quite long.

long. On the face of it, there are four such situations that seem to me to "stand out" for their scope¹⁰⁴ (***).

In all four cases, the hypothetical theorem ended up being proved, for the most part, by the "from the sea rising", submerged and dissolved by some more or less vast theory, going far beyond the results it was initially intended to establish. In fact, I've noticed that the ideas, notions, formulas and methods I developed in these situations (and in others too) have long since entered the realm of "well-known" mathematics, which "everyone" knows and uses to their heart's content, regardless of their origin¹⁰⁵ (*).

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18.2.6.5. (e) The nine months and the rising sea

Note 123 (November 9) There's another point in common with the four cases mentioned yesterday, of open questions that were resolved (or rather, "dissolved") by "the approach of the rising sea". This is the role played by **J.P. Serre** in each of these four cases. It was above all a role of "detonator", to get me "started" on these questions, to use the expressions of a footnote in the Introduction mentioning this role (see "The end of a secret", section 8 of the Introduction). In fact (as I now realize), it appears that Serre played just such a role in the genesis of the main ideas and tasks I developed between 1955 and 1970, i.e. between the time I left functional analysis for geometry, and the time I left the world of mathematics.

I could say, with a slight exaggeration, that between the early fifties and around 1966, in other words for some fifteen years, everything I learned about "geometry" (in a very broad sense, encompassing algebraic or analytic geometry, topology and arithmetic), I learned from Serre' when I didn'tp learnt by myself in my mathematical work. I think it was in 1952, when Serre came to Nancy (where I stayed until 1953), that he began to become a privileged interlocutor for me - and for years, he was even my **only** interlocutor for themes outside functional analysis. I think the first thing he talked to me about was Tor and Ext, which I'd made my own, and yet, look, it's as easy as pie... and the magic of injective and projective resolutions and derived and satellite functors, at a time when the Cartan-Eilenberg "diplodocus" had not yet been published. What attracted me to cohomology at that time were the "A and B theorems" he and Cartan had just developed on Stein's analytic spaces.

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¹⁰⁴(***) The questions I have in mind here are, in chronological order of their solution, the following:

1. Validity of the Riemann-Roch-Hirzebruch formula in any characteristic.
2. Structure of the fundamental "prime to characteristic" group of an algebraic curve over an algebraically closed body of any characteristic.
3. Rationality of *L-functions* of *fi ni* type schemes over a *fi ni* body (part of the "Weil conjectures", and an important step towards the proof of these conjectures, completed by Deligne).
4. Semi-stable reduction of abelian varieties over the fraction field of a discrete valuation ring.

¹⁰⁵(*) I myself have often practised this carelessness about the origin of the "well-known" I used, except in cases where I knew the origin at first hand, having more or less witnessed the birth, or when I was the father myself. As I have seen many times over the years, and especially in the course of my reflections on the Burial, this elementary delicacy has often been lacking in some of my students or close friends in the mathematical world, even when it has been a question of things they have learned from none other than me, and whose origin they know beyond any possibility of doubt. On this subject, see the reflection in the note "Le Fossoyeur - ou la Congrégation toute entière", n° 97.

or two tête-à-tête with Serre that I sensed all the power, the geometric richness concealed in such simple cohomological statements. At first, they had gone completely over my head, before he told me about them, at a time when I hadn't yet "felt" the geometric substance in the beam cohomology of a space. I was so enchanted that for years I had been intending to work on analytic spaces, as soon as I had completed the work I was still doing on functional analysis, where I was definitely not going to linger! If I didn't really follow through on these intentions, it's because Serre had in the meantime turned to algebraic geometry and written his famous "FAC" foundation article, which made comprehensible and highly seductive what had previously appeared to me to be unbearably boring - so seductive, in fact, that I couldn't resist these charms, and so turned to algebraic geometry, rather than analytic spaces.

If I hadn't held back, I'd have been off, one thing leading to another, making the history of my relationship with Serre, which would also be little more than the history of my mathematical interests, from 1952 to 1970. This is not the place. I would only add that, as is only right and proper, it was from Serre that I was introduced to the four questions mentioned above. Of course, it wasn't a matter of pointing out the precise wording of the question, period. The essential thing was that Serre each time strongly sensed the rich substance behind a statement that, offhand, would probably have neither warmed nor chilled me - and that he managed to "convey" this perception of a rich, tangible, mysterious substance - a perception that is at the same time

desire to know this substance, to penetrate it. This is perhaps the most crucial moment of all in a work of discovery, the moment when \square "it clicks", despite having no idea yet so vague

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This is the real moment of "conception". This is truly the moment of "conception" - the moment from which gestation work can and does take place, given the right circumstances. ...

If Serre played an important role in my work and in my mathematical output, it seems to me that it was more in the appearance of those crucial moments, when the spark passes and obscure, invisible work begins, than in the technical means, unknown to me, that he sometimes provided me with at the right moment, or in the ideas that I borrowed from him at later stages of my work.

One of the reasons, no doubt, for the special role played by Serre, is my reluctance to keep abreast of mathematical news by reading, or even to learn the ABCs of a particular "well-known" theory by reading the books or dissertations that deal with it. As far as possible, I like to get my information from the living word of people who are "in the know". From the time I first came into contact with a mathematical environment (in 1948) until I left in 1970, I was fortunate never to lack a competent and willing interlocutor to keep me abreast of things that might be of interest to me. This may have created a dependency, but I never felt that way¹⁰⁶ (*). In fact, the question of "dependence" could hardly arise, as long as my interlocutor and I were equally interested in what he was teaching me. Teaching the eager-to-learn is beneficial for both parties, and an opportunity for the "teacher" to learn, as well as for the one being taught.

The "reason" given earlier does explain the importance of interlocutors in my mathematical past, but not the exceptional role played by Serre, which seems to me to far exceed that of all my other "interlocutors" combined! What's certain is that Serre and I complemented each other perfectly. We had similar interests.

¹⁰⁶(*) The first and only exception was in 1981, long after my "departure" from the mathematical world. It was when I turned to Deligne as the ideal interlocutor for my Anabelian reflections, after my "Long walk through Galois theory". At the time, I clearly sensed the intention to take advantage of this unique interlocutor situation, to "turn me on my head" - and I ceased all mathematical relations with him, until today. On this episode, see the note "Two turning points", n° 66.

We had many strong points in common, and I sensed in him the same high standards and rigour that I put into my work. Apart from that, we worked in very different "styles". I have the impression that our approaches of the \square mathematics and our work complemented each other, without really ever encroaching on each other. The genre

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The kind of work I was doing (and the way I was doing it) was very different from Serre's kind of work. He might lay the first foundations of a theory in a fifty-page text, or even spend a year writing a medium-sized book elegantly and concisely expounding some subject that inspired him - but certainly not spend the best part of five years of his life, or even ten years or more, developing at length and in volumes a whole new language (which had been quite dispensable until then), to found a new and fertile approach to algebraic geometry, let's say. He introduced a number of fertile new ideas and notions, without letting himself be drawn into "carrying" them through to the end. On more than one occasion, however, these ideas and notions served as a starting point for a large-scale work that suited me perfectly, and for which there would have been no question of Serre himself taking the plunge.

An association comes irresistibly to me here. In the light of the reflections of the last few days, I see my relationship to mathematical work and to my "works" more as "**maternal**" than "paternal". The moment of conception, crucial though it is, represents for me a tiny portion of the "work" during which the thing in gestation, the "child" to come, grows and develops. This work is very much like that of a pregnant woman's pregnancy, which begins when the child is conceived, and continues for nine long months... . The time it takes to bring what was a foetus to term and to **give birth** - that is, to bring a **child** into the world, a living, **complete** child, not just a head or a torso or a baby skeleton or whatever. The mother's role is obviously very different from that of the father (even the best father in the world. . .), who does little more than cast a seed, then goes off to do other things.

Clearly, Serre's mathematical work, his approach to mathematics, is strongly yang-dominant, "masculine". His approach to a difficulty would rather be that of the chisel and the hammer, very rarely that of the sea that rises and submerges, or that of water that soaks and dissolves. And he seems content to cast a seed, without much concern for where it will fall, or whether it will trigger conception and labor, or even whether the child that might be born of it will be in his likeness or bear his name.

\square An image can help us apprehend an important aspect of a certain reality, but it does not exhaust reality. Reality is always more complex and richer than any image that tries to express it, and so it is with the images that came to me, without having sought them out, to express two different approaches to mathematics - Serre's and mine. Serre sometimes brought to fruition work that needed breathing space, just as I sometimes sowed ideas, some of which germinated and were brought to fruition by others. No more than in my approach to mathematics, I lack "virility" (whereas the background note is "feminine"), any more than Serre lacks "femininity" in his, balancing his "virile" background note.

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The same cannot be said of a creative approach to an unknown substance, be it mathematical or otherwise: there is no discovery, no knowledge, no renewal, except through the joint and inseparable action of the original yin and yang energies and impulses within a single being. It is in the intimate fusion of the two that lies the **beauty of** a being, or of a work of art - that delicate, elusive quality which signals itself to us through that special feeling of harmony, of satisfaction. This quality is present in all Serre's work that I have known, whether in person or through the texts he has written. I have known few mathematicians where it is so consistently present, and with such force.

18.2.6.6. (f) The Yin funeral (yang buries yin (4))

Note 124 (November 10) Yesterday's and the day before's reflections are far from exhausting the set of characters strongly marked in my mathematical work, which are of a yin nature. To probe them further, on the lines of the present reflection on yin and yang in mathematics, would also be an excellent opportunity for me to deepen an understanding of the nature of mathematical work in general. This theme of yin and yang in mathematics, which I thought I'd get round to in a day's reflection, and on which I've already spent five consecutive days feeling as if I'd only just begun, has just revealed itself as one of those many seemingly innocuous themes, which become broader and deeper the closer you get to it and the more you enter into it. There's no way I'm going to rush through this juicy theme (or even just "get around to it"), in the middle of a Funeral Ceremony that I've just started.

don't want to drag this out of proportion!

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□ I'd just like to point out two more of these "strong characters" (without comment, I promise!). marked" in my mathematical work that go in the "yin", feminine direction. One is a predilection for the **general**, rather than the particular (which makes a "pair" or "couple" with it). The other trait seems to me to be even stronger, or to put it better, more essential, more neuralgic, and broader too (in the sense that it **contains** the first). If there is one "quest" that has run through my entire life as a mathematician, from the age of seventeen (fresh out of high school) right up to the present day, an incessant quest that has marked all my work (published or unpublished) since its inception, it is that of **unity**, through the infinite multiplicity of mathematical things and possible approaches to these things. Detecting and discovering this unity beyond the often bewildering richness of diversity (without taking anything away from this richness), recognizing common traits beyond differences and dissimilarities, and going right to the root of analogies and resemblances to discover profound kinship - this has been my passion throughout my life. The very differences, the expression of unlimited and elusive diversity, have come to seem like the infinitely branching branches and twigs of the same vast tree, where each and every branch and twig shows me the way to the trunk that is common to them all. Instinctively and by nature, my path has been that of **water**, which always tends to **descend**, the path towards this trunk, towards these roots. And if I liked to linger along the way, it was rarely at the ridge to explore leaves and delicate twigs, but above all at the large branches, the trunk and the master roots, to get to know their texture and feel through the bark the rising flow of nourishing sap.¹⁰⁷ (*)

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□ To tell the truth, I'm still not sure what to make of this newly discovered fact, how to situate it - that in my approach to mathematics, in my way of "doing math", the basic tone with me is strongly yin, "feminine". This is in line with a certain intuition I've already alluded to - that the

¹⁰⁷(*) I believe I can discern in this quest for unity through diversity, a distinctive trait common to the three passions that have marked my life, including passion for love and meditation. Perhaps even, apart from any passion, it's a **way of** apprehending reality in which I tend to see, pay attention to and give weight to common traits and kinships, rather than differences (without being tempted to overlook the latter). I've noticed that the most common tendency of many is the opposite tendency, the yang tendency, which often goes so far as to ignore or deny deep-rooted kinship. (Superyang tendency, characteristic of our culture. It is often accompanied by a reflex to level out differences, to align everything on the same supposedly "perfect" or "superior" model, for the sake of a false "unity", which is an excessive impoverishment as well as violence). These differences in accent between an interlocutor and myself have often been the cause of dialogues de sourds, in which two parallel monologues are developed that never meet. ...

basic tone of my deepest being, I mean the "child" in me or the "Worker", i.e. that which is creative and beyond conditioning (i.e. beyond the "I", the "Boss") - that this basic tone is also "feminine" rather than masculine. Perhaps I now have everything I need to clarify what this really is, by carefully examining all the signs that point either in one direction or the other¹⁰⁸ (*), to recognize the significance of each, and what emerges from them as a whole. And if such work doesn't lead to a tangible "yes" or "no", surely it won't have been in vain, in order to get a better grasp of my ignorance, which at the moment is still hazy, unsettled, because I haven't meditated on it. Perhaps I'll do the same, once I've finished my work on Harvest and Sowing, and on the momentum of this one. But then again, this is not the place.

But if I've been led to this reflection on yin and yang, it's been in the course of a reflection in which I've been striving above all to understand certain relationships, between myself and others (among those who were my students, in particular). So it's the possible repercussions of the "new fact" that has just appeared, on my relationship with others and on others' relationship with me, that I'm mainly interested in here. And it's here, too, that I find myself at a loss to "place" or exploit this fact. Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that, apart from me, probably nobody has ever noticed such a thing - not on a conscious level, at least on a formulated level. In any case, I've never received any echoes that I could interpret in this sense, as far as I can remember - any more than I've received any echoes that I could interpret in this sense, as far as I can remember.

that I don't remember any echoes that would give me an image of myself.

"yin," while the character I've camped out since my ^{infancy} (if not early childhood) has been strongly p. 562
yang; so much so that even now, this "virile" character seems like a second (?) nature, which continues to dominate my life in many ways.

It's true that the mere fact that a trait in someone (me, in this case) is not perceived on a conscious level doesn't necessarily prevent it from affecting relationships with others, and that this trait is indeed perceived in the mathematical world, among mathematicians who are more or less familiar with my work, and that this perception has "spread" among a much wider mathematical public.

- I have no doubt about it. When I wrote, in "L' Eloge Funèbre (1) - ou les compliments" that "the anonymous pen that has taken care of my eulogy here has gratified me abundantly with what today is delivered to disdain", I wouldn't have known at the time, to identify in a lapidary formula exactly what was "today delivered to disdain" by the mathematical fashion, among the things to which I attach value. But the very next day, through an "association of ideas" that I'll have to come back to¹⁰⁹ (*), I had sensed (without perhaps having formulated it, and without it yet appearing as clearly as it does now) that "this something" was none other than everything that was recognized (at an often informal level) as being a "yin" or "feminine" way of doing mathematics, "feminine" way of doing mathematics - a way that was tacitly equated with "bombing", "nonsense" (to borrow the compliment paid by my pupil and friend Pierre Deligne, to the text that forms the basis of all his work), "cranking", "ease" and so on.

Certainly, in the Eulogy (delivered by this same friend Pierre), including in the passage where I am quoted in a breath with him¹¹⁰ (**), compliments were de rigueur! There was no question of nonsense or

¹⁰⁸(*) Several of my strongly marked yang traits seem to me to be **acquired** traits, stemming from conditioning, and more precisely, from the superyang brand image dating back to my childhood. These traits include an inordinate investment in action; a strong projection towards the future, i.e. towards the accomplishment of my tasks; a predilection for discovery work that is above all intellectual, and the invasive role of thought; a closed attitude towards anything that doesn't appear to be directly linked to my current tasks, and in particular my inattention to landscapes, seasons and so on. There is, however, one yang trait that seems innate and not acquired, and that's my strong affinity with **fire**, unlike my relationship with water, which is decidedly not "my element". In fact, it seems that my astrological chart is marked by a very strong yang imbalance, with all the signs that enter it being "fire signs", to the exclusion of all water signs.

¹⁰⁹(*) See the beginning of the note "Muscle and tripe" (n° 106), where this association is first mentioned.

¹¹⁰(**) See note "L'Eloge Funèbre (2) - ou la force et d'auréole", n° 105.

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of bombast, but rather of "**titanic** aspect", "twenty volumes", "cleared **essential problems**", "greater **natural generality**" (sic), school "**nourished** by the **generosity** with which he communicated his ideas", "theories of **legendary depth**", "renewed **foundations**", "**opened** new applications", notions "so **natural** that it's hard for us to imagine the effort they cost" (not to say that they were "easy" - but that's something I took care to make clear myself¹¹¹ (***)' □ "great attention to terminology" (not to say "bombing"), "**ancestors** of algebraic K-theory", "topos introduced... .. on a **general** base body", "**analogies suggested** by Grothendieck", "**conjectures**... .. still as unapproachable... .", "as Grothendieck had **dreamed** it".

I've underlined the key words in these quotations - they're all words that denote a yin approach to things. The "perfect fingering" in this burial by "well-dosed compliment" consisted in the systematic use of hyperbole with regard to those qualities which, on the one hand, are "delivered to disdain", and on the other hand, are real and are of great value to me; and this **while** passing a complete and radical eraser stroke on the complementary aspects, which today have the exclusivity of honors, the "virile" aspects, as strongly present however in my work as in anyone else's, with very few exceptions.

In fact, it's these "virile" aspects and values, to the exclusion of the slightest "feminine" note, that are highlighted in the text on Pierre Deligne, both by the choice of a few epithets ("proverbial **difficulty**", "**surprising result**", "makes *l-adic* cohomology a **powerful** tool", "**first step**", "**astonishingly useful**", "**speed**", "**penetration**", "**enlightening and constructive reactions** to each question", "**brilliant discoveries**"), than by the detailed enumeration of tangible results (whereas not a single result of mine is mentioned in my portrait-minute, nor is it suggested that these results may have played a role for those of Deligne).

I'm not sorry I took the trouble to make this quick compilation of epithets - the effect is truly striking! If, at the level of structured knowledge, few people have any notion of yin and yang, we have to believe that in the unconscious of my friend Pierre, as in that which served as his scribe, there is a perception of flawless certainty. Here, it is put to good use for a certain cause: to deliver to scorn he who must be delivered to scorn, and to designate a hero to the admiration of the crowd.

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In fact, I doubt that these three short texts I've just looked at had very many readers. But whether or not they did seems to me to be an incidental question. As far as I'm concerned, these texts were addressed, not not to hypothetical potential patrons (after all, it's not my friend Pierre's concern to find patrons to finance his institution), but to the "Congrégation toute □ **entière**", which appeared in the reflections at the time. course of the note of the same name (aka "Le Fossoyeur" n° 97). The message they carry is like a shortcut and masterly of innumerable messages in the same vein, from my friend Pierre and others among those who were my friends or students, and others still perhaps, messages captured and approved by this same Congregation. If there is such a thing as a collective unconscious (and I'd be inclined to think there is now), there's no doubt that in the unconscious of this Congregation (aka the "mathematical community"), as in that of the Grand Officiant at my solemn funeral, there's the same flawless perception of what's yin (pissed off!), and what's yang (hats off!).

And all of a sudden, this funeral appears to me in a new, unexpected light, in which my own person has become an accessory, a **symbol of** what must be "handed over to disdain". These are no longer the funerals of a person, nor of a work, nor even of an inadmissible dissidence, but the funerals of the "mathematical feminine" - and even more profoundly, perhaps, in each of the many participants applauding the Eulogy, **the funerals of the disowned woman who lives within himself**.

¹¹¹(***) See note "The trap - or ease and exhaustion" n° 99.

18.2.6.7. (g) Supermaman or Superpapa

Note 125 (November 11) Exceptionally (for once. . .), I woke up early this morning, after barely four or five hours' sleep. The unexpected outcome of yesterday's reflection immediately set in motion intense work to "place" and assimilate the new fact that had just emerged, just enough time to warm up a hearty soup and have a snack before going to bed at three o'clock last morning. And early in the morning, this same work dragged me out of sleep, then out of bed... ..

If I speak of an "unexpected" outcome and a "new" fact, I must add that from the very beginning of this interminable "digression" on yin and yang, there had been in me a kind of restrained expectation of a "denouement", or at least the expectation of a "junction" that was to take place with a certain procession, which had assembled in a Funeral Ceremony. It might have seemed that I was drifting further and further away from the scene of the funeral, or even that it had been definitively forgotten - and yet no, it had. always there, as if in mute or filigree. I had never really left them. Their silent presence manifested itself in this discreet and constant expectation, this feeling of tension, of suspense, which carried me towards p . 565

that still nebulous point where the "junction" was finally to be made. I could sense the approximate location of this junction point - it was around a certain "association of ideas" (evoked more than once, but still not formulated) which had been the starting point, the initial motivation for this unforeseen journey through yin and yang and through my life. All in all, this journey was to be like another great cycle, returning (more or less. . .) to its point of departure; or rather, like a turn in a downward spiral, taking me a notch deeper into the thing probed, "to the very heart" (if my premonition wasn't deceiving me) of this Funeral.

But just as I'm getting ready to "land", and at the turn of a final paragraph of a "note" that's still all about "digression" or even "rehashing", here I am, suddenly in the middle of a funeral ceremony and right in the heart of it, a bit like an extraterrestrial who's catapulted himself right in front of the priest in his chasuble and the congregation of the faithful ; or even worse, like a deceased person, believed dead and (almost) already buried, who suddenly lifts the lid (and wreaths and touching epitaphs come tumbling out!) and there he is in person, in his white shroud and sparkling eyes, like a living imp emerging from his box when you least expect it!

Thus, the culmination of yesterday's reflection was at the same time the denouement of that suspense I spoke of, a very particular suspense that is very familiar to me in "sea-spreading" work, be it mathematical or any other. But in the very wake of this relaxation of a long suspense immediately appeared a **perplexity**. I think it's this perplexity above all that has absorbed me ever since, and which, at ungodly hours, has drawn me from bed to the typewriter. That there should be perplexity is hardly surprising - it happens, more or less, every time a situation suddenly appears in a new light, which at first sight would seem to contradict an old vision. The very first thing to do, then, is to carefully probe these contradictions, to examine to what extent they are real, or only apparent, i.e. expressions of an inertia of the mind which is reluctant to recognize the "same" thing under two different lights. This indispensable work is complete, when all the dissonances have been resolved into a new harmony (albeit a provisional one), into a vision that encompasses and brings together previous partial visions, correcting or adjusting them as necessary, and eliminating those that would turn out to be fundamentally wrong. In such a renewed vision, the "old" which gave rise to it, p . 566 i.e. the more fragmentary visions that come together in it, itself acquires a new meaning¹¹² (*).

To return to my "perplexity", here it is. The "denouement" or "new day" consisted of an image

¹¹²(*) Compare with the reflections in the two sections "L'Enfant et le bon Dieu" and "Erreur et découverte", n° s 1 and 2.

suddenly appeared - that of the burial with great pomp of the "symbol" of the "mathematical feminine", incarnate in my person, and projection at the same time of the "disowned woman" in each of the participants at the funeral; or to put it another way, it's the image of the symbolic burial of a kind of **Super-Mother**, as an expiatory victim in short and in place of the woman-but-rarely-mother who vegetates in the obscure underground of each of the participants who came to applaud at the funeral. This image seems to contradict **another, opposite**, still hazy, one that had gradually formed in the course of the pre-June reflection (culminating in the note "The Gravedigger - or the entire congregation"): that of a **Super-Father** both admired and feared, both attractive and hated, "massacred" by his children, whose mutilated remains are delivered to derision during the "same" funeral. Placed side-by-side (if that were even necessary), these vividly colored images will seem to border on the zany and delirious, and I can easily imagine the scalp dance that these psychoanalytical fantasies are bound to provoke, assuming there are any readers who have had the breath to follow me this far!

I'll leave them to their dance, which will add an exotic note to this unusual funeral, and in the meantime I'll follow up on an association that arose last night, which I believe will reconcile these two supposedly antagonistic, even irreconcilable, images or facets, and even make them love and marry.

18.2.7. The reversal of yin and yang

18.2.7.1. (a) The reversal (1) - or the vehement wife

Note 126 (November 12) I had thought of pursuing in my notes that association mentioned at the end of yesterday's notes, of a nature to "reconcile" and "make love" the two seemingly antagonistic images that had emerged from my funeral. As I was about to start the notes in this direction, I sensed a reluctance, which I wouldn't want to ignore.

The association concerned my mother's relationship with my father, and the meaning of the destruction of the family that had led to the death of my mother.

p. 567 took place in 1933, by my mother's will overcoming my father's acquiescence (reluctant and embarrassed at first, then eager and total). This crucial episode marked a kind of reversal in the couple ☐ **formed by** my mother and father.

My father had been the ostentatiously adulated heroic embodiment of virile values, while my mother (a strong-willed, domineering character if ever there was one) strutted her stuff in the colors of the subjugated and happy woman, over a daily life marked by constant confrontation. Acquiescence to the children's sacrifice marks the moment when the God and Hero **collapses**, followed by a veritable orgy of "triumphant contempt for the woman who, only the day before, had played the role of swooning adulteress, and who now took the place of the fallen hero, emasculated and happy to be so, reduced to the despised role of "woman", from which she herself was relieved at the same moment... .

The little I've said is so schematic, so quintessential I'm afraid, that it's more likely to give rise to innumerable misunderstandings than to help us understand the hidden motives behind a certain burial. However, I feel that this is not the place to expand on what I have just outlined in a few words. To render with a minimum of finesse a complex reality, blurred at will by the two protagonists, would require a new and lengthy digression, of a magnitude that the context does not justify. I don't feel inclined to delve into it at present, and all the less so as this is a situation that involves others than myself, and where my own responsibility (as co-actor) doesn't really seem engaged. I, and my sister, figure not as actors, but as **instruments** in my mother's hands to bring down the ardently admired and envied Hero, in order to take his place and make him an object of derision.

If this scenario, patiently uncovered five years ago¹¹³ (*), is the most extreme and violent of its kind that I've ever experienced, I've nevertheless had ample opportunity since then to detect very similar scenarios in other couples. The work I did on my parents' lives helped me open my eyes to things that had previously escaped me entirely. I was stunned at the time, and with good reason! Today, I would tend to believe that, apart from the particular violence of the colors, the kind of antagonistic relationship I uncovered in the couple formed by my parents is more or less typical of couple relationships, or at least extremely common. So the reader who, like me, has ended up using his or her faculties to fathom the hidden springs of couple antagonisms, or of female-male antagonism, won't be otherwise surprised (or even shocked) by what little I've said here.

□ If I try to disregard what is peculiar from one case to another, and draw out the common points to the male-female antagonisms I've been able to see up close and where I've understood something, there's this.

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1. In women, admiration and envy of men, due to the (often overrated) prestige they enjoy as a result of their status (as males, in particular) and the qualities (real or supposed) that justify it.
2. Often there's an element of resentment, even hatred, due to an amalgam (unconscious, as it happens) between the man (lover or husband, for example) and the father. The antagonistic relationship between mother and father is taken up by the daughter, who identifies (more or less completely) with the mother. More direct motives for resentment (towards the father) are often added (his tyrannical attitudes, lack of affection, attention or concern, etc.). Subsequently, these feelings of antagonism (and others), "ready to use", are projected as they are onto the partner (actual or potential), whether or not the latter has "the head for the job".

So when earlier (in 1°) I wrote that women's dispositions (of admiration and envy no- This is only partly true. It seems to me that, more often than not, the **driving force** behind these dispositions **comes from the relationship with the father** (even if the latter is long dead and buried), and that its entry into action depends only to a limited extent on the particular personality of the partner.

3. To compensate for her feelings of inferiority (entirely subjective, needless to say) and veiled antagonism, or even animosity or hatred, there's a fear of exercising power over her partner (even though it's he who, by more or less tacit general consensus, is supposed to hold authority). The woman exercises power by any means at her disposal (the most powerful being her body, and above all, her children,¹¹⁴ (*)), and it is almost always hidden. The gratification that accompanies it is therefore mostly unconscious, but no less real and important. The power game often becomes all-consuming, becoming the main content of a woman's life, absorbing almost all her energy, and to which everything else (including the love drive and children) is subordinated, even sacrificed, without hesitation.

4. □ The most extreme case, the most torn, is when admiration and envy towards the male, which it is to dominate while appearing to submit to him, is accompanied by contempt, even disgust and hatred, for what is feminine - for her own condition as a woman. Yet it is only by playing on her "femininity" that she can hope to subdue the man, or at least maneuver him to her will.

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¹¹³(*) On this subject, see the two notes "La surface et la profondeur" and "Eloge de L'écriture", n°s 101 and 102.

¹¹⁴(*) The main common "means", however, is not mentioned here, being of a more subtle nature, difficult to describe in a few words. It consists of a certain all-purpose "tactic", examined in the later section "The claw in the velvet" (notes n°s 137-140) of the reflection on yin and yang.

willingly! So, to satisfy her strongest egotic impulse, that of "making her partner work" (or even subduing him, or breaking him. . .), she finds herself forced into a role that is hated, felt as contemptible, as unworthy of her. It is in this extreme case of refusal of her own condition and nature, that of a superyang and anti-yin option, that she will seek an illusory escape from the conflict she carries within her, using all her strength to achieve a **role reversal**: herself substituting for the man, the hero and master, once admired and envied and now fallen, reduced himself to the role she had long worn as an abject livery, the despised role from which she would finally be delivered... .

The sketch I've just made is also schematic, capable at best of **evoking** a certain reality for those who have already perceived it for themselves here and there, without perhaps having yet tried to define it as best I could through a summary description like this one. If I wanted to give it some relief, I should at least try to specify the different **levels** (almost all unconscious) on which this set of mutually antagonistic feelings and desires are played out. Moreover, in this tangle of inexorable egotic mechanisms, from which the love drive seems rigorously absent, I'd also have to try and find out whether and to what extent it contributes to the never-ending round-about (like the force of the wind, perhaps, captured by the wings of an ingenious mill to make a heavy millstone turn forever... .), and to what extent it also happens that the cogs sometimes stop and fall silent, to give free rein to **something else**.

And finally, I've left out entirely what's going on inside him, the "partner" or protagonist, as if he existed only in relation to her, as the **object of** attraction and repulsion, admiration and envy of the woman facing him. This is undoubtedly one of the reasons for this omission: in this merry-go-round of the couple, who play the active role, investing themselves in it wholeheartedly, often finding their true *raison d'être* in it (if not their own).

p. 570 better), while **he** sees nothing but fire, busy as he is elsewhere and □ moreover as naive as any¹¹⁵ (*), reacting one after the other without trying to understand, and (what's more) without understanding indeed, not even (it seems to me) on an unconscious level. At least, that's the impression I've always had, ever since I started paying attention to the couple's merry-go-round! But it's also true that I'm much less familiar with the man's role, since I've only been able to observe it up close in the case of my modest self, whereas I've had the opportunity more than once, on the other hand, to get to know the woman's role from the very front.

In any case, even if I were to take great care, over ten pages or a whole volume, to flesh out my rather schematic description, it would still be wasted effort for a reader who has not yet "used his faculties" in this area, and who has never seen or smelled anything of the kind. As for the reader who is a little "in the know", surely the little I've said about it, notwithstanding clumsiness and obscurity, will be enough to put him back in the bath of things he had already perceived for himself, and to arouse in him images and associations no less rich than those that were present in the background, at the time of writing my lapidary description.

It doesn't take much more, it seems to me, to see the "missing link" between antagonism to the "Superpère" (finding its expression in the symbolic burial of the latter), and contempt, rejection of the "feminine", and more profoundly, the denial of "the woman" in oneself (which may find expression in the symbolic "Burial" of a "Supermère", under a plethora of dithyrambic double epithets).

¹¹⁵(*) (November 23) Of course, if the merry-go-round is spinning, it's because (however "naive" he may be) **he's** enjoying it just as much as she is - and she's making it her job to see to it! It seems to me that the two main "hooks" by which she "holds" him (and by which she too is held. . .) are vanity, and a need for emotional and love security, guaranteed by a stable partner. And then there are the children...

use. .)¹¹⁶ (**).

18.2.7.2. Retrospective (1) or the three parts of a picture

Note 127 □(November 13) The time seems ripe now for me to try to trace in a few largep lines a vision both sharper and more nuanced of the Burial, which (as I wrote the day before yesterday) "encompasses and reunites the earlier partial visions, correcting or adjusting them as necessary. . . ". I see three such earlier visions, which we must recognize as partial aspects of a single **everything**.

The first aspect to emerge, the most obvious and also the most simplistic, is the "**reprisal for dissent**" aspect, which was the aspect most emphasized in the note "Le Fossoyeur - ou la Congrégation tout entière" (cf. note 97 p.) - the last note before the illness episode. It's also the note, among those from processions I to X (those before the incident), that seems to me to capture the **collective motivations** most deeply, those of "Le Fossoyeur" alias "La Congrégation (quasiment) tout entière".

The second aspect, which I might call "**massacre** (more than just symbolic) and **burial** (symbolic) of the **Superfather**", doesn't appear. Perhaps this is because this component of the funeral's motivations doesn't really concern "the entire congregation", which was the focus of my attention at the time, but mainly (if not exclusively) "those who were my pupils". It's true that, even leaving aside their undisputed leader, my friend Pierre, they played a leading role in the implementation of the Burial, which would not have been possible without the contribution of

of some, and without the acquiescence of all. (On this subject, see the note on "Silence" (see note no.° 84 p.). It is It is through them, above all, that the "Superpère" aspect seems to me crucial to an understanding of Burial.

The first aspect, the "retaliation" aspect, came to my attention from the time of Yves Lade- gaillerie's setbacks in 1976¹¹⁷ (*); since then, I've tended to forget this aspect, but periodically it has come back to my attention, over the following years. It has finally gone beyond the formless stage of being "felt" without more, and by becoming the substance of a clear and nuanced understanding, in the quoted note on the "Gravedigger".

The second aspect'□or "Superpère" aspect, only began to appear in the course of reflection in Ré- coltes et Semailles¹¹⁸ (*), and first¹¹⁹ (**) without any connection with the Burial as such, which I was to discover only in the following months. This aspect gradually emerges from the mists throughout the reflection on the Burial, finally taking striking form with the notes "Le massacre", "La dépouille. . . ", ". . and the body" (87, 88, 89). These notes are dated May 12, 16 and 17, the "Gravedigger" note is dated May 24; the illness episode appears on June 10, and puts an end for over three months to the continuation of the notes, which resume on September 22. At the very least, it's likely that if this episode had not occurred, at a time when I was about to take stock of the whole and draw a final line, my vision of the Burial would have stopped at that which had emerged in the two weeks between May 12 and 24 - a vision in "two parts", each of which remained in its own corner, without the idea ever occurring to me to try to put them together.

Yet there was a vague feeling, like a barely perceptible mist, that the final word was still to come.

¹¹⁶(**) (November 23) This was so hasty that a week later, this conclusion and this "missing link" were entirely forgotten! For the "missing step" in arriving at a more convincing "missing link", see yesterday's note "The reversal of yin and yang (2) - or revolt" (n° 132).

¹¹⁷(*) see the two notes "On n'arrête pas le progrès!" and "Cercueil 2: les découpages tronçonnées", n° s 50 and 94.

¹¹⁸(*) (November 29) To tell the truth, this aspect had already been present in the form of an epidermal intuition for a number of years in my relations with Deligne, but without me ever dwelling on it before the Harvest and Sowing reflection.

¹¹⁹(**) In the two sections "The Enemy Father (1) (2)", n° s 29, 30.

not really grasped; the feeling of one "groping in the shadows" (the expression must have appeared once or twice in the course of my notes on Burial). The Gravedigger's final note must have had the effect of a light gust of wind in the fog, which can give the illusion that the fog has dissipated, when in fact it has only shifted a tad. Or to put it another way: the aspect taken up in this note appeared there in such clarity and with such relief, that the impression (by no means illusory) of a tangible, penetrating understanding of this aspect, and the feeling of satisfaction that accompanied it (a feeling, that this impression and this feeling created a kind of euphoria, of one who feels ready to reach the goal, and made me more or less forget the other, nonetheless significant, aspect, the "Superpère" aspect, which had remained "on the back burner"!

The third installment appeared just three days ago (five months to the day after the appearance of the unfortunate episode-illness). It's □ the (symbolic) **Funeral and** (very real) **Burial** aspect of the

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"This **"feminine"** is visualized as a kind of **"Supermom"**, herself embodied in my modest person! This aspect came to light at the end of a long and entirely unforeseen "digression" on yin and yang, in which an effort had finally been made to express intelligibly a certain "association of ideas" stemming from a certain "Funeral Eulogy", which was supposed to close the funeral ceremony. This famous "association" or "intuition" (to which I first alluded at the very beginning of the note "Le muscle et la tripe" (yang enterre yin (1)),) has still not been made explicit - but everything is ready to go, and I've been promising for a while that I'll get to it!

Along the way, a whole host of facts and intuitions have come to light, some of them new and unexpected for me, and all of them helping me to reconnect with important aspects of my life, and of existence in general. One of these facts - that the "basic tonality" of my mathematical work is "feminine" - seems to contradict one of the intuitions at the root of this association, which is still waiting for its time: the intuition that as a mathematician (as for everything else), I was a very **yang** character; an intuition therefore linked to the "Superpère" aspect of Burial. And this same fact, which seems to contradict this association (from which all the thinking on yin and yang stems!) also brings up in a flash the third aspect that had eluded me until then, the "Supermother" aspect. At the same time (at the end of the endings), the link is made with a "Burial" that seemed to have been forgotten for nearly a hundred pages!

For "rising tide", it's rising tide - let's hope that the end result, I mean this promised "vision" that I'm about to bring out of limbo, will be equal to the means, namely a whole sea of philosophical-Freudian digressions on yin and yang... . The tide has turned (with the

note-coup-d'envoi "Le muscle et la tripe") on October 2, the crucial "new fact" made its appearance in the following days¹²⁰ (*), while □ any day now I'm getting ready to finally put this famous

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"association" (which appeared five months earlier, on May 12 or 13, after reflection on the note "L' Eloge Funèbre

(1) - or compliments", on the same day as the crucial note "The massacre"). But this fact wasn't "revealed" in the notes until five days ago, on November 8, after three preliminary notes on yin and yang in maths (written over the previous three days). This is the note "The rising sea... ." (122). The very next day, November 10, with the note "Les obsèques du yin (yang enterre yin (4))" (124)), the "Supermère" makes her appearance (but the word is only used in the following day's note, "Supermaman ou Superpapa?" (125)). And so we have the "third part" of L'Enterrement!

It's without any deliberate intention that I've committed myself, on the spur of the moment, to this retrospective of

¹²⁰(*) I seem to remember that as early as the day after tomorrow, in the note "Innocence (the marriage of yin and yang)" (n° 107), the fact in question had appeared, and was part of the "various signs" referred to in that note (without any further details about them), which "have made me suspect more than once that... .. it is the 'feminine' qualities that dominate in my being... .".

the reflection on Burial, from the perspective of the successive appearance of its three main aspects (as I see things now). Such occasional retrospectives, in the course of a long-term meditation, have each time proved most useful, giving an overall view of the process of reflection, and at the same time a fresh perspective on some of these main "résultats"¹²¹ (*). Perhaps the most striking thing for the hypothetical reader of this retrospective is that I have makes the detour through such a long digression, rather than get straight to this famous "association" (still to come) and that we don't talk about it anymore, to finally get to the famous "trait final," under the Burial; p. 575 which I was in such a hurry to draw in the note "L'Eloge Funèbre (2)" of September 29, when I was just getting back into the harness of the reflection left in abeyance in June! It was with this in mind, moreover, that I began the following note three days later, "Le muscle et la tripe", which begins with an allusion to this association, without giving any details about it.

If I didn't do it then, and put it off from day to day and week to week for a month and ten days already, it's by no means because of a deliberate intention, which would have appeared at some point. If I try to fathom the cause, I'd say that I must have felt instinctively, without even having to tell myself, that at the point I'd reached then, writing the association in question outright would have made no sense; that it would have been like a mere "statement", purely formal or verbal, while the rich substance covered by words that would have come to me by a pure effect of memorization, would remain ignored, unperceived. If you're a mathematician (or a scientist, if you're not), you're bound to have experienced such a situation many times, and the discomfort it arouses, when confronted with a statement that you can easily see is perfectly precise, and where, moreover, you know the meaning of each of the terms used as best you can, and yet feel that the "meaning" and substance totally escape you. The situation is perhaps even more frequent with non-technical texts, which nevertheless express a tangible substance, strongly perceived by the author; with the difference, however, that it is much rarer for the reader to realize with any clarity that the meaning of what he is reading escapes him. In this case, there was even more - for **myself** too, who for months hadn't been "in the bath" of the Funeral Eulogy and the associations associated with it, and who for years hadn't really "plunged" into the reality of yin and yang (while brushing up against it at every step. . .).

- Even for **me, anything** I might have written to "say" this association would have been a verbal thing, not really felt or perceived. Resolving to do so, or to put it another way, forcing myself to do so, would have been a purely formal way of discharging a kind of obligation, out of a sense of conscience, "completing" in short, a penum, while taking care to "give good weight", not to lose along the way such an "association" which (as I well remembered!) had been juicy and steaming, and which had long since had time to cool down.

and molder in a corner of memory!

□ If what I remembered were indeed to serve the deepening of an understanding that remained

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I could not, however, do without these hundred pages of "digressions". They form the most profound part of the whole reflection pursued throughout Récoltes et

¹²¹(*) This kind of retrospective seems to me to be very rare in mathematical work, and I've only been practising it myself since the writing of "Pursuing Stacks" (started in spring last year). A common working practice, on the other hand, and one which has a similar effect, from the point of view of a "fresh perspective" on the ideas and results of a mathematical work in progress, is to take up "ab ovo" all the notions and statements of the theory one is developing, in the order that presents itself as the most natural, at the point at which one's understanding is at that moment. Often such work, which may seem purely routine, leads to a substantial deepening of understanding, for example by bringing to light, through the demands of internal coherence of the new ordering, equally "natural" notions, properties, relations etc., which had not been seen previously. Sometimes, too, by revealing the fortuitous or artificial nature of certain hypotheses, or the narrowness of an entire initial context, the work of "restatement" leads to an unsuspected broadening of the initial purpose, giving the theory initially developed a new dimension and scope.

Sowing. I cannot yet predict whether the vision of Burial that I am about to unravel in their wake will leave me with a sense of complete satisfaction, or whether there will remain obscure corners or dissonances, which I may give up trying to illuminate or resolve, at least for the time being, or in Récoltes et Semailles. But in any case, just as in my mathematical work, I know that each of these hundred pages, like each of the six hundred (give or take a few) of the text of Récoltes et Semailles now being written, has its own unique place and message and function, and that I could not have done without any of them (whether or not there are readers to follow me this far!). While the goal was far away (if not totally forgotten. . .), each of these pages brought me its own harvest, which it alone could bring me.

18.2.7.3. Retrospective (2) or the knot

Note 127 (November 17) I've just gone through four rather difficult days, with a lot of turmoil around me. There could be no question of continuing in the same vein, and my work on the notes has been limited to a little housekeeping: rereading the part of the text to be given over to typesetting, and correcting the part that has been done. Between the "first draft" of the text for each note, reread before starting on the next note, and the final net text, ready for duplication, I make at least three careful readings, making adjustments of expression during the first two at least. I'm going to get to know the text of Récoltes et Semailles pretty well! But above all, I'm doing what's necessary to make sure that the text that will be entrusted to me for duplication will be the best I have to offer, including in its form. With the exception of one of the Funeral notes, for all the sections and notes of Récoltes et Semailles that I've written and reread, the last reading left me with a feeling of complete satisfaction. I felt that each time I had managed to say what I had to say as clearly and as nuanced as I was capable of doing, without hiding anything that was clear, understood, known to me at the time of writing, nor anything that remained obscure, blurred, misunderstood or even entirely mysterious, unknown... .

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□ The only exception is the note "The half and the whole - or the crack" of October 17, from which the "thread"

of the meditation split into two, on the two themes I've called (subtitled in the rest of the notes "the key to yin and yang") "Our Mother Death" and "Refusal and Acceptance"¹²² (*). This is the last part of this note, the two or three pages where I speak of division within the person as the ultimate root of division and conflict in the couple, in the family and in human society. This is an intuition that first appeared to me in the early years after my "departure" from the world of science, and which has developed, confirmed and deepened over the years, right up to the present day. It has become so "self-evident" to me (without my ever having bothered to examine it carefully and in all its facets), that it has crept into my thinking somewhat as a matter of course, without any effort to present it in such a way as to make this "self-evidence" even slightly apparent. But if reading these pages leaves me with an impression of vagueness and dissatisfaction, it's surely not simply a question of clumsy "presentation". Rather, I feel I've jumped in with both feet over a substantial reflection on this complex theme, a reflection for which I feel I have all the elements in hand to make it, but which isn't done for all that! In the note of October 25th ("Paradise Lost" (116)), which is directly linked to the note of the 17th (to develop the theme of "Refusal and Acceptance" from there), I first try as best I can to "make up for" the gaps I had noticed in the "Refusal and Acceptance" note.

¹²²(*) The need to group the notes that make up the "digression" on yin and yang under subheadings was felt only a few days ago. This also led me to readjust the names I'd given to these notes, which are now quoted in some places under names that are a little different from their original names (but with the right number, nonetheless). At the same time, the name of this set of notes, "The key to yin and yang", also appeared.

earlier note - but without saying much more than simply this: that as for a possible "voyage of discovery into conflict", "that's not the direction I want to go in right now", too bad, that's for another time!

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□ In the previous note of four days ago, I had surveyed three aspects, or "strands", of the p. 578 table. Burial, that have emerged so far. Afterwards, I remembered that at two points already during the reflection on Burial, I had felt, and written, that I was touching the "knot" of the conflict. It was in the notes "Le noeud" and "L' Eloge Funèbre (2) - ou la force et l'auréole" (,). These notes echoed reflections (seemingly "quite general") in an early section of Récoltes et Semailles,

"Infallibility (of others) and contempt (of self)" (section n° 4). It's **self-contempt**, ignorance of one's own It is also the source of **contempt for others**, of the eternal reflex-compensation of "proving" one's worth by placing oneself above others, using (for example) the derisory power to demean or crush, or simply to cause pain or harm.

As I wrote this note, I certainly had no shortage of examples. The one most vivid in my mind at the time was Pierre Deligne, whom I'd seen use his power to discourage and even humiliate in ways that often seemed inexplicable. It was only two months after writing this note that I began to discover "L'Enterrement in all its splendor", as witnessed by the notes of April 19 ("Souvenir d'un rêve - ou la naissance des motifs", and "L'Enterrement - ou le Nouveau père" (51) (52)). Gradually, too, I discovered my friend Pierre's role as Grand Officiant at my funeral and burial. Most of the pre-June notes on the funeral (Cortèges I to X) focus on him. It's also the one about which I have incomparably richer and more personal material than for any of the other numerous participants. So, on the two occasions when I had the feeling of "touching the heart of the conflict", it was he again, the only one with whom regular contact has been maintained to this very day, who was at the center of my attention.

18.2.7.4. (d) Parents - or the heart of the conflict

Note 128 (November 18) Twelve hours of sleep last night - I needed it, after several rather short nights! I feel that I've regained some of the energy that was beginning to fray a little - I'm more energized than yesterday, to pick up the famous "thread" where I left off.

□ In the two moments I was talking about yesterday there was a kind of "flash" in me so clear and strong, that the idea p. 579 that it wasn't something purely subjective, the product (let's say) of a simple, deliberate intention to apply some psychological "theory" that was close to my heart - that it was, in short, the "butterfly" providentially caught in his net by the butterfly hunter¹²³ (*)! To doubt such signs, whether in meditation or maths or elsewhere, would simply be to abdicate my power to know and discover. I'm lucky enough to know what that power is, and if there's one thing I have every confidence in, it's in him.

I could see in this "flash", in what it taught me, a fourth "part" of the picture of

¹²³(*) For this image, see the note "L'enfant et la mer - ou foi et doute" n° 103.

l'Enterrement, which would be added to the other three (reviewed in the November 13 note). But right away I see it as intimately linked to the two aspects "Superpère" and "Supermère" - and this obvious link goes far beyond the person of my friend. This misunderstanding of the "power to know and create" within us, which I mentioned again yesterday, is nothing other than a misunderstanding of our fundamental unity, the fruit of the marriage in our being of "yin" and "yang", "feminine" and "masculine" qualities, energies and forces. For what is "man" in us, on its own, does not make us capable of knowing or creating, any more than what is "woman" in us, on its own, gives us this power. It is not a factitious and derisory **half** of our being that has the power to know and create, but it is the **whole**, the **totality of** our being, that has this power. It has it, not as the outcome of a quest, a long journey, a becoming, which we would go through in a state of temporary powerlessness that would gradually amass "power" along the way; but this power is ours by nature, we have received it as a free gift, from the day we were born¹²⁴ (**).

p. 580 And this "self-contempt", or "lack of self-knowledge", is nothing other than the **refusal** of this gift, the refusal of this fundamental unity, and of the power that is its inseparable companion. Or rather, it is like an inseparable shadow of this refusal, it is the **knowledge of an impotence**¹²⁵ (*), introduced by this refusal; a shy, blurred, unassumed knowledge, which takes great care to stop at the known (which is very poorly known. . .), afraid as it is to plunge deeper, to become aware of the hidden unknown power, and blocked by this deliberate, cultivated powerlessness.

The most common form this denial of our unity takes, in our superyang society, is the burial day after day, hour after hour of the "yin", the "feminine" in us. This is precisely what the "supermother part" was all about, aka "Funeral and burial of the feminine" and, more specifically and **above all**, of the feminine within **ourselves**.

But I also feel that there is a direct and profound link between self-contempt and the "Superpère component", aka "massacre and burial of the father". It's this strongly presaged link that I'd now like to try and identify. To put it another way, there must be a direct and profound link between the division within us and our antagonism to the father.

p. 581 It goes without saying that this "antagonism" finds occasion to express itself as much in relation to the bio-logical father, as in relation to the person who took his place in childhood, or in relation to any other person who, at one time or another and for one reason or another, takes the place of a more or less symbolic "spare father", onto whom the original antagonistic drives are projected. My aim, then, is to identify the root cause of these antagonistic drives and attitudes, so common that we might sometimes be tempted to regard them as universal; a cause that goes deeper than a simple set of concrete grievances, often all the admittedly tangible grievances one might have against the author of one's days. More than once, I've found that these grievances are often more in the nature of a plausible and welcome rationalization, to an antagonism whose real root, the cause of its vehemence and tenacity, lies elsewhere.

I could formulate the intuition I'm trying to pin down in another way, in the form in which it spontaneously presents itself to me: it's that I have the intimate conviction that in the one who is "**one**", undivided, in the one who accepts himself in the totality of his being - in him, the conflict with the father, or with the mother, is resolved. He is **autonomous**, "**free**" from either parent. The umbilical cord that continues to link us to our parents,

¹²⁴(**) And probably even long before we were born. ...

¹²⁵(*) As I explain a line further on, this knowledge is "blurred", in its essential content it remains unconscious. Often, however, a small piece of it emerges (like the tip of an iceberg whose base remains carefully submerged...), in a sort of **profession of faith of impotence**, which more than once has left me speechless. They are made in the tone of a peremptory and unanswerable **statement**, behind which one senses a kind of vehement, fierce closure - as if this impotence, which is thus claimed as an intangible and sacred "fact", were the most precious asset, which one would not relinquish at any price. . .

long after childhood and adolescence (and more often than not, throughout adulthood and into death) - this link is broken. The moorings are broken, which until recently held us back from truly setting out on **our own journey** to discover our Mother World¹²⁶ (*).

This intimate conviction is not just wishful thinking, it's not the projection of a wish. (renamed "conviction" for the occasion). Its origins lie in my own experience, first and foremost.

place in □ what I've seen in my relationship with my own parents. I'm thinking here of the transformation This was marked by the "awakening of the yin" in me, followed by the discovery of meditation in the months that followed, and finally by the "reunion" with my childhood two days after¹²⁷ (*). I realize that this turning point was marked by an immediate **autonomy**, in contrast to an earlier dependence on received and adopted ideas. The most profound of all these dependencies was my dependency on my parents, whose values and options had shaped mine and my own vision of the world, and whose Epinal image of themselves, of the couple they formed and of their relationship with their children I had also taken on board "en bloc" and as it was, without any change whatsoever. Since childhood, I'd been "operating" on this set of values, options and images, which were in no way the fruit of my own life experience and assimilation work, but simply "baggage". Much of this baggage was made up of clichés and self-indulgent illusions, which I had "trusted" from my parents, and which very often in my life replaced a direct and living perception, a creative perception of the things around me.

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It's true that this "autonomy" I'm talking about appeared immediately with the discovery of the power of meditation. It was total (I think) in everything I took care to examine. That doesn't mean that many preconceived ideas, particularly and above all those that came to me from my parents, initially remained in place through sheer inertia, because they hadn't yet been examined. There were so many things to look at, there was no question of looking at everything at once! Not to mention the fact that, after a few months of intense work, I allowed myself to be distracted by "life going on" - especially love affairs, as you can imagine¹²⁸ (**). During

¹²⁶(*) It's a strange thing that in French, the notes "le monde", "l'univers" and "le cosmos" are all masculine. The equivalent words in German, "diewelt", "das Ail", "der Kosmos", are of the three genders feminine, neuter (which is often a kind of "super-feminine" in German), and masculine. This seems to me to correspond better to the nature of the things designated by these terms. When we speak of the "cosmos", the connotation (apart from space cells and extraterrestrials, of recent invention) is that of an **order**, governed by laws - ideas which correspond well to the masculine (in which the two languages concur). On the other hand, "the world" and "the universe" suggest the idea of a **whole** of which we and everything else are a **part**; of something, moreover, that it's up to us to **discover**, to **penetrate**, to **know**. In these aspects, which seem essential to me, these two terms designate things that are "yin", "feminine" in nature, and particularly so in relation to us. I'd be hard-pressed to understand why the French language nevertheless assigns them the masculine gender.

In this connection, I'd like to point out another strange (?) "anomaly", this time apparently in German, where "le soleil" and "la lune" are called "die Sonne", "der Mond". Their genders are reversed from those used in French, which would seem to be the most "natural". Thus, the sun is immediately associated with the idea of heat and fire, which are typically yang in nature. Perhaps this "anomaly" is common in Nordic languages, because in cold countries, where the sun's heat is never felt as torrid, burning, but is expected as a blessing, a source of life, the sun is felt (along with the earth) as a kind of nurturing mother, lavishing creatures with the warmth they "feed on" as much as with the nourishment they receive from the earth... ..

¹²⁷(*) I talk about these crucial episodes in my life in the notes "The reunion (the awakening of yin (1))" and "Acceptance (the awakening of yin (2))", n°s 109 and 110, and in the section "Desire and meditation", n° 36.

¹²⁸(**) My love life in the years following my discovery of meditation in 1976 was more intense, and also more eventful, than at any other time in my life. It surely represented a dispersion, a diversion from the initial impetus of meditation, which was not to be resumed (with its due breadth) until August 1979, with the long-term meditation on my parents' lives. (For this, see the notes "La surface et la profondeur" and "Eloge de l'écriture", n°s 101 and 102.) Yet, with hindsight, I realize that I could not yet "spare" this dispersion - a certain passion, a certain hunger within me had to be consumed, and along the way, I had to continue to learn, through those I loved, what I had learned only imperfectly in my past life. At this point, I had my doubts.

For the next two years or so, my meditations were confined to a few occasional reflections of very limited scope, when I found myself confronted with some acute conflict situation, and urgently felt the need to get to the bottom of it. It was only after August 1979 (almost three years after my discovery of meditation) that I began the "great cleansing" of the preconceived ideas about my parents and myself, which continued to clutter me up and block my view of this fascinating world in which I live. The work on my parents' lives absorbed me for seven months, until March of the following year. I was then on the eve of my fifty-second birthday. It was with this work that the autonomy I spoke of, which in a sense had remained only "potential" for three years, became fully actual, complete and irreversible. It was also through this work, and only through it, that I was able to **love** my parents in the full sense of the word, that is to say: **to accept** what they were, or had been, with all that this had implied (and that I was then beginning to glimpse), and in particular, implied for me, their son.

If I felt the need to do this work (128₁), and if I was able to do it, it was because three years earlier, I had been able to accept the gift of life received at birth, and denied for forty years - the gift of my unity. Or, to put it another way, it's because I'd been able to **accept my own nature**. It was through accepting and loving myself that I was able to accept and love my parents¹²⁹ (*).

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I can also say that it was through this work alone that the **conflict with my parents** was "resolved"-a conflict whose existence I hadn't even suspected a few years before, when my parents were □ dead one by one and the other for over twenty years. It's true that the basic note in my attitude towards my parents, since my early childhood, had been one of admiring respect, appreciation, unreserved identification, and after their death, a kind of tacit cult of their person and memory. This is not the kind of relationship we usually refer to as "conflict", suggesting a basic note of antagonism, of enmity. Of course, my parents were happy with the way I made them feel, they thought it was all very well and in the right order - and there can't be many parents who wouldn't like to be in their place, or who don't congratulate themselves when they are! It was only after this work on my parents, and even more so after the work on my childhood that followed, that I was able to realize fully, with full knowledge of the facts, just how **false**, fake, not "**real**" this idyllic relationship I'd had with my parents had been. It could only have survived by stubbornly **erasing** from a touching canvas a host of things that didn't "fit", including painful periods (of acute antagonism, often felt as a **heartbreak**), or chronic "blunders", which recurred in the relationship between my mother and me with the same implacable regularity (even if less frequently) as had once been the case between her and my father. Not to mention things that had entirely escaped my conscious awareness, such as the "big cross" I had drawn over my parents at the age of eight, after two years spent in a foreign environment, with a hasty letter from my mother three or four times a year as any sign of life from either of them... ..

But the profound reason, the **real** reason, why I call my relationship with my parents "conflictual" between the summer of 1933 (when I was five years old) and the winter of 1979/80 (when I was fifty-one), is not that during those forty-six years there were conflicts that pitted me against one or the other or both of them jointly - whether these conflicts were frequent or rare, violent or latent, conscious or unconscious. It's rather that this relationship wasn't **and couldn't** be **assumed** (as it was, I mean, without profound transformation). It could only be lived and seen as I lived it and as I saw it, through the effect of a constant, tenacious **repression** of my faculties of knowledge and understanding; through a **refusal**

that meditation on the past alone could have taught me.

¹²⁹(*) This is in line with the reflections at the end of the note "Acceptance (the awakening of yin (2))", n° 110.

stubbornly of a □ cognition of the true nature of this relationship, or at least, of certain

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of this relationship, involving in an essential way each of my parents as much as myself, and the image I maintained of us. To put it another way, the form this relationship had taken was perpetuated by a stubborn, incessant **flight** from a reality that was all too tangible, a reality that was just as stubborn in making itself known to me again and again, without me ever really learning anything from it while my parents were still alive. The episodes, sometimes heart-rending, of clear and undeniable conflict opposing me to one or the other, were only some of the more or less eloquent signs of the "conflictual" nature of the relationship with my parents, i.e. of this repression and evasion taking place **within myself**.

To put it another way, a "conflictual" relationship with others, in the deepest sense of the term, is one that is "divided", one that perpetuates itself equal to itself through a process of repression, of escape from reality, and which conversely helps to perpetuate these processes in itself. The signs of "conflict", of "division" in the relationship, can be as much in the nature of antagonism, as in that of allegiance; it can be a deliberate utterance of criticism or even disdain, as a deliberate utterance of approval or admiration.

And here I am again, without having sought it or planned it, with what might be called my philosophical "dada": that conflict between people is only the "sign" of conflict in each of the protagonists, or again: that the "source" of conflict in society is conflict, the division in the person. (The parents in all this ended up disappearing without a trace!).

This view seems to overlook entirely the more simplistic and by far more common view: that conflict between two people is the result of "interests" or desires in one and the other, which are "objectively" antagonistic, i.e., such that the satisfaction of one can only be achieved at the expense of the other. This is the universally accepted way of seeing things, whether we're talking about conflict between two distinct people, or internal conflict within the same person. So (in the first case) these "desires" are incompatible may be the desire to dominate, to set the tone, to steer the ship.

certainly the most □ current cases, including between parent and child (and just as much, between wife and husband, or between

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lover and lover). I'm not denying that this way of looking at things is real and useful, at least in some cases. But I see that it only concerns a superficial reality, while a deeper reality escapes it entirely. To give you an example, I'd like to point out that the desire to dominate (or to shine, or in general, to put oneself above others) is rooted precisely in this "self-contempt", in this "lack of self-knowledge" mentioned earlier, which we try to escape by adopting attitudes and behaviour that **blur** and **compensate for** this secret lack of self-esteem. So, beyond the "objective" conflict of antagonistic desires, we see in this case the conflict within the person, as the creator of desires of such a nature that they can only arouse and feed antagonisms to others.

Of course, with these few comments I'm not going to exhaust the delicate and important question of the relationship between the two aspects of conflict, which I'd like to describe as "superficial" and "deep" - and that's probably not the place here. Rather, I feel the need to return to the theme of conflict with the father, or conflict with the parents, from which I was moving away. At one point, I may have given the impression (and even let myself be carried away by it for a few moments!) that conflict with a parent, or with Pierre or Paule, was all the same. But I know it's not! I know that **conflict with the father, conflict with the mother, is at the heart of the conflict within ourselves**.

I spoke earlier, in this sense, of my "intimate conviction" (which I would also call a **knowledge** within me, a thing well understood), that in the one who is not divided within himself, the conflict with the parents is resolved. This knowledge, I said, comes to me above all (I believe) from the experience of conflict resolution in my

p. 587 relationship with my parents¹³⁰ (*). Another way of putting it is that **accepting our parents** (i.e. ending the conflict with our parents) **is part of accepting ourselves**. They are (in relation to us) and our **origins**, and our **conditioning** (or a good part of it, at least). The first of one (our origins) is inseparable from who we are, whatever our path and destiny; the other (our conditioning) is deeply rooted in us, and as such is as much a part of who we are as our origins. To deny the true reality of our mother or father, whether expressed in antagonism or allegiance, is also to deny an essential part of ourselves and of what our life has been, as far back as we can remember. ...

And there's more. It was through our mother and father, before all others, that the conflict in both of them was transmitted to us. (This is what was expressed a few moments ago by the pithy term "our conditionings"!) This is how they are linked to the conflict in ourselves, more closely than any other people in the world. And the first external projection of this conflict within us, and the oldest and most crucial of all, is the conflict with our mother and father. So it seems to me that the conflict within ourselves, and the conflict with either of our parents, are indissolubly linked - they are like one and the same conflict. Sometimes I've expressed the "intimate conviction" that when the conflict within us is resolved (or at least, when it's resolved at its root, in the "yin versus yang" division), then our conflict with our parents is resolved too; or, to put it another way, that the resolution of the conflict within us passes through that of the conflict with our parents. But I'm convinced that the opposite is also true: that as soon as the conflict with our parents is resolved, the conflict within us is resolved at the same time¹³¹ (*). This is why I see the relationship with our parents as a **key role** in our spiritual adventure, a unique role that belongs to no one else in our family, whether spouse or child, friend, teacher or pupil.

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p. 588 **Note 128₁** □(December 1) ¹³²(*) The importance for me of "getting to know my parents" was reiterated vided by a dream, which came to me on October 28, 1978. It was a dream about my father's agony. This agony stretched over days and nights of painful struggle, surrounded by the busy indifference of those around him, while by the tacit consensus of all he was considered "already dead" - "it was like a verdict, which would have made his death effective, cutting short all doubt". When I woke up, I recounted the dream, but during the

¹³⁰(*) See footnote below.

¹³¹(*) I can give the impression here of posing as "the one who has resolved the conflict within himself". It's true that I say without reservation that the conflict with my parents has been totally resolved. It's also true that the conflict within myself continues to be felt in many ways, it hasn't disappeared. It's something that's certainly apparent on every page of Harvest and Sowing, and it's something I've had occasion to point out on more than one occasion, in one case or another. It would therefore seem to contradict the assertion commented on in this footnote, "that as soon as the conflict with our parents is resolved, the conflict within us is resolved at the same time". And yet, in a certain sense (the one I had in mind when writing these lines), it is indeed true that "the conflict within me is resolved". At least, something essential in this conflict, at its very root, is well and truly resolved, by this knowledge of my unity, by this acceptance of myself. If the conflict is likened to a tree with strong, deep roots, we can say that when the root is cut or withered, the tree is already dead, whereas through acquired inertia, the trunk and main branches remain in place, just long enough to wither and disintegrate little by little. I can feel this gradual "drying up" of the conflict as the years go by, like a once strong and vivacious hold that is gradually loosening. I see the writing of Récoltes et Semailles as one stage in this process, among many others over the past eight years. Another image to try and describe this same reality is that of a deep calm that gradually spreads out, like the calm of a deep sea, unaffected by the upheavals that shake the surface. I explain this in more detail in the two notes "The reunion (the awakening of yin (1))" and "Acceptance (the awakening of yin (2))", n°s 109, 110.

¹³²(*) This note is a b. de p. to the previous note° 128 "Parents - or the heart of the conflict".

In the three months that followed, I avoided thinking about it at all, to the point where it sank into the penumbra of half-forgetting. In short, I "buried" my father's death, about which this dream had spoken to me, and in this dream (which evoked a crucial aspect of my waking life) I "buried" my living father. There was considerable resistance to the clear and penetrating message of this overwhelmingly beautiful dream. They were resolved at the end of a first night of stubborn meditation on the meaning of the dream, on the following January 31st, followed by four more meditations in the three weeks that followed.

This dream made me realize that my relationship with my father and mother was a frozen, "dead" relationship, cut off from a living reality whose perception was being repressed - just as (in the dream) the perception of agony declared null and void, and the spontaneous action that followed from it, was repressed: to help the one who, painfully and abandoned by all, was struggling to live.

□ The first thing to end this isolation in me was to get to know my parents. I

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I had no idea at the time of the dimensions of the task, but I imagined that "in a few hours" I'd be able to get "to the heart of the matter"! The idea of getting to know myself, particularly through my childhood, didn't occur to me at the time. I felt the need to do so later, as a spontaneous consequence of the journey I was about to embark upon. This journey began only six months later, in August 1979, because of the long digression (though by no means pointless in many respects) that constituted the episode "Eloge de l'Inceste". (For the latter, see note "L' Acte (113).

Along with the dream of October 18, 1976 (which triggered the "reunion"), this dream about my father's agony is one of the two that most strongly influenced the course of my life. The resistance to his message was much stronger, it seems to me. The message of the first was received within hours of awakening, while that of the second was put off for months. It only began to be fulfilled nine months later, with my departure on a voyage of discovery that continues to this day. ...

It's only in the last few days that I've been able to make the connection between the meaning of this dream and the reality of the funeral I'm trying to penetrate in the present reflection. This funeral, in which I appear as the "principal deceased", appeared to me a short while ago as a "return of things" (see the note of the same name),

(73)). This time, I see a "return of things" again, but from an entirely unexpected angle. In L'Enterrement, I appear alternately as "The Father" and "The Mother". The idea had never occurred to me that I'd ever been in the analogous position of a son, "burying" alive (be it symbolically, or by tacit consensus) his father or mother - quite the contrary! And indeed, I had strong reasons to be convinced of the contrary, reasons I first mention at the end of the note "the massacre" (in the context, it's true, of the Father's **massacre**, not his burial). (I come back to this in more detail in the note "Innocence (the marriage of yin and yang)" (107). In writing these last two paragraphs about my early childhood, in the note "The Massacre", I must surely have given the impression (and indeed, been under that impression myself at the time) that my relationship with my father had been free of conflict throughout my life. This is what

might also suggest a superficial look at this relationship. But already in the note commented on here, "Parents - or the heart of the conflict", □ where I do not confine myself to such epidermal impressions, it appears

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clearly that this is not the case, that this view of things (which was indeed mine until January 31, 1979) was one of the illusions that I was happy to entertain for most of my adult life. This illusion became clear to me the moment I finally took the trouble to examine the meaning of the dream about my father's agony - the most **beautiful** of all the dreams life has given me to date. This dream presents the grip of conflict on my relationship with my father with striking realism - and it also lets me experience the **resolution** of this conflict. The conflict is resolved by a **break** in me with the consensus that my father is dead, a break that suddenly opens the door to **something else** - and by a gesture of love from my father, giving me the chance to live with him.

meaning that he had heard the cry that my constricted throat was unable to let out towards him. . .

The deep kinship between this dream experience, a striking parable of a frozen relationship with my parents (which suddenly comes back to life. . .), and the reality of the Burial I've been probing for nearly nine months, is now so obvious to me. It's remarkable that throughout this long period of reflection, and right up until the last few days, the thought of this kinship never crossed my mind. I finally "stumbled upon it" by pure chance, in connection with a footnote in which I intended to point out, for all practical purposes, the role that this time too (in triggering a reflection on my parents) had played a certain **dream**, among so many others over the last eight years that have been like providential beacons on my path. This comment had the effect of putting me back in touch with the experience and substance of this dream, which I'm still a long way from having exhausted. Once this contact had been re-established, it was hardly possible, given the context, for the relationship with Burial not to become apparent.

It's true that this kinship, for the moment, only concerns a certain "knot", whereas in this dream and in the reality it transcribes, there is the knot, and its resolution. This resolution, moreover, which the dream had brought to life for me, the flavor and strength of which I'd known from that night on, it was up to me and no one else to make it a lived reality in my waking life too, in my relationship with my father and mother. I was free to do it, or not to do it - and for months, it was the latter alternative.

p. 591 that was my choice! Today - five years after that resolution - it's surely still the same, in□this sort of symmetrical situation where I'm involved, while I'm the one who acts as Father buried by a consensus-verdict, where I had been the son who devoutly buried his flesh-and-blood father alive! And perhaps this time too, it's by meditating on the meaning of my life - in this case, on the meaning of this burial - that I'll resolve this other knot in which I find myself, and perhaps dissolve yet another part of the weight of my past.

As to whether this meditation will be of any use to anyone other than myself - to such and such a protagonist perhaps of this funeral where I am not the only one to be buried, and where legions of mourners have flocked to the funeral - that need not be my concern; nor whether such and such a knot as I see in others will resolve itself or not. That's his job, I've got enough of my own! But if by any chance it should resolve itself while I'm still alive, I'll surely be one of the first to know*, and I'll be glad of it... ..

18.2.7.5. (e) The Enemy Father (3) - where yang buries yang

Note 129 Decidedly, in the preceding pages¹³³ (*), I barely touched on the theme of **conflict with parents**, and not even that of conflict with the father, which had been my starting point. The associations of ideas I followed from there seem to have distanced me from it, rather than deepening it. In what I've just said about conflict with parents, the roles of mother and father are interchangeable, just as it makes no difference whether the "we" referred to in these pages refers to a man or a woman. However, in our relationship to parents, mother and father are far from symmetrical, and the role played by each of them depends crucially on whether "we" are boy or girl (now man or woman).

In this case, the conflict with the father (expressed through his symbolic burial, or even his massacre) is of primary interest to me in the case of those I know to have actively participated in my funeral, all of whom are **men**. In the structuring of the ego, then, the father is the one to whom

p. 592 We **identify with**, and **model ourselves** on, in our relationship with others (and more specifically, with women), and in our relationship with ourselves. Rarely does this identifica□tion take place without major "burrs", and the antagonism to the father is one of the traces, a tenacious one if ever there was one. This is not the place to try to go into all the details.

¹³³(*) Those of note no. 128, of which this is an immediate continuation.

Nor do we examine the way they tend to express themselves in the relationship with the father. Indeed, my own experience in this area is so atypical that I'd perhaps be less well placed than anyone else to make such an inventory, even though I don't feel intimately, from my own experience, the ins and outs and the particular "flavour" of any of the main cases¹³⁴ (*). My experience here is mostly indirect, based on what I've observed around me, and first and foremost in my children's relationships with me.

Over and above the particular nature of the "blunders", and the grievances and resentments towards the father that stem from them, there is one common aspect that I have strongly perceived on many occasions, when any deliberate "explanatory" statement was entirely absent. This is that the boy's or man's antagonism towards the father who has served him as a model, and whom he reproduces, whether "positively" or "negatively" (by imitation, or by opposition), whether he likes it and recognizes it or not - this antagonism is nothing other than an aspect, particularly eloquent and crucial, of an antagonism towards **himself**. More precisely, it is the outward sign, through the (more or less clearly expressed) rejection of the father, of the **rejection of a part of himself**; of that, surely, by which (unwittingly, or against certain conscious or unconscious options) he resembles his rejected model - his father.

As a result, I'm back on my feet - I can see the link between "self-contempt" (or "self-denial") and "antagonism to the father" becoming clearer - but I'm back on an unexpected side. I was prepared to find a more or less direct link between this antagonism to the father, and self-denial in the form of the refusal (or "burial") of the feminine in one's own person. Instead, I seem to have falls (as I should have expected, in "good logic") on the rejection of the **masculine**. And yet, I know although this refusal, less obvious and more hidden ^{in□the} man than the refusal of the feminine in him (of which I have especially p. 593

It's not so rare for a person's ego to be in conflict with his or her own, and it weighs just as heavily on him or her. Often, it is superimposed on the other, so that, however the ego is structured, whether in yin or yang colors, we are sure to be unacceptable to ourselves! Or to put it another way, this rejection of the father, or the rejection of what is "masculine", "virile" in oneself and makes us resemble the father, often goes hand **in hand** with the unreserved adoption (in the absence of a "yin" counterweight, rejected) of a "yang", "macho" value system with a touch of zinc!¹³⁵ (*)

The idea comes to me that this contradiction (truly appalling indeed, once said and written in black and white!) is undoubtedly also the real **nerve** in this merciless **competition**, which is one of the hallmarks of our supermacho society (and this just as much in the upper echelons of science, as anywhere else. . .). For if "climbing" and "surpassing" are superyang values par excellence, these values would undoubtedly not be internalized with such vehemence, nor would they be put into practice with such brutality (however subdued, when it comes to "high spheres" . . .) if in the rival in the best position, the latter was not the only one.) if we didn't also see the formidable shadow of the Father, at once admired, envied and secretly hated - the one who was there before us, and whose very existence, as far back as we can remember, has been **the great challenge** in our lives.

18.2.7.6. (f) The arrow and the wave

Note 130 (November 19) I found myself impatient to continue where I left off. It's been a week, in fact (since the note of November 12, "L'épouse véhémence (le renversement du

¹³⁴(*) Compare with the reflections at the end of the note "The Massacre", n° 87.

¹³⁵(*) (November 29) At least, this is by far the most frequent case of which I'm aware.

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yin and yang)" (126), that day after day I have the feeling that I'm on the verge of getting "to the heart of the matter" - of coming to the overall picture of the Burial that I had promised myself, which would bring together the partial "strands" that had been de□gaged in the course of reflection - and a week, too, that the "point" in question found itself postponed from day by day. Each day, as I finish my note (since I have to stop and go to bed, as the hour advances), I feel that I've done a job I couldn't avoid doing, that I've "advanced" a notch - but at the same time I feel that the "point" I'm trying to get at has receded by the same amount! The obvious temptation here is to just keep going until I've got to the crux of the matter. But after the "health incidents" of the last three years, I also know that this is the blunder to avoid.

In fact, I know deep down that I'm right in the thick of it. I'm just gnawing at the bitter end. This impatience to get to the end of a task, this drive towards a "point" or "crux", intensely perceived in front of me - close by, or far away, it doesn't really matter - this attraction of the "goal" to me that throws me forward, like an arrow hurtling towards its target - this aspect that seems to me the most intensely "**yang**" of my person, characterizes my way of being **outside work time**. It's a striking aspect of the "**boss**", of what is conditioned, acquired in me. Nothing in what I knew of my early childhood could have foreshadowed this character, which appeared later in my childhood, and which has so strongly marked my entire adult life to this day.

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In the workplace itself, this aspect seems to have all but disappeared. I have the impression that the little that remains here and there is no more and no less than the sign of the boss's occasional interference, discreet it must be said, in the course of the work (where, to tell the truth, he has nothing to do!). The work itself, at the whim of the Worker who, through my hands, works at his own pace, follows a completely different rhythm. Impatient ardour is replaced by peaceful, stubborn calm. There is no longer an arrow hurrying towards a target, but a wave that stretches out far and wide, moving who knows where, wherever the moving force that drives it takes it - a wave followed by another wave, followed by yet another... . There is no hesitation in this movement, in every place and at every moment it has its own direction that carries it, or draws it forward. In each moment there is a progression, one cannot say towards what, there is a "work" accomplished in a movement that ignores effort.

- and there is no goal. The very idea of a "goal" here seems strangely preposterous - where on earth would we want to place it?! The goal has disappeared, and so has□the arrow. If there is an arrow, it's not a vibrating one that shoots out

in the heart of a target to come and plant themselves in it - but in **each** place of this moving mass of waves following one another there is an unequivocal movement and force, there is a direction in a progression, as precise and sharp as an arrow, invisible and yet imperious that would mark this direction, this force, this movement.

So, it seems to me that in my work, I'm as "yin", as "sea and motion", as one can be. This has been true, I believe, of all the work of discovery in my life, of all the work I've thrown myself into with passion, and above all, of my mathematical and meditative work. And now that I've unexpectedly described how I feel about this work in a sudden, compelling image, it seems to me that this image also describes the **movement of my life**, from the day of my reunion with myself, and perhaps even before, from the moment of my "salutary uprooting" from a cosy¹³⁶ (*) fold. At the very least, it describes the "how" of my life on a deeper level, that of the "calm" I spoke of (just a few hours ago) in one of the footnotes to yesterday's note - a calm that is unaffected by the agitation that takes place on the surface. In this deep calm, there is movement and progress, but there is no goal - the goal has disappeared.

And I also remember now that it was this same image that came to me in March, when I

¹³⁶(*) See note of the same name, n° 42.

speaks of the manifestations of my two passions, meditation and mathematics, as "the up-and-down motion of waves following one another, like the breaths of a vast and peaceful respiration... . "¹³⁷ (**). Now, eight months on, I believe I recognize in these images the spontaneous movement of my being, in what is most spontaneous, in what is truly original in me - in what comes from the child eager to know, before it is touched by the preoccupation with appearances and the frenzy of becoming... .

18.2.7.7. (g) The mystery of conflict

Note 131 □ (November 20) Yesterday evening was spent almost entirely rereading the previous day's notes, p. 596 correct them on the way, retype a page that was decidedly too overloaded, write the footnotes (planned the day before) - and already it was midnight! I was anxious to get on with the evening's work, however little it might be, and went back to my typewriter to resume the previous day's interrupted "thread". And then something else came to mind - the image of the arrow and the wave. For a long time, I'd recognized myself in the arrow, whereas the wave seemed to correspond to a temperament quite different from my own. It's one of the surprises that came up in the course of this reflection on yin and yang, that it's this image of the wave that expresses most strikingly, and most accurately, the "basic tone" that prevails in my being, when "the boss" is far away, or at least when he gives way to something else. The image took shape, as if it had been there all ready, just waiting for the words that would finally give it form. They came without haste or hesitation, as I simply tried to **describe**, as faithfully as possible, without glossing over or distorting anything, what still remained a vague feeling.

The description completed, it was around two o'clock in the morning. I reread these two pages that very night, so there was no need to make any alterations. The trickiest part was when I tried to describe this intuition of a continuous infinity of "arrows", closing like a "field" of forces. It was an idea that presented itself forcefully, and which seemed reluctant to let itself be evoked by language. Yet I felt that this was an important aspect of the whole image, the "yang in the yin" aspect. In the wave there's "the arrow", there's a **momentum** that carries it forward, following a movement of its own, which is not that of **an** arrow, but rather that of a whole multiplicity, a **continuous** multiplicity that smoothly restores the wave's movement. And I also knew that in my work I was **also an** "arrow"; but I was doing so in a different mode from the one I'd imagined until now, because I hadn't taken the time to ever look at this work with any kind of attention, to immerse myself in it as if it were someone other than myself, in order to perceive its tonality. If I hadn't done so earlier, in the eight years that it's been happening to me

to meditate on, is undoubtedly that I have remained the unwitting prisoner of an inveterate deliberate intention: that of identifying myself with the □ "boss" in me, rather than with the Worker-child; that is to say also, when I speak of "me", of p. 597

think first and foremost (perhaps even exclusively, very often) of the person I am when it's the "boss" who takes center stage. In a way, these are also the times when I'm not at work.

The necessities and vagaries of teaching (among other things) have nevertheless, since the discovery of meditation, drawn my attention to **certain** features of my work - namely, those features which I felt were universal in nature, that they should be present in **all** creative work, in all work of discovery¹³⁸ (*). But before this reflection on yin and yang, I hadn't yet thought of discerning

¹³⁷(**) See the end of the "My passions" section, n° 35, from which these lines are taken.

¹³⁸(*) The first written text, I believe, in which I evoke some of these traits, is that of October 1978, "En guise de Programme" (alluded to in the note of November 6, "La belle inconnue" n° 130). After this text, I won't bother to spell out and expand on my observations on this subject in black and white before this year's Harvest and Sowing reflection. Its first eight sections are essentially devoted to this theme, not to mention numerous other comments throughout the course of the year.

in my own work, which makes it different from that of any other. One of these traits, which seems to me the most crucial of all, is finally identified in the November 8 note "La mer qui monte. ... "

(122). The image first evoked in that note, in the typical context of a conjecture to be proved, is taken up again in yesterday's notes, in a different light, outside any particular context. At last, I'll pick up where I left off the day before yesterday. I left¹³⁹ (**) with the intention of trying to pinpoint the root cause of antagonism to the father, beyond the specific grievances we may have against him. Following the associations of ideas that came to the fore, I initially strayed from this line of thought, being led above all to speak of conflict with parents, father or mother indifferently. This "conflict" can take the form of allegiance (as was the case with me), as well as that of "conflict" between parents.

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of antagonism. Since my work on the lives of born parents, this "conflict **with parents**" appears to me to be truly ☐ "at the heart of the conflict" within ourselves. Resolving the latter, I'm convinced, is neither more, nor less than resolving the conflict with the parents, i.e.: being free of them, being fully autonomous spiritually, pursuing **one's own** journey... .

Returning once again to antagonism to the father, in man, I've reconnected with an intuition that has occurred to me many times over the last few years: it has occurred to me that the deeper meaning of this antagonism to the father is the rejection of that in us which makes us like the father, of the appearance and **virile** traits of our person. I've made this last part of yesterday's reflection¹⁴⁰ (*) a separate note, with the name

"The enemy father (3) - or yang buries yang" - thus also suggesting, by this name, the link with the two sections "The enemy father (1), (2)" (n° s 29,30), where this "enemy father" theme appears for the first time.

Thus, the aspect of the Burial discussed at the start of yesterday's reflection, namely the aspect of "self-contempt", or "self-unrecognition" or "self-denial", appears as a kind of hyphen, or better still, a "**hinge**", between the two preceding sections, the "Supermother - or burial of the 'feminine'" section and the "Superfather - or massacre and burial of the father" section. This hinge-like nature becomes apparent as soon as it becomes clear that, in the first of these strands, "the feminine" is, above all else, "the feminine **in us**" (as indeed was perceived as early as the November 10 note "Les obsèques du yin (yang enterre yin (4)", where the "Supermère" strand makes its appearance); and furthermore, that "the father" is, above all, the symbolic substitute for "the masculine in us". Thus, the two aspects in question are perfectly aligned.

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symmetrical, corresponding to the two obvious "cases de figure" of the "refusal of self" - namely, the refusal of "the woman" (aka Mother) in us, and the refusal of "the man" (aka Father) in us¹⁴¹ (**). And the ☐ theme of conflict at the

parents, which is a kind of conjunction or superposition of the two distinct themes of conflict with the mother, and with the father, also appears as a kind of hinge. Or to put it another way, as seen in yesterday's reflection¹⁴² (*), this theme appears to be inseparable from that of self-denial, the one and the other being two distinct aspects of the same undivided reality, that of **conflict within ourselves**.

In all this, it would seem that the original aim of "identifying the root **cause** of antagonism to the father" is still unfulfilled. I could say that antagonism to the father is one of the **forms** taken by antagonism to oneself, or self-denial. The initial question therefore seems to split into two. On the one hand, for what "causes" does self-denial take on this particular form in certain cases? Probing it also means

of this reflection.

¹³⁹(**) In the note "Parents - or the heart of the conflict", n° 128.

¹⁴⁰(*) In fact, this is not the previous day's note, but the day before, which I'm about to follow up on.

¹⁴¹(**) I would remind you that it is by no means rare for the two kinds of "symmetrical" refusal to overlap in the same person. Given the devaluation of yin in our society, it must be quite rare, in any case, for yin refusal not to be present in a more or less pronounced form. So I'd be tempted to see in the antagonism to the father a sign (at least presumptive) of a double refusal of yin **and** yang.

¹⁴²(*) See penultimate footnote.

We'd like to take a closer look at a number of different typical situations that could give rise to such antagonism.

On the other hand, we're back to the even deeper and more crucial question of the "**cause**" of self-denial, i.e. the cause of conflict and division within us. I think I've at least grasped the common **mechanism** by which the generational conflict is transmitted - the rejection of ourselves within us is nothing other than the internalization of the rejection of us by those around us from our earliest years - of the rejection at least of certain aspects and impulses within us, which form an essential part of our original being, of our creative faculties. I touch on this aspect of things (among others) in the "Refusal and acceptance" section of "The key to yin and yang", and more particularly in the first two notes "Paradise lost" and "The cycle" (116), (116').

Having grasped this common "mechanism" of conflict transmission, however, does not mean having understood the **cause** of conflict in ourselves and (through us) in human society. **Why**, from time immemorial in all places (according to the unanimous testimonies that have come down to us through the ages), "Society" does not tolerate

Is it not the case that those who make it up are **whole** beings? That is to say, beings in full □possession of their creative faculties, who do not repress at great cost a part of what they are, considered so shameful (or so fearsome...) that it is better to ignore that it is, and tacitly rule that it **is not**... . p. 600

For me, this is one of the great mysteries of existence, perhaps the greatest mystery of all¹⁴³ (*).

There was a time, just a few years ago, when my attitude towards the universal reality of repression and conflict was one of militant **revolt** - revolt against this "**sword**", which claimed to cut in two what, by its very nature, should be one, **was** one. This was my attitude when I wrote the Eloge five years ago¹⁴⁴ (**). It was through the long-term meditation that followed, on the lives of my parents, that this attitude changed. Through this work, which day after day brought me back into intimate contact with the manifestations of the conflict in my parents, and which patiently led me from the manifestations to their meaning and cause - through this work I finally came to feel the **mystery** of the conflict. The rebellious attitude had disappeared, as if it had never been there. It had been an epidermal reaction, a simple dispersion of energy. A revolt - against whom? Not against a person or a group of people, against the famous "Them... ." ! We're all in the same boat, and we've been here a million or two years... . Revolt against "God"? That's all it would have taken.

□ Deep down, I've known for a long time (I couldn't even say how long, although for a long time p. 601 I pretended to ignore it. ...), that everything in this world has its good reason for being, and even, if we understand the bottom line, surely everything is **good** as it is. Death and the "beyond" of death (if there is such a thing) is one of these things. It's a mystery, and if there's a "**faith**" in me about it, it doesn't consist in "articles of faith" about the existence (or non-existence) of an afterlife and its particularities, but simply in this simple assurance: that things are perfect as they are, including everything to do with death, and also everything to do with birth, which is just as mysterious. For

¹⁴³(*) This suggestion is purely subjective, it simply reflects the fact that, of all the "great mysteries of existence", this is the one I feel particularly strongly about, in a way that goes beyond mere intellectual curiosity. It's the only one that arouses in me a **desire** to fathom it, to know it, to know "the last word" (insofar as it can be known, with the limited faculties that are mine). The difference is the same as in mathematics, between the open-ended questions that "I can feel" (into which I could dive straight away), and those that I "understand" in the technical sense of the term, whose scope I perceive (at a **superficial** level), but which "neither warm nor cool me". The Riemann hypothesis is one of the latter (no doubt due to my great ignorance of analytic number theory), and Fermat's theorem was another until a few years ago. It's my "Anabelian" reflections that have changed my attitude towards the latter, while my ignorance of the work it gave rise to is still as great as ever.

¹⁴⁴(**) This episode is mentioned several times in *Récoltes et Semailles*, most recently in the note "L'Acte", n° 113.

For a long time, however, I had excluded "conflict" from this list - I saw it as a kind of "burr", an inadmissible bleat, a stubborn and bizarre (even revolting) "kink" in the concert of Creation. All it took was for me to become intimately acquainted with the conflict, instead of wasting my time pretending to fight with it, for my relationship with it to be profoundly transformed.

The mysteries of death and "after death", of birth and "before birth", are not unique to our species. The questions they raise have meaning for all living beings, perhaps even for everything from the electron to the nebula. The mystery of conflict, on the other hand, seems to me to be unique to man, to

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the human species¹⁴⁵ (*). It appears to me as **the** great mystery about the particular meaning, the particular destiny of **our species**. The "explanations" that have been given, by ethnologists and the psychologists, those altogether at least that I've heard of, are clearly no more than **rationalizations**, to **justify** the repression suffered and internalized, as indispensable to the smooth running and very existence of society; rather like in a society of one-armed or one-legged people, there will be no shortage of eminent theorists to prove A plus B (without anyone thinking of contradicting) that a society where people have the use of both arms (or both legs) could in no way function¹⁴⁶ (*). These are all convoluted justifications, attempting to conceal a mystery with explanations that purport to be "scientific". In fact, the question of the origin and meaning of conflict (or repression) in human society remains purely rhetorical, as long as those who pretend to ask it have not gone through an intense and in-depth process of understanding conflict **itself**, and the origins of conflict **within it**. In the absence of such self-knowledge, this question (like questions about the nature of freedom, or love, or creativity) is a modern equivalent of the medieval question about the "sex of angels" - an exercise in style without more, to manage to "fit in" what needs to be fitted in anyway. Strictly speaking, this question is not a "scientific" one, and its examination does not presuppose **maturity**, but simply a certain preliminary knowledge, and a certain level of intellectual power or agility¹⁴⁷ (**).

In this case, it's not a question of trying to guess the mechanisms by which repression is established in human ^{society}, i.e. to find an **explanation** for the fact of repression. A

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Even supposing we could come up with a plausible, even convincing scenario, I wouldn't feel much further ahead. It might shed light on a certain interesting aspect of the mystery - the "mechanical" aspect, in short - without penetrating it. No more than the detailed results of paleontology and the

¹⁴⁵(*) (December 3) I may be right to object that conflict, in the form of aggression and confrontation between individuals or groups of individuals, exists within species other than our own. When I speak of "conflict" here, I'm thinking of the specific form it takes in human society, and in particular of its profound links with **division** and **repression** within the individual - repression of the major part of his being, and in particular repression of his means of perceiving reality, and of perception itself. The various forms of repression seem to me to be rooted in the one that seems to me to be the most crucial of all, the so-called "sexual" repression, which inculcates shame of one's own body and bodily functions and drives (or at least, of some of these functions and drives). These are mechanisms unknown outside the human species, as far as I know. Perhaps I'm wrong in using the terms "conflict", "division" and "repression" almost as synonyms, or at least as terms that designate different aspects of the same reality. I'll explain a little more about the meaning of the word "conflict" for me in the note "Parents - or the heart of conflict", n° 128.

¹⁴⁶(*) Just as in the days of slave societies, for "the best minds" (who were also served by slaves) as for the rest, it was taken for granted that "no society without slaves". Apparently, it wasn't until Plato had the unexpected good fortune to find himself a slave that he began to see things differently.

¹⁴⁷(**) (December 3) The fact that the question of the meaning of conflict does not fall within the remit of science might give rise to the expectation that answers can be found in myths and religions. "It seems to me, however, that this is not the case. From what I know, it would seem that one of their essential functions, not to say their main function, is to establish a "law" which, for the most part, consists of a "package" of prohibitions through which repression materializes in a particular society. This law, presented as sacred in essence, is not required to justify itself, or to explain its "meaning", let alone the meaning it shares with other laws governing other societies.

molecular biology, nor even Darwin's profound ideas, really penetrate the mystery of the appearance of life and its creative flowering on earth over the past three or four billion years. What interests me in the mystery of conflict is not the mechanical, scientific aspect - an aspect that's as **external to me** as Fermat's famous "theorem". But it's the question of the **meaning** of conflict. This meaning **concerns me** in an immediate and essential way, just as it concerns each and every one of the countless men and women who have torn and killed each other over countless generations, and who have passed on to their children the conflict taken up from their parents.

That there must be a **meaning** to the conflict, and that I can know what that meaning is, is surely part of the "faith" I was talking about earlier. It's obvious to me - and that familiar "sense of mystery", that there's something deep here to fathom, tells me at the same time that this "something" **is** precisely **that meaning**. The "faith" in question overlaps with a faith in my faculties, when they reveal to me, here without the shadow of a doubt, that there is a "meaning" before me to discover.

Perhaps one day, this meaning will become apparent, as if I had always known it! This mystery doesn't seem distant or unapproachable. It presents itself to me as something very close at hand, which it would be up to me to know more intimately. And surely I can already see a way of approaching it, or rather an aspect that already seems to be beckoning me in a friendly way. After all, conflict has much to teach me, and has already taught me a great deal... .

18.2.7.8. (h) The reversal (2) - or the ambiguous revolt

Note 132 (November 22) That makes two notes in a row where I see myself embarking on excursions anything out of program - this time □ I'll be careful to start first with this

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which, for once, was **expected**. I'd like to look at one of the "typical situations" mentioned (without further clarification) in the previous note, situations likely to give rise to antagonism towards the father, and more profoundly, to a (more or less radical) rejection of virile traits in oneself (which rejection finds its symbolic expression in the rejection of the father). I had remembered the situation in question as early as the November 18 reflection, ending with the note "The enemy father (3) - or yang buries yang". My intention then was to point out, in this "typical situation" at least, a **direct link between rejection of the masculine and rejection of the feminine**.

The case in point closest to me, and on which I had worked at length in addition, was that of my mother. All her life, she had indulged in a barely disguised contempt for everything feminine, she had modelled herself on masculine values to excess, and at the same time her relationship with men had been, since her adolescence, a "viscerally" antagonistic one¹⁴⁸ (*). I was very fortunate that my mother spoke to me very freely about her life from childhood onwards, and that I had access to detailed autobiographical notes up to the early years of her life with my father, not to mention a voluminous correspondence. In addition to my own experiences with her, this is exceptionally rich material, which I'm far from having exhausted. I've worked with her enough to feel, without a doubt, that the double refusal in her that I've just mentioned - refusal of the feminine and antagonism towards men - was rooted in a torn relationship with her father. The latter, an endearing man in many respects, generous, honest and affectionate, had become embittered during a long social decline in post-war Germany (I mean, the Germany of 14-18), of which there were so many. In fact, this downward spiral had begun even earlier, from a well-to-do, carriage-riding man to a

¹⁴⁸(*) Unlike his disdain for the feminine, this visceral antagonism, reflected in a vehement and turbulent love life, remained unconscious throughout his life. I only became aware of it during my work from August 1979 to March 1980.

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itinerant shoe-shiner. Under the sting of worries and disappointments, his short-tempered temper sometimes turned to family tyranny, for which his wife, in frail health, fai□s mostly to blame. My mother, deeply attached to her father as she was to her mother, was repulsed by these episodes of paternal tyranny, suffered in silence by her mother, who sometimes couldn't take it but never complained. The child was passionately identified with her mother, the victim of paternal arbitrariness, and at the same time the role played by her mother (the role of victim, the passive role - "the role of a woman". . .) seemed intolerable to her. There was this identification with the mother, expressed in a revolt, a visceral antagonism towards the father, and at the same **time** there was this startle that "I'll never be like her" (who suffers without rebelling), a startle that could only mean at the same time "I'll never be like women".

But even more profoundly, there was also a longing for the power of the father, of the man, to dominate at will. And my mother's life was dominated and devastated by this all-consuming passion to dominate; and above all, to dominate and break **man** - the very man who aroused in her such a surge of raging revolt, the man who by his very nature was supposed to dominate her - just as her father had dominated her mother, suffering, pale and powerless, his power.

I was going to write here that the reflection now "joins" that pursued in the note "The vehement wife (the reversal of yin and yang)", of November 12 (126). As I didn't remember this note very clearly, I've just reread it. Strangely enough, I had forgotten that this note was prompted (like today's) by my mother's "case study". Ten days ago, I had felt reluctant to develop this case at all. If I've come back to it today, overcoming this reluctance (which I'd also forgotten in the meantime!), it's undoubtedly because there was an aspect of the situation that had remained unclear. I'd also forgotten that the starting point for today's note, "the intention to put my finger... on a direct link between the refusal of the masculine and the refusal of the feminine", had already been the initial motivation for the reflection of ten days ago, following naturally on from the question that ended the previous day's note "Supermaman or Superpapa?" (125). In fact, the last sentence of the 12 :

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"It doesn't take much to see the 'missing link' between... .", would seem to say that I had then thought I had accomplished my task for the day (of éta□blir such a link). If I had entirely forgotten that I had already updated this link, and even though I had already asked myself this question before the note of four days ago (on which I followed up today's reflection), it's undoubtedly because I hadn't yet been fully convinced by the brilliant conclusion I've just quoted, formulated no more than six days before this note "The enemy father". (3) - or yang buries yang". The situation becomes clearer by quoting the whole sentence:

"It doesn't take much to see the "missing link" appear between antagonism to the Superfather (finding its symbolic expression in the burial of the aforementioned), and contempt, rejection of the "feminine", and more profoundly the denial of "the woman" in oneself (which will perhaps find expression in the symbolic "Burial" of a "Supermother", under a plethora of dithyrambic epithets of double use... .)."

In this conclusion, there was one step missing, which made it hasty: it was the link between "antagonism to the Superfather" and the refusal of the "masculine", a link that only appeared in the reflection with the quoted note of November 18 "The Father the enemy (3) - or yang buries yang". Antagonism to the Father then appeared to me as the symbolic expression of the far more crucial reality of refusing the yang, "masculine" side of oneself. In the "symmetrical" case of the rejection of the feminine, this link between the symbolic expression and its deeper meaning had already been perceived when the "Supermere part" appeared, in the November 10 note "The funeral of yin (yang buries yin (4))" (124). This is how the two "opposing" strands that appeared in the "Supermaman or Superdad?" note of November 11th - the Father's funeral and the Mother's funeral - came to be seen.

before yesterday as symmetrical manifestations of self-denial (or self-contempt), taking the dual form of the **rejection of the masculine and the rejection of the feminine in their own person.**

In my note of the 18th, "The Enemy Father (3) - or yang buries yang", I confined myself to the case of a **male** "subject" - although the most extreme case known to me is that of my mother! In fact, my mother had been entirely forgotten in this reflection, even ten days earlier (if not hidden under the heading "my parents" in the note of November 17).

It's the knowledge I have of my children and their relationship to me, that made me feel four days ago a link between antagonism to the father, and the rejection of the masculine in oneself. In fact, for each of the four

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(among my five) children whom I've had the opportunity to know fairly closely, I've more than once in recent years sensed, behind attitudes of inveterate antagonism towards me, their father, a rejection of the virile side of their being, and above all, of the **impetus** within them which launches them out to meet the world - and which makes them resemble a father who's been rejected! I'd never asked myself whether this was a general fact; or rather, there was a sort of unspoken presumption in me that it must be so, without my ever feeling the need, before the reflection of four days ago, to formulate the thing clearly, let alone examine it with any care. To tell the truth, this kind of "general" question was not at all one of those I asked myself in meditation, whose purpose had been more down-to-earth: to understand myself, above all through my relationships with others - and thereby also, to some extent, to understand "others", i.e. those with whom I came into relationship.

Of course, in my reflection of four days ago, when I suggested that there must be this link, that antagonism to the father was the expression of a deeper conflict, namely the rejection of "the man" within oneself, it was still a simple presumption, suggested by my very limited experience. This link seems to me at least plausible, and more particularly in men, but I don't claim to "see" this link in general. I don't have this "intimate conviction" about it, which I so often choose as my very sure guide. In my mother's case, for example, I can see that antagonism to the father was the source of an occult and virulent antagonism to virile traits **in a man**, but by no means to such traits in a woman, quite the contrary. It's true that the mere fact of fully valuing virile traits, and cultivating them to excess in oneself, may not necessarily mean that one fully accepts the yang side of one's being; that would, after all, **also** mean accepting the "yin within the yang" that is spontaneously found in any yang "dominant" trait, which of course was not the case with my mother.

But this is taking a rather dialectical turn, which doesn't inspire me with confidence! I prefer to refer instead to my direct perception of my mother, as refined by my reflection on her life and that of my father. I don't remember ever having the feeling

un refus chez elle de quelque chose, **en** **she** that is fundamentally "virile". On the other hand, I strongly perceived

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in her, this contradiction, or rather, this **heartbreak**, of one who cultivates within herself (like so many **weapons**), and who cherishes more than her life, the very traits that, in man, arouse in her such vehemence, and whose life has been crumbled (and prematurely consumed) by the fever of constantly meeting and confronting, and reducing to mercy in others, the **same** force on which she has staked her all, and which devastates her own life, as it devastates the lives of all those dear to her.

18.2.8. Masters and Servant

18.2.8.1. (a) Velvet paw - or smiles

Note 133 (November 24) The cases mentioned in the previous note of the day before yesterday are not, to my knowledge, the only ones to confirm this presentiment that a superyang imbalance in the father (whether or not this imbalance takes despotic forms), is reflected in the children by a rejection of yang, which in turn can express itself in many different ways. In boys, in the cases I'm aware of and which are on my mind at the time of writing, this rejection takes the form of a (more or less complete) repression of the virile side of himself - and this rejection will surely follow him throughout his life (unless profoundly renewed, which is certainly rare). My mother's case shows me that it's not always the same with a daughter - unless my mother also had a certain rejection of the virile side of her being, expressed in a more subtle way that I've never been aware of until now¹⁴⁹ (*). What is striking in her case, however, is the opposite extreme effect - that of an overdevelopment of virile traits in her (in addition to an aversion to everything feminine). I know of other cases in the same vein, in **men** (my mother's father, for example) - that of a **revolt** against the father, expressed by the development of a strongly virile personality, able to confront the father "on equal terms". As I haven't had the opportunity to experience such a case up close, I'm inclined to believe that it must be rarer. But it doesn't really matter.

□ If there's one common thread running through all the cases I've come across from near and far, it would be this: a

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The father's superyang imbalance is reflected in the child's **imbalance**, which may be in the yin direction (perhaps the most common case), or in the yang direction¹⁵⁰ (*). In every case I can think of (though I wouldn't dream of systematically listing all the cases I've come across), this imbalance is accompanied by **an antagonistic relationship with the father**. I have the impression that it is also accompanied by a visceral antagonistic attitude towards **male** third persons, in whom yang traits are strongly marked, at least when these are not balanced by complementary yin traits - that is, towards men in whom a superyang imbalance prevails, reminiscent of that of the father.

A superyang imbalance of this kind (like the opposite imbalance) is bound to arouse **unease** in anyone, as I've already seen¹⁵¹ (**). But this uneasiness doesn't necessarily translate into an automatic antagonistic attitude - it's not uncommon, for example, for it to be resolved (or at least to disappear from the field of consciousness) by an attitude of submission, more or less unconditional admiration, or allegiance.

The association comes to me here that it was these tones that were surely the most common, in relations to my person (haloed by prestige), within the mathematical world - at least among those colleagues (or students) who (as I wrote elsewhere) "did not feel protected by a comparable renown", or (I'll add here) those in whom a certain inner balance, a certain spontaneous knowledge of their own

force, did not exclude such cantilevers. But it is undoubtedly in the nature of such a relationship of "allegiance" that it conceals a hidden antagonism, which ^{se□manifests} itself (openly, or in a way that still remains occult)

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¹⁴⁹(*) A related situation is that of a mother with a domineering, invasive temperament, a sign of superyang imbalance. In both cases, which I know first-hand, this resulted in the daughter's repression of her "virile" traits.

¹⁵⁰(*) When I speak here of "imbalance in yin direction", this does not mean a (perhaps excessive, one-sided) development of yin traits, but rather a **repression** of yang traits, which is not at all the same thing. In the opposite case, described as "imbalance in yang direction", it does mean an "excessive development" of yang traits, which often goes hand in hand with a more or less thorough repression of certain yin traits.

¹⁵¹(**) In the note "Le Superpère (yang enterre yin (2))", n° 108.

when the right opportunity arises...

I've just followed a few associations, which pick up on and complete my thoughts of the day before yesterday (in the previous note "The reversal of yin and yang (2) - or revolt"), and by the same token, those of the note of November 18, "The enemy father (3) - or yang buries yang". They make me realize that the relationship between a certain state of yin or yang imbalance in one of the parents (in this case, a yang imbalance in the father), and the repercussions it has on the child, is by no means univocal, as I hastily suggested. Undoubtedly, the form in which parental imbalance, in this case of the father, is transmitted must depend on many other factors, both the family environment (and more particularly, the mother's person and attitude), and the child's birth temperament¹⁵² (*).

But to tell the truth, that wasn't the direction I had in mind when I started thinking about this earlier. Rather, I was thinking of pursuing a completely different association of ideas, which has been present since the reflection of November 12, when the dynamic of **the reversal of** yin and yang roles was introduced into the reflection for the first time (in the note of the same name, "- or the vehement wife", (126)). Perhaps the reader will have made the connection on his or her own - in any case, when I raised this question on November 12, then the day before yesterday on November 22, somewhere in the back of my mind, as if in mute tones, was the thought of two other occasions when "reversal" had already been mentioned, in the course of this reflection on Burial. The first was in the note of the same name in Cortège V, "Mon ami Pierre" (note (68') of April 28). The second occurrence is in a footnote, in the reflection of September 30, part of the note "L' Eloge Funèbre (2) - ou l'auréole et la force". There's even a third such occasion, but between the lines, at the beginning of the reflection due the day after tomorrow, which opened the reflection "The key to yin and yang".

(This is the note "Muscle and tripe (yang buries yin (!))" (106), from October 30.) □ This is the content of p. 611.

the famous "association d'idées, suscitée par l'Eloge Funèbre en trois volets", to which it alludes

- the very one that set me off that very day, to start the digression on wine and yang that I've been pursuing for almost two months. Now might be the perfect time to let the cat out of the bag, since I've been talking about it, not to mention thinking about it since the day after May 12, after the note "L' Eloge Funèbre (1) - ou les compliments", more than six months ago.

What these three situations have in common is that they involve a "reversal" of roles between my friend and ex-student Pierre, and myself. In both cases, which I mentioned a moment ago, I appear as my ex-student's "collaborator" (if not outright pupil!). The first time, it's as if I'd contributed (in a messy, admittedly, but sometimes interesting way) to the development of the "powerful tool" of *l-adic* cohomology by my brilliant predecessor and friend. The second time, when we are quoted in a breath (for having "linked topology, algebraic geometry and number theory by 'interdisciplinary' means"), the same reversal of reality is cleverly suggested by a typographical "oversight", as if by the greatest of coincidences¹⁵³ (*). The meaning of this reversal becomes even more tendentious than a simple question of precedence (in this case, within an institution that Dieudonné and I were the only ones to "start" at the scientific level, but which I had left a long time ago), when we pay attention to the choice of eulogistic epithets ("theories of legendary depth" for one, "brilliant discoveries" for the other, who is also entitled to the underline, along with everyone else except me). This meaning was "strikingly" clarified in the reflection "Les

¹⁵²(*) In this way, I can see that each of my mother's three brothers (all younger than her) developed in a very different way from my mother (who was a bit of a swan in a brood of ducks), and from the other brothers too.

¹⁵³As I realized earlier in the note "The Massacre" (n° 87), chance often makes things right, as long as the typographers and movers get involved!

obsequies of yin (yang buries yin (4)) ((124), November 10), in which reflection on yin and yang suddenly "landed" in the midst of a funeral ceremony: to one the accumulation of epithets (dithyrambic at times) yin and superyin, to the other yang and superyang. ...

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That's what struck me the day after the note □ "Les compliments" of May 12, even before that. to have had the opportunity to explain it in as much detail as I did two weeks ago. According to the way I felt at the time (which I'll have to revisit here), there was a real **reversal of** reality, or more precisely, a "reversal", taken to a caricatural extreme, of a basic reality which I felt to be nuanced and balanced. I saw myself as a person with a strong "yang" or even superyang dominant, at least in my most apparent, most obvious traits, and particularly those that are obvious to others¹⁵⁴ (*). On the other hand, I sensed in my friend Pierre a basic yin temperament, much more balanced than mine had been in the days when we saw each other often and he was my pupil.

In fact, I believe that this apprehension of reality was essentially correct. If I have sometimes, in recent years, and most recently¹⁵⁵ (**), sensed an original "yin" background note in myself, it seems to me that I was the first and only one to feel it - that it was above all through my yang or "virile" traits, often quite invasive, that I was constantly apprehended by others¹⁵⁶ (***), both on a conscious and unconscious level - at least as far as personal relationships were concerned. These relationships (apart from romantic ones) mainly, if not exclusively, involve the "boss" in us, the conditioned. The new fact that emerged in the course of thinking about yin and yang - that **in my work**, my approach to things is predominantly yin, "feminine" - doesn't really contradict what I already knew. He nuanced it, correcting me on a point where I had tacitly put everything "in the same bag". And all things considered, it seems to me that the sudden and strong impression I'd had of a cartoonish "reversal" of a reality, or more precisely, of an **intention** of such a deliberate reversal - that this "intuition" was also essentially correct, albeit sketchy. It's the reality imperfectly grasped by this intuition that I'd now like to delve into more closely.

18.2.8.2. (b) Brothers and spouses - or double signature

□

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Note 134 (November 25) I'd first have to try and get a closer grasp of this impression, for me that the "base note" in my friend Pierre is a **yin** note. As I see it, this is true both at the level of the "I", as I've seen it expressed in his relationship with me and others, and in his work, i.e. at the level of the drive for knowledge, the creative faculties within him.

As for the first aspect, he and I were obviously of **complementary** temperaments, with the added nuance that the excessive, "superyang" aspect of mine seemed to disconcert him somewhat at times. It was above all, I think, this constant forward projection towards the accomplishment of my tasks, this **isolation** from everything that wasn't related to them, that aroused in him a kind of incredulous astonishment, in which I sensed a nuance of affectionate regret - the same regret I'd felt many times in my mother, when she saw me so cut off from the beauty of things around me¹⁵⁷ (*).

¹⁵⁴(*) Even more so in the years "before I left" than now.

¹⁵⁵(**) In the note "The arrow and the wave" (n° 130, November 19).

¹⁵⁶(***) And for myself too.

¹⁵⁷(*) My mother, like my father, retained right up to the end of her life a capacity for communion with nature, as well as a keen sense of observation of everything around her, both of which I still lack today. This was perhaps the only "yin" aspect of her being that she didn't repress, that was able to blossom freely. On the other hand,

Strictly speaking, it wasn't a feeling of unease, a sign of rejection of a certain reality. At least, I don't recall a single instance of him feeling uneasy with me, or having the impression of an attitude or movement of rejection, of distancing, or even of a clash between us. And I have no doubt that this was in no way a deliberate "diplomatic" gesture on his part, of one who had decided to let nothing show. On the contrary, he sometimes expressed the "astonishment" to which I alluded, without any trace of embarrassment or irritation. Clearly, the basic tone in our relationship, and one that has never wavered to this day¹⁵⁸ (**), was one of affectionate sympathy, which never crossed no shadows.

□ This remains for me a strange fact, and one that nothing I believe could have made anyone suspect, before p. 614 the episode of my departure from the IHES (and even then, at the level of what "passes" directly in a tête à tête, let's say) the fact that from the very first years after our meeting there was a deep, essential ambiguity in his relationship to my person, through the presence of a hidden antagonism, a desire at least to distance himself from my person, and that of ousting. The latter manifested itself in a particularly brutal way (which left me stunned at the time), though infinitely subdued in manner, during the episode of my departure from the IHES (mentioned in the section "Eviction" (63)). My friend had just been co-opted as the fifth "permanent" member of IHES, thanks in no small part to my heartfelt efforts in this direction. In the "explanation" that took place between us (perhaps there were several, I couldn't say), he never lost that perfect, smiling naturalness, with all the aspects of benevolent kindness, that made him so endearing. He then explained to me, without my detecting the slightest hint of hesitation or embarrassment, and even less of antagonism or enmity, or secret satisfaction, that he had from those early years made the decision to devote his life and all his energy to mathematical work; that this dedication to mathematics, which was his for better or for worse, had to come before anything else; that the reason why I expected the support of my colleagues and, in particular, of himself (to request the withdrawal of funds from the Ministry of the Armed Forces) seemed to him to be entirely unrelated to mathematics; that he regretted, of course, that this was a prohibitive circumstance for me, and that, given life "axioms" different from his own, I was about to leave the IHES for a cause which, from his point of view, seemed inconsequential; but that, to his great regret, he could not associate himself, any more than my other colleagues, with a request which was foreign to him, and the outcome of which was entirely indifferent to him (134).₁

In essence, I have given the "manifest", explicit content of my friend's speech, as I remember it, without any effort to try and restore a style of expression, or the atmosphere of an interview, of which I have retained no particularity beyond what I have said here.

The episode takes place at a time when I hadn't yet the slightest suspicion that, behind the overt content quite anodyne (and sometimes strangely absurd) speech, often expresses itself in □ sourdine, and quite clearly, p. 615 a completely different message. This one was surely perceived on an unconscious level, but fiercely rejected, repressed from the conscious field. It's in this note, however, written over fourteen years later, that I take the trouble for the first time to subject this episode to conscious attention, and clearly formulate its long-rejected meaning.

Here I followed one of the threads, probably the strongest, of the associations that came my way. I made it

as for "projection towards a goal", which is one of the dominant traits of my "self", it's also perhaps the only aspect of my person through which I've managed to be even more yang than my mother!

¹⁵⁸(**) (November 26) Although the basic tone has remained one of sympathy and attraction, since I left, over the years and more and more, this relationship has become more and more strained, sclerotic, drained of what gave it quality of life. I feel as if I'm standing in front of a "shell" that's so perfectly watertight, that nothing gets through either way. See "Two turning points" and "The tomb", n°s 66, 71.

However, I realize in retrospect that this is not the case. Without doubt, the image of a person and their temperament that emerges spontaneously from the description of concrete situations in which they find themselves involved, is more vivid and convincing than an enumeration of "traits" that are supposed to define them. Rather than launch into this, I'd prefer to note yet another association, and engage in -another digression, by comparing the relationship examined here with that between Serre and myself. In terms of the relationship between our persons, the impression that prevails for me is by no means that of a "**complementarity**" as with Pierre, but rather that of an **affinity** between two temperaments, each strongly "yang" to the other. More than once, in the eighteen years of close mathematical communication, this affinity has manifested itself in occasional frictions, expressing itself in passing chills, none of which have lasted long. As I remember it, these episodes were caused by casual impatience on Serre's part, which didn't sit well with my own susceptibility. Sometimes Serre was annoyed by my stubborn pursuit of an idea against all odds, when it seemed important to me. I'd bring it up at every opportunity, without worrying whether it would "pass" or not, strengthened as I was by the conviction (which was rarely mistaken) that I had "**the** right" point of view. I don't know why Serre had developed an aversion to my cohomological "big fuss" - perhaps he was simply allergic, like André Weil, to all "big fuss". On the other hand, when I began to develop "my" cohomological yoga, in the second half of the fifties, Serre was practically my only occasional interlocutor.

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so it wasn't looking good! I \square crois that he only consented to take a cautious interest in these works, and only began to realize they were getting somewhere, with the development of staggered cohomology from 1963 onwards, followed the same year by my sketch of a demonstration ("in four spoonfuls") of the rationality of L functions¹⁵⁹ (*).

It seems to me that the relationship between Serre and me was typical of a yang-yang affinity, unlike the relationship with Deligne, which was a yin-yang complementarity. In terms of mathematical work and approach, however, the situation was reversed. As I said in a previous note ("Les neuf mois et les cinq minutes", (123)), I feel that Serre's approach and my own are **complementary**, in the sense of yang-yin complementarity. It was this very complementarity that gave rise to occasional friction, due to the strongly yang temperaments of both him and me.

The relationship between Deligne's and my approaches to mathematics was quite different, to be sure. I can say, without reservation, that it was with Deligne, more than with anyone else, that I had the experience of a perfect **affinity** in our ways of seeing and approaching the mathematical questions that interested us both. This experience has been renewed every time there has been a mathematical dialogue between us. It's clear to me that this is by no means a coincidence - due, for example, to the influence I exerted on him during the decisive years of his apprenticeship. This affinity didn't develop over a long period of familiarity - on the contrary, it was present right from the start.

our first contacts, which was the force at work in creating, almost overnight, a bond of such strength, rooted in our shared passion. It's about a deep affinity between two approaches \square de

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¹⁵⁹(*) Another point of friction I remember, probably even more episodic, was my insistence on linking the theory of quotient transition in algebraic groups and formal schemes (still poorly understood in the 1950s) to questions of the "effectiveness" of flat equivalence relations, or even (later) to quotient transition in the context of fpqc bundles. These views, first taken up by Gabriel and Manin, are now commonplace just about everywhere in algebraic geometry and even elsewhere. It seems to me that Serre's reluctance dissipated, as soon as I took the trouble (as no one else seemed willing to do) to prove in black and white the first effectivity theorem, for flat and finite equivalence relations.

mathematics, pre-existing at the time of our meeting, and which express (I'm convinced) an important aspect of the original temperament in both of us - a yin "basic tone" in the apprehension and discovery of things¹⁶⁰ (*).

There's no question of "demonstrating" such an intimate conviction, any more than I'd dream of wanting to "demonstrate" that the basic tone in my own mathematical work (let's say) is yin, "feminine". At the very most, it's sometimes possible for such things to "pass on" a feeling from one person to another, and trigger in others an awareness of something to which they had not previously paid attention; something that had escaped their conscious attention, yet was already "registered" somewhere, in diffuse form. The situation is surely blurred, as it so often is, by the efforts made by the person concerned to mold himself according to the values in honor, the yang, "masculine" values. Whereas I can see that his mathematical work and the (considerable) influence he exerted are profoundly "masculine".

marked by his ambiguous relationship with me, I doubt, however, that the efforts in question to erase

a basic temperament akin to mine, recused - that these efforts were crowned with success. Certainly the

The same rigorous attitudes that didn't apply to him before my "departure" have long since prevented him (at least in writings intended for publication) from examining things that are too far beneath him, or things that are now anathema. Yet it seems to me that in what he publishes, he has not been able to refrain from following the style of approach that is spontaneously his own. At least, that's the impression I got as I leafed through the few parsimonious offprints he was still kind enough to send me from beyond the grave, after my "death" fifteen years ago.

But of course, my understanding of Deligne's mathematical approach goes back to the years before my "death", between 1965 and 1969. For five years, we were both strongly connected to the same things, and mathematical communication was uninterrupted (except for a year he spent in Belgium), and more intense than that I had with any other mathematician, including mime (it seems to me) Serre. More than once, I've had occasion to evoke those years¹⁶¹ (*), of intense creativity for both of them. In my friend's case, they were marked by an impressive start, which didn't surprise me because it seemed so obvious! It was a time when his very sure sense of substance, of what is tangible behind the most abstract appearances, or in the most "general nonsense" formulations, was not yet obscured by complacency, nor by the burial syndrome that later appeared. He then made numerous contributions to those themes (extreme-yin, I might say) that later consen- sus (with his unreserved blessing) had long since excluded from the ranks of "mathematics".

¹⁶⁰(*) (November 26) The reflections of the present note, in continuity with those of the notes "The rising sea" and "The nine months and five minutes" (n°s 122, 123), seem to suggest for any person the presence of a "double signature", or a **double** "basic tone": one (undoubtedly the most apparent) concerns the "boss", i.e. the structure of the "ego" and the mechanisms that govern it; the other concerns the "Worker", aka the "child", i.e. also the drive for knowledge, discovery of the world, creation (including, of course, the drive for love). (It's true, it's the most common thing in the world to take the boss for the worker and vice versa, in other words, to take bladders for lanterns - but that's another story...) So for me, this basic double tone is yang(boss)-yin(child), for Serre it's yang-yang, for Deligne it's yin-yin (without my having any feelings of doubt or hesitation about it). Against the background of sympathetic relations with one and the other, it's this "distribution" of "signs" (or "tones") which means that, in terms of relations between people, my relationship with Serre is one of affinity and my relationship with Deligne is one of complementarity.

approaches to mathematics.

Of the four possible "distributions", only the yin-yang double tone remains. Given the disfavor of yin in our macho society, a disfavor that will tend to play especially on the first tone (the "boss tone"), I presume that the yin-yang double-tone must be less frequent than yang-yang. Yet I know at least one notorious mathematician who seems to fit this signature. Of course, the second tone, or "original tone", is trickier to pin down, as it will often be "blurred" by outside influences, by the desire to be and do "like everyone else".

¹⁶¹(*) See in particular the notes "L'enfant", "L'enterrement", "L'éviction", "L'investiture", "Le noeud" (in Cortège V, Mon ami Pierre), and the note "L'héritier" (in Cortège IX, Mes élèves).

p. 619 serious"¹⁶² (**): topos formalism, cohomological "big stuff"... . I review and edit pins these contributions, with obvious pleasure, in the introduction to SGA 4¹⁶³ (*). Other such contributions (among even more "muscular" ones, which immediately placed him among the "big stars") can be found in my 1968/69 double report, referred to in the note "The investiture"¹⁶⁴ (**).

Note 134₁ (November 26)¹⁶⁵ (***) Typical detail: these military funds, about which nobody wanted to lift a finger, as long as there was talk that they would be the cause of my departure, were suppressed the very year of my departure to general indifference! You never know, in case it upsets a distinguished guest who's a bit fussy about the matter... . The funds in question represented only a small part of IHES resources (5%, if I remember correctly). Without having to consult each other, my four colleagues at IHES (not counting the director) were unanimous in seizing the opportunity to get rid of me (almost at the same time, in fact, as the director himself). And I thought I was indispensable, and loved!

(December 6) The two physicists at IHES, Michel and Ruelle, were unhappy that the "Physics" section at IHES was somewhat of a poor relation, next to the mathematics section, represented by Thom, Deligne and myself (including two Fields medals!). This imbalance had just been exacerbated by Deligne's co-optation (which, incidentally, had been done with the unreserved agreement of Michel and Ruelle, unanimously in of the IHES Scientific Council, with the exception of Thom). There had been consultation between physicists and mathematicians at the IHES, to put pressure on the director, Léon Motchane, to re-establish fairness.
p. 620 balance between the two sections, as far as possible. I assume, however, that my physicist colleagues must not have been unhappy to see this imbalance effectively offset, and much sooner than they would have hoped, with the sudden prospect of my departure.

As for Thom, he was incensed that Deligne had been co-opted against his formal opposition. He had described Deligne's contributions, all unpublished, which I mentioned in my glowing "investiture" report, and which obviously went over his head, as mere "exercises"! What shocked him about Deligne's accession to "permanent" status at IHES, on an equal footing with himself, was that the young Deligne - he was 25 at the time - wasn't already covered in honors. According to Thom, such a position should come only as "the crowning achievement of a career". It was a far cry, less than ten years later, from the heroic years when I welcomed a still unknown Hironaka into my makeshift premises... . In any case, Thom's bitterness was such that (according to what he told me himself) he was thinking of leaving the IHES, to return to his professorship in Strasbourg, which he had been careful (more cautious than I had been, when I left the CNRS for the IHES) to keep. Through my warm sponsorship of Deligne, I had been the first and foremost cause of his frustration, and I presume that Thom must have felt, in his heart of hearts, that I had only got what I had deserved through my impertinence, by

¹⁶²(18.5.4.4**) (November 26) Incidentally, some of this mathematics was exhumed, loudly and without my name being mentioned, at the "Colloque Pervers" in 1981, and the following year with the "memorable volume" LN 900. On this subject, see the notes "L'Iniquité - ou le sens d'un retour", "Thèse à crédit et assurance tous risques", "Souvenir d'un rêve - ou la naissance des motifs", n°s 75, 81, 51.

¹⁶³(*) (November 26) These comments had been added to a second, completely revised edition of SGA 4 (especially concerning sites and topos). They may give the impression that Deligne had been associated with the birth of the main ideas and results that constitute the "powerful tool" of étale and *l-adic* cohomology. So I've added my voice to that of Deligne and my other cohomology students, sharing (ten years later) the remains of a deceased master!

¹⁶⁴(**) This double report is reproduced in volume 1 of *Réflexions Mathématiques*.

¹⁶⁵(***) This sub-note to the previous note ("Brothers and spouses - or the double signature" n° 134) is taken from a footnote to that note. (See reference at the end of the third paragraph of this note).

seeing himself forced to leave the IHES just a few months after having introduced my brilliant "protégé"!

As for the director, at a time when he found himself cornered by the unanimous desire of the permanent staff to leave, he then (according to a tried and tested tactic he wielded to perfection) played the "divide and rule" game, using the question of the military funds as a convenient means of distraction, and at the same time getting rid of the most troublesome of his permanent staff. (A masterly reversal of fortune, since the secrecy he had maintained around the presence of these funds seemed to me to be an additional and compelling reason to force him to leave!

and his departure from the IHES closely followed mine - from someone who, like him, had been part of the IHES from its precarious and heroic early years, and who' [□] with him and according to p. 621 its own resources, had ensured its credibility and durability.

18.2.8.3. (c) Yin the Servant, and the new masters

Note 135 (November 26) Among the many affinities between Deligne and myself, in the years before my departure, was the pleasure he took, as I did, in developing (when the need arose) what I call "gros fourbis". Most, if not all, of my energy as a mathematician was devoted to such tasks. If it were a question of building a house, doing "big jobs" would mean : not just making a tantalizing sketch of the house, or even two or three from different angles, or even detailed plans, with dimensions and all; but bringing and cutting the stones that are to be used to build it, one by one; assemble them into walls, lay the beams, rafters and tiles or lozes; fit doors and windows, washbasins, sinks, drains and gutters; and install (if you're really going to live in it yourself) right down to the curtains on the windows and the drawings on the walls. It can be a large house, or a one-room cottage - but the spirit of the work is the same. And as long as you live in it, no matter how thoroughly you've done everything, you soon realize that the work is never finished, that there's always something new to come - at least when the "grosse fourbis" - sorry, the house - is vast.

Most of my energy as a mathematician, between 1955 and 1970, was devoted to starting up and developing à brin de zinc four **big** "gros fourbis" - without, of course, having reached the end of any of them, see above. These are, in chronological order, the cohomological tool, schemas, topos, motifs¹⁶⁶ (*). These four master themes are, moreover, intimately connected one [□] to the other, as would be distinct buildings p. 622 all part of the same farm or hamlet, all working towards the same goal. And each of these "big edifices" led me, without any intention on my part, to develop other "big edifices" that were already much smaller - a bit like building a large house, or even a whole hamlet, which leads you to install a lime kiln, a carpentry and joinery workshop, and so on. A few examples,

¹⁶⁶(*) The "cohomological tool" didn't wait for me to exist. I'm referring here to a certain personal approach, which led in particular to the "mastery of étale cohomology" (which seems to me the main technical and conceptual ingredient in the demonstration of Weil's conjectures, completed by Deligne). Twenty years later, in "A la Poursuite des Champs", I'm pursuing this line of research in the direction of "non-commutative" (or "homotopic") cohomology. For the "commutative cohomology" direction, I give some details about this approach in the beginning of the note "My orphans" (n° 46). The four "big fourbis" referred to here correspond essentially to the five "key notions" in the note quoted, except that the "cohomological tool" corresponds to **two** such notions or ideas (namely, derived categories, and the "six operations" formalism).

Interestingly, the only one of the four "big fourbis" (or main research themes) named in my Eulogy (see notes n° 104 and 105) are topos. As chance would have it, this is also the one of the three buried by my cohomology students, the one that had not yet been exhumed under the paternities of rechanges, at the time of the Funeral Eulogy. (The latter takes place in 1983, the derived categories are exhumed in 1981 at the Colloque Pervers, and the motifs in 1982 in the "memorable volume" LN 900).

every year, the need was felt once again to augment the arsenal of categorical notions and constructs with two or three (small) additional "big eats". People who've come ten or twenty years later, who've found everything ready-made and are comfortably settled in (and even others who basically know what they're dealing with), shrug their shoulders condescendingly at so much unreadable "nonsense" (Deligne dixit) and eh-four hair-splitting ("Spitzfindigkeiten", as an illustrious German correspondent called them, albeit well-disposed towards me¹⁶⁷ (*)). These are people who have no idea what it's like to build a house on level ground, and who will probably never build one, content to play landlord in those that others have built for them, with both hands and with all their heart.

p. 623 □ I was a bit brisk just now, seeming to put my friend Pierre in the bag of those who "have no idea of what it's like to build a house...". Not only did he see me at work, but it was with pleasure that he built houses of his own, as if he'd never done anything else in the twenty years he'd been in the world. Incidentally, this story of "big forks" and house-building and all that (in case the reader hasn't already noticed. . .) is yet another aspect, or another image, to capture something I had previously tried to grasp as best I could with the image of "the rising sea", then with that of a train of waves following one another¹⁶⁸ (*). This is the "yin mode", or "feminine" mode, of apprehending reality, and the corresponding approach to immersing oneself in it and extracting an image that renders this reality with suppleness and fidelity. So here I am, taking a detour via my own person, to return to my initial purpose - that of "conveying" this strong perception within me of a kinship, an essential affinity between Deligne's approach to mathematics and my own. But in this aspect of Deligne's work, which I've just tried to define with the help of an image, there was a complete "blurring", it seems to me, after my departure-death in 1970 - I believe that the "big fourbis" are totally absent from his "after" publications. Certainly, he could not reasonably have used this trait in his disowned master, to debunk the latter, while tolerating the same trait flourishing in himself, in accordance with his own nature.

It's true that if it's not a question of following an inner need, the expression of an elementary impulse, but simply of increasing one's prestige through the accumulation of **results** that "make a mark", my friend really had no interest in continuing to embarrass himself with (more or less) "big stuff". Even in my day, and outside the Bourbaki group (itself involved in a sizeable "gros fourbis"!), it was already a rather frowned-upon thing to do. This is hardly surprising, given that the "superyang" blinkers, in our society and in the world around us, have become the norm.

p. 624 in the consensus of the scientific world, didn't start yesterday. Perhaps this was the main reason why the houses I took pleasure in building remained uninhabited for ^{long}□years, except for by the bricklayer himself (who was also the architect, carpenter etc.). And to this day, even the part of my work that has long since become common heritage (and even where there is still no other reference available than my writings), remains surrounded (at least for those who are not part of the "beau monde" and who make no point of looking down on it) by an almost awe-inspiring halo, as if entering it would require almost superhuman faculties. It's true that it's often long, and it couldn't be otherwise, given that everything is well and truly done, by hand and in detail, from start to finish, with even

¹⁶⁷(*) My correspondent kindly assured me, just to please me, that he was well aware that my work was "largely free of such defects" ("weitgehend frei von diesen Übeln"). For him, these were the "tares" into which one could not fail to fall (like the "Spitzfindigkeiten" of categorists of all stripes), if one were to develop a theory (as I suggested with regard to motifs) on foundations that would still remain conjectural. Here we find the visceral rejection of the "mathematical dream" discussed in the section "The forbidden dream" and in the following three sections (sections 5 to 8). It's yet another aspect of an automatic repression of any "yin", "feminine" approach to mathematics.

¹⁶⁸(*) See the two notes "The rising sea" and "The arrow and the wave", n°s 122, 130.

at every turn of the chapter, explanations of where we're going¹⁶⁹ (*). It didn't seem to me that my students, when they were working with me, had much trouble getting into the swing of things. But that was at a time when "tangible results" had already won over the mathematical establishment, and my students worked with the confidence of playing a "safe" card. I have the impression that, since then, more and more people have taken pleasure in accrediting the "unreadable" version¹⁷⁰ (**), in accordance with a fashion that is even more tyrannical today than it was in my day.

But even setting aside the desiderata of fashion, when it comes to calculating profitability and "returns", we're bound to be careful to avoid "big stuff" like the plague. Developing "big stuff" and making it available to everyone is a **service** to a scientific community that often accepts it.

reluctantly. I've never been too bothered by this understandable reticence; I've always been a bit

knew that I had "the right stuff", and that sooner or later, people wouldn't be able to stop coming.

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But even as they come, the "returns" in terms of "credit" can only be modest. If I were to draw up a numerical balance sheet, not of the notions, questions and ideas I introduced and developed in the fifteen years from 1955 to 1970, and which have either become part of the common, anonymous heritage, or are buried without music (waiting to be exhumed with great fanfare), but of what might be called "great theorems", I doubt I'd find even ten. Perhaps the total time directly devoted to their demonstration is of the order of a few weeks, or a few months at the most. There wasn't one until 1957 (Riemann-Roch-Grothendieck theorem) - and yet I know I hadn't wasted my time in the three years before that. In fact, none of the "great theorems" would have been demonstrated by now (although this was by no means my main concern), if I hadn't stubbornly followed a passion for understanding within myself for these fifteen years, trusting the approach it dictated, whether or not it was "profitable" (in terms of such and such desiderata), or whether or not it was well regarded in the wider world. Each time, this approach consisted of starting with a strong intuition, or a handful of such intuitions, and taking them as a solid, foolproof thread that pulled me into the unknown; and in doing so, to change the image, I couldn't help but gradually, with the unknown in the process of making itself known, like rough stones that you "know" by cutting them, build houses, some very large, some not so large, and all fit to be lived in - houses where every nook and cranny is destined to become a welcoming and familiar place for more than one person. Doors and windows are plumb and open and close without cracking or creaking, the roof doesn't leak and the chimney doesn't pull. It doesn't have to be Notre Dame de Paris, and there's no "great theorem" hidden in everyone's breadbox - these are simply houses that had to be built, and that I built to be lived in. I found my joy in making them, beautiful and spacious, knowing full well that the work I was doing, alone or in company, had to be done, and that at each moment it was as good as I could make it.

It's this spirit, too, that I found in the Bourbaki group in the 1950s, and which made me feel at ease, "at home", notwithstanding the differences in background and culture, and the difficulties.

that I mentioned earlier. In those days at least, it was a \square esprit de **service**, still, that

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¹⁶⁹(*) It's only over the years, I think, that I've come to realize the need to include such explanations, often purely heuristic, to try as far as possible to communicate to the reader a sense of "direction" and purpose, strongly present in me at the time of writing. Today, this seems far more essential than meticulous writing of key demonstrations, which the reader will be happy to reconstitute or even construct from scratch, as soon as he senses where we're going, and that "where" attracts him... ..

¹⁷⁰(**) This is obvious only to Deligne, who repeated it to me during his recent visit. This was SGA 4 (more than half of which develops the language of topos with extreme meticulousness), declared "unreadable" by my friend, as justification for his brilliant "SGA 4 operation¹".

I found there. Service to a **task**, and beyond the task, service to other men, eager like us to understand things small and great, and to understand them thoroughly and to the end. This "service" did not take the form of austere duty or asceticism. It arose spontaneously and joyfully from an inner need, expressing something in common that linked these very different men.

And it's this same spirit that I recognize in the Cartan seminar, where so many French mathematicians got their start, and later (in the 1960s) in my own seminar (which goes by the acronym SGA, "Séminaire de Géométrie Algébrique du Bois Marie"). One of the differences between the two seminars was that mine were strongly focused on the development of the "big fourbis" mentioned earlier (i.e. "**my**" fourbis), for which there were never too many hands, whereas Cartan's themes from one year to the next were more eclectic. What seems more important to me is what the two seminars had in common, and above all, what seems to me to have been their essential function, their **raison d'être**. To tell the truth, I can see two of them. One of the functions of these seminars, close to Bourbaki's purpose, was to prepare and make available to everyone easily accessible texts (I mean, essentially complete), developing in a detailed way important themes that are difficult to access¹⁷¹ (*). The other function of these seminars was to provide a **place** where motivated young researchers - even if they weren't geniuses - could learn the trade of mathematician on topical issues, in contact with eminent and benevolent men. Learning the trade - in other words, getting down to work, and in the process, finding an opportunity to make a name for themselves.

It would seem that my departure in 1970 marked the end, in France at least, of the "major seminars".

- **sustainable** places where, year after year, some of the great themes of contemporary mathematics are being worked on - and places that are also **benevolent** and inspiring, for ☐all those who come to put their minds to it.

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hand. I don't know if they exist anywhere else in the world (Moscow, perhaps, under the impetus of I.M. Gelfand?). What is certain is that such places are decidedly contrary to the zeitgeist, just like the "big fourbis", written out in black and white, meticulously, for **all** to see.

It's no coincidence that hardly anyone writes careful and (for the time being) ex-hausive essays on topics that have been ripe for discussion for ten or even twenty years, and which are clearly crucial, but which in the meantime are only accessible to a handful of people "in the know". Those who are part of the mathematical "big world", unless they are also part of the "handful" in question, will have no difficulty whatsoever in being brought up to speed by one of them, who will be only too happy to oblige. As for the rest of us, what the hell! Back in the sixties, I saw a lot of books clamoring to be written. I'd have written them myself, but I couldn't do everything at once. To my knowledge, none of these books has yet been written¹⁷² (*). However, I know more than one person (even if only among ex-students) who was in the know enough and had the feeling and the knack, to be able to write without difficulty such a book as was needed (and still is). And from the little I've seen of some of their later work, I don't get the impression that it's the abundance and difficulty of their more personal work that's made them so successful.

¹⁷¹(*) "Difficult to access", either because these themes remained imperfectly understood, or because they were known only to a handful of insiders, and the scattered publications dealing with them gave an inadequate picture.

¹⁷²(*) (November 28) I should make an exception here for theses written at my instigation. The spirit that animated me and which I believe communicated itself to my students, at least during the time they worked with me, was that which animated me for my own work; that is to say, in colorful terms, "to build the houses" that were visibly needed, even if I was often the only one to feel the need for this or that particular "house". I have the impression that, as a general rule (with one exception), this feeling was eventually communicated to the student, making him or her "hook" on a particular subject, and subsequently identify strongly with it. With the exception of Verdier, who didn't deign to make available to everyone the foundation work agreed between us and which is still waiting to be written, the thesis work of all the students who did their state doctorate thesis with me has become what you might call "standard references". They are houses fit to live in, and none of them duplicates any other. ...

would have prevented him ("I'm sorry, but I really don't have the time!") from providing this service to the famous "mathematical community". For more than one, too, it's a safe bet that it would have made him even more notorious, like author of a book read and quoted (even if not everything he expounds necessarily□from him - but the "how" p . 628 is by no means a negligible quantity. ...), than by the more or less thick bundle of its separate prints.

Clearly, it's not a simple "lack of time" that's preventing some of us, with impressive unanimity, from making accessible to all what remains the privilege of a few - or even from having (if only here and there, let's say, the time to write a book) an **attitude of "service"**. At this point, I'm irresistibly reminded of the SGA 5 seminar in 1965/66, which, for eleven years, had been ignored for personal gain by the very people who had benefited from it in the first place, my friend Pierre and my other cohomology students! It's true that there was a body to share, and therefore a special motivation in this case. But I'm also thinking of other cases, where the service rendered made up for obvious shortcomings, and was brushed aside by the people in place¹⁷³ (*). People will say that these are still rather special cases, that it was my person who was targeted, when it was obvious that it was I who had inspired the work in question. And yet, I can sense a "zeitgeist" in all of this that transcends any individual case.

The aspect of the "zeitgeist" that I'm trying to pin down here, as best I can, is the **discrediting of an attitude of service** - a discrediting that I perceive through a host of converging signs, and which for me is a patent fact. Everyone is free to deny it, just as they are free to examine it for themselves and see for themselves. My purpose here is not to "prove" it to a reluctant reader, but to try to grasp its meaning.

From the point of view of this reflection, the first meaning is obvious. The attitude of service is typically a "yin", "feminine" attitude, and it's not surprising that it's one of the many that find themselves devalued. The nuance, which I've seen many times, is that such an attitude was just the right one. good for those who couldn't afford a "master" attitude - that work done in this spirit

□was **subaltern** drudgery, good for the pedestrian among those who coach big ideas and p . 629 brilliant discoveries".

However, I also know that there's more to it than that - because otherwise, why should we prevent at all costs a "pedestrian" of good will (when by chance there are any) from quietly doing in his corner the dirty work that is his by right, finally providing solid references where previously we had to be content with saying (when we deigned to say something. . .) "we know that. . . "or "we can demonstrate that... . ", or more rarely and more honestly "we'll admit that... . " ? !

I was first confronted with this troubling question eight years ago, when Yves Ladegaillerie was trying to "fit in" his thesis¹⁷⁴ (*). It was, I confess, at a time when my interest in both mathematics and the world of mathematicians was at its most marginal. I was a little bewildered, but I didn't try to unravel the meaning of this mystery. With a few variations, my attitude hardly changed in the years that followed, until last February, when I continued to reflect on the subject in Récoltes et Semailles. And yet, by dint of picking up on signs, and even if I didn't mean to, I couldn't help but gradually pick up on their meaning, or rather, meanings. I can see two of them. One has to do with me - the burial syndrome, which I haven't quite got round to yet. The other has nothing to do with any particular person. It's about an **attitude of exclusivity in the possession and control of scientific "information"**, an attitude that prevails within the scientific community.

¹⁷³(*) I'm thinking here, of course, of Yves Ladegaillerie's work, and that of Olivier Leroy, mentioned in four previous notes and sections ("On n'arrête pas le Progrès", "Cercueil 2 - ou les découpes tronçonnées", "La note - ou la nouvelle éthique", "Cercueil 4 - ou les topos sans fleurs ni couronnes", notes n°s 50, 94, section 33, note n° 96).

¹⁷⁴(*) On this subject, see the two notes°s 50 and 94, cited in the previous footnote.

of the scientific "establishment", making it a kind of ruling caste by divine right, within the so-called scientific "community"¹⁷⁵ (**).

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This is a theme I've already touched on (barely, barely) in the note □ "Deontological consensus - and information control", and a little also in "Le "snobisme des jeunes", ou les défenseurs de la pureté" (25), (27)). I suspect that this is a **new development** in the scientific world, which has come to take hold at a snail's pace over the past two or three decades. I don't think I was among those who propagated and welcomed this unwritten "new ethic" of double standards¹⁷⁶ (*). If I have any co-responsibility for its advent, it's rather that I didn't see it coming¹⁷⁷ (**). Before these last few years, I had no idea that the all-round information I had enjoyed freely, practically since my first contacts with the scientific world in 1948, had over the years become, I'm not sure when or how, a far-reaching **privilege** shared with a handful of friends - a **class privilege**, to use an overused term, which here seems to express a very tangible reality.

But my aim is not to make a "class analysis" of the mathematical world, and the "relations of force" and the "means of power" in this world - no more than to paint a "picture of manners". It's time to return to □ a more limited purpose - that of understanding, in its essential springs in the main protagonists, the "news" of my early funeral!

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18.2.8.4. (d) Yin the Servant (2), and the generosity

Note 136 (November 28) The previous two notes were essentially digressions around the theme of the yin-yin affinity between Deligne and myself, in terms of mathematical work and approach to mathematics. I don't know whether they helped to "get across" my perception of this affinity and its nature, which for me is beyond doubt.

I've written elsewhere that "in my work, I'm as "yin", as "sea and motion", as one can be". On reflection, I'd say that's not literally true - that one "can be" even more so, because (as I see it) Deligne is even more so than I am. Or at least, the "yang in the yin" seems more pronounced in me than in him. What's fiery in me, takes on a more measured air in him. Where I boldly launch myself forward, more often than not he will remain cautious, and often well-founded, in his expectations. As long as I have the beginnings of an idea, a "tip" I can get my hands on, I don't hesitate to throw myself into a mathematical quagmire that I feel is substantial, without bothering to take a closer look at the initial idea ("ihr auf den zahn fühlen", as they say in German. . .), or to predict the outcome of the melee. Sometimes the idea just doesn't make sense, for some obvious reason that escapes me because I'm so keen to "jump into the fray". Eventually I realize it - sometimes I feel like an idiot, and yet I've rarely regretted taking the plunge. That's how I make contact with an unknown substance - by rubbing up against it, whether "advisedly" or not.

¹⁷⁵(**) (December 6) Lust for domination is a **superyang** imbalance, and by far the most common form of such an imbalance. It corresponds to an obliteration of the yin term, "feminine" in the yin-yang couple "Master-servant", or "that which dominates (or masters) - that which serves", neighboring the couple "mastery - service".

¹⁷⁶(**) I don't know if there are many among the elders or colleagues of my generation, or even among younger colleagues and friends, who have seen it. I doubt if there is a single one of "those who welcomed me fraternally, into this world that became mine", to whom Récoltes et Semailles is dedicated - apart perhaps from Chevalley. That's certainly one of the things I'd have liked to talk about with him - but he's no longer here to tell me. ...

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My friend, on the other hand, first probes and examines - and then launches out, when he feels sure, if not of the point of arrival, which would be asking too much, but at any rate that there's somewhere to land, and that he won't come back empty-handed. I've never had the impression in his work of any kind of **dispersion of energy**, as I often had - but rather that with him, **all the strokes work**. From this point of view, his style of work carried the mark of **maturity**, whereas mine was more the mark of **youth**, sometimes muddled by the sheer force of it. to be feisty. When we first met, however, I was approaching forty, p. 632

when he was twenty years old. And more than once, I sensed in him a kind of smiling indulgence towards me, the kind of indulgence a benevolent adult would have towards an affectionate child, when he saw me still embarking on some (small) "big job", without ever doubting anything... ..

The aspects I'm evoking here are no doubt difficult to detect in published works "au net", which present a final, or at least advanced, stage of reflection. I'm no less exacting in my work than he was, and I hardly ever entrusted notes to a typist or printer until they had reached a stage where they satisfied my need for complete clarity. On the other hand, in the style of writing I follow in "Réflexions Mathématiques" (and particularly in "A la Poursuite des Champs"), the original approach to the work is apparent on every page. Readers will notice many "misses". They are all small in scale - usually spotted the next day or two, if not the very same day, and rectified in the pages that follow. (That this should be so surprised me - it's one of the signs of the extraordinary "ease" of my mathematical work, which I've mentioned elsewhere¹⁷⁸ (*).). One of the reasons for the "little misses" is, of course, my lack of familiarity with a subject I hadn't touched for seven or eight years - and these absent-mindednesses become rarer as the work progresses, as the contact gradually lost is re-established. Nevertheless, this way of taking at face value, without hesitation, what a rather nebulous memory gave me of things I knew more or less well at the time, illustrates well this "go-getter" aspect, and sometimes scrambling, which constitutes (among others) the "yang in the yin" aspect of my mathematical (or non-mathematical) work. I'm convinced that an equally spontaneous text from Deligne's pen would be much closer to what is commonly considered "publishable" - indeed, publishable by his own exacting standards.

□ If I insist here on the character of "maturity", of "yin very yin" in the working style and approach of p. 633 I don't mean to suggest that my friend's work is in any way unbalanced, that it lacks or is lacking in "yang" or "virile" qualities. If this were so, his work would not, like Serre's or mine, bear the delicate, unmistakable mark of **beauty on** every page. But this is not the place, any more than I did in the case of Serre or mine, to follow the delicate harmony of yin and yang, of "feminine" and "masculine", in his published work, which is known to me, and in what is known to me of his work through the personal contact I've had with him for nearly two decades.

Nor should we think that my observation of a balance between yin and yang is some kind of truism, that it applies immediately to every man who, in one capacity or another, is considered a "great mathematician". This perception of beauty that I just mentioned is not equally present, nor to the same degree, in the work of all mathematicians who leave a lasting imprint on the mathematics of their time. Among these, I know of two who, like Deligne, appear to me to be predominantly yin in both their work and their personality, and whose work has never failed to impress me.

¹⁷⁸(*) See note "The trap - or ease and exhaustion", n° 99. It seems to me that this "ease" is even greater now than it was before I "left". This seems to me to be linked to a maturation that has taken place in me over the past fifteen years, and which is felt in my mathematical work as elsewhere.

The yin imbalance is so extreme in one of these colleagues that he seems entirely unable to even formulate the slightest definition or statement clearly and correctly. The yin imbalance is so extreme in one of these colleagues that he seems entirely incapable of formulating even the slightest definition or statement clearly and correctly (let alone an idea. . .) - even though he has a deep intuition for many things, and has introduced a number of important and fruitful ideas. In each case, these ideas have taken shape through the work of others. It's clear that he has a rare repression of "yang" traits and forces, both in his work and in his way of being. This repression takes on the proportions of true powerlessness, even in his work, where he would be incapable of completing anything by himself.

p. 634 means. He compensates for this impotence of being with an attitude of megalomania, internalizing at the same time the defects he delights in cultivating in himself, as if it were **thanks to them** that he could ☐conceive ideas that

(in his eyes) make him **the** great scientist of the millennium. ... ¹⁷⁹(*)

I sense a repression in the opposite direction in my friend Pierre, evacuating certain "yin" traits and leading him (more or less successfully) to model himself on a superyang image. Admittedly, this repression is a long way from the opposite extreme I've just described. It does not go so far as to erase from the reader or interlocutor the feeling of beauty, of satisfaction without any aftertaste of unease, which are the signs of a true understanding, giving at every moment their fair share to both clarity and shadow, to mystery. In other words, the "superyang" brand image chosen by my friend should hardly encroach on his work itself, at times of work I mean, when the presence of the "boss" should be as often effaced as it is (I think) with Serre, or with me¹⁸⁰ (**).

On the other hand, it seems to me that the role of the boss becomes important, even invasive, when it comes to choosing work **themes**. There's this fixed idea of standing out from my person, and by the same token, the refusal to follow certain inclinations of his own nature which are too strongly associated in him with the image of the disowned master. So, while he may, like anyone else of great means, be able to demonstrate difficult theorems (or even "proverbially difficult" ones), and even to introduce beautiful ideas and develop them, he would never dream of naively "rethinking", in his own way and even if only in broad outline, an entire science (such as topology, which could really use it....) - or even to create a new science from scratch, to "unearth new worlds" (as I wrote elsewhere) (136₁). And yet, if there's anyone I have no doubt he has what it takes, it's him. If there's anything he's lacked until now

p. 635 to do this is **generosity** - true generosity, which is at the same time a calm assurance, which makes us follow the impulse of our own nature wherever it carries us, without us ☐soucier or encouragement, nor "returns".

But there's also the simple joy of "building houses", big or small, for others to live in, without necessarily having to be on the scale of a "whole science" or a "new world" - the joy of lugging stones and beams around like the first bricklayer or carpenter who comes along, without fear of being mistaken for this or looking like that - or of bringing within everyone's reach what (according to some) should remain the preserve of the very few. It's an attitude of service, a certain humility, another expression of the same generosity mentioned earlier, of the same fidelity to one's own nature. My friend has exchanged it for an attitude of self-importance ("me - to do such a job!") and a caste attitude¹⁸¹ (*), in terms of choice.

¹⁷⁹(*) I'm talking about attitudes and ways of being that I'd seen before I left, when I had the opportunity to meet this prestigious colleague on a familiar basis. It's not impossible that something has changed since then (although that would be a rare occurrence. . .).

¹⁸⁰(**) I revise this hasty impression at the end of sub-note no. ° 136₁ (dated December 4) to this note.

¹⁸¹(*) This "class" attitude, in my friend and in the "great mathematical world", appears in my thoughts first in the two notes (from March) "Deontological consensus - and control of information" and "Youth snobbery - or the defenders of purity" (n°s 25, 27), and it reappears in last week's note "Yin The servant, and the new

acceptable" work themes.

Finally, there is a third attitude or force by which "the boss" weighs in on my friend's choice of work themes, the substance he gives himself to probe, a force that sets him imperative barriers. It's the "master's funeral" syndrome, or **gravedigger's syndrome**. It's not just a question of refraining from naming the one who must remain ignored. It's also a matter of burying the work itself, or more precisely, of "**cutting**" it off cleanly, as if with a **chainsaw**, in one's own work as in that of others, at the level of each of the master branches sprouting from a vigorous trunk¹⁸² (**). As I reminded you the day before yesterday (in the previous note, "Yin the Servant, and the new masters"), among the four major themes that I identified and developed during my period as a "surveyor" between 1955 and 1970, only one was "taken" and used in broad daylight by my brilliant pupil and ^{succ}cessor, the other three have been "truncated" - muted, p. 636 it goes without saying. One of the themes was partially exhumed in 1981, and another the following year - as if stunted shoots had sprouted from the scarred stumps of severed main branches, surrounded by brightly-colored garlands and neon lights, just to give the impression...

Note 136₁ (December 4)¹⁸³ (*) My own approach has constantly led me to "rethink" from top to bottom everything that stands in my way as a mathematician, whether it's the most insignificant thing, or whether it's on the scale of "an entire science". It's true that, having only two arms like everyone else, I haven't always been able to go so far in carrying out a program of work to remake "an entire science from top to bottom", as I did in the case of algebraic geometry, starting from a few very simple key ideas around the notion of the schema. Even in this case, where I invested a large part of my mathematical energy for twelve years in a row, I was far from "completing" the planned program - for that, I would have needed twelve more years! (And no one after I left bothered to carry on with the task, which must have seemed (wrongly) thankless... .)

Other cases in which I have rethought a science, but certainly without going that far, include **holographic algebra** (both commutative and non-commutative - the latter, incidentally, did not yet exist when I first started thinking about it in 1955), and **topology**, with the introduction of the notion of **topos**, which is still waiting for its time to become the daily bread of the geometric topologist, along with the various notions of "topos".

of "spaces" and "varieties" commonly used today¹⁸⁴ (**). No doubt certain important parts of current topology will hardly be touched ^{by} the systematic development of the p. 637 point.

toposic viewpoint in topology. So this point of view seems to me to be the crucial element in the "creation from scratch of a new science" - a science that achieves a synthesis (entirely unexpected when I arrived in the 1950s) of algebraic geometry, topology and arithmetic¹⁸⁵ (*). Over and above the construction of the new algebraic geometry, and through the "mastery of stale cohomology" (and that of the l-adic cohomology that follows from it), it was the elaboration of a master builder of this new science still in the making, and the development of solid technical foundations, that was in my eyes my main contribution to the mathematics of my time. The "yoga of **patterns**", which remains

masters", n° 135.

¹⁸²(**) I was first confronted with the reality of "the chainsaw" on May 19, during the reflection in the double note "Les héritiers... .", ". . . and the chainsaw" (n°s 91, 92), then in the four coffin notes that follow (and which, with "Le Fossoyeur", form the "Fourgon Funèbre" or Cortège X de l'Enterrement), on May 21 and 22 (notes n° 93-96).

¹⁸³(*) This sub-note to the preceding note ("Yin the servant (2) - or generosity", n° 136), is taken from a footnote to this one. (See footnote in third paragraph before end of footnote).

¹⁸⁴(**) Compare with some of the comments in the second part of the March note "My orphans" (n° 46), and in his sub-notes n°s 46₅ to 46₇.

¹⁸⁵(*) See previous footnote. (March 11, 1985) The term "entirely unexpected" is no doubt excessive, for the prescience of such a synthesis is already to be found in Weil's conjectures, which acted as a powerful source of inspiration.

still conjectural, seems to me to be the soul, or at least the neuralgic part among all, of this new science, so vast that until today I hadn't even thought of giving it a name. We could call it, perhaps, **arithmetic geometry**, suggesting by this name the image of a "geometry" that we would develop "above the absolute base" Spec \mathbb{Z} , and which admits "specializations" both in the traditional "algebraic geometries" of the various characteristics, and in "transcendental" geometric notions (above the basic bodies \mathbb{R} , \mathbb{C} or $\mathbb{Q}_l \dots$), via the notions of analytic or rigid-analytic "varieties" (or better, **multiplicities**), and their variants.

I see yet another "new science" that I had glimpsed as early as the 1960s, originating in my reflections on homological algebra begun in 1955. It's a vast synthesis of ideas coming from homological algebra (as it developed in contact with the needs of geometry

algebra, or better said, "arithmetic geometry"), homotopic algebra, the topos version of "general topology", and finally the theory (in limbo since the sixties) of (non-strict) ∞ -categories, or, as I prefer to say now, ∞ -fields. I had expected, as something going that this synthesis was going to be taken in hand by some of my cohomology students, in the same way that I would-

p. 638 mencer par Verdier \square dont la fameuse thèse¹⁸⁶ (*) était censé justement aller dans ce sens. It seemed to me that the

The development of a satisfactory common language, with all the desired generality and flexibility, was to be a matter of a few years' work, surely exciting, by a small nucleus of motivated researchers. After a few very fragmentary beginnings in this direction by some of my cohomology students, my departure in 1970 signaled an immediate abandonment of this work program, among many others close to my heart. That's why I came back to some of my ideas, in a 1975 correspondence with Larry Breen, in the hope of reviving a vision of things that I felt were "in the way", and that "everyone" took care to carefully circumvent, whenever confronted with them. In my letters to Larry Breen (reproduced in chap. I of "A la Poursuite des Champs"), I proposed to call by the name **topological algebra** this science still in gestation, which for a decade or two I alone had been glimpsing¹⁸⁷ (**). Finally, in February 1973, with "A la Poursuite des Champs" (The Pursuit of Fields), I set to work, wearily and despairingly, to see someone other than myself tackle a task that had been burning to be undertaken for twenty years.

Clearly, there's no common ground between the "arithmetic geometry" mentioned earlier, and topological algebra, one of whose main roles, in my view, is that of "logistical support" in the development of this new geometry. For this new geometry to reach the stage of full maturity attested (let's say) by a mastery of the notion of pattern, comparable to the mastery we have of stale cohomology, we must no doubt expect several generations of geometers to have tackled it, more

dynamic and bolder than those I've seen at work; not to mention a comparable mastery of **Anabelian \square algebraic geometry**, which appears to me (along with the motifs) as one of the two neuralgic" parts of arithmetic geometry, now discernible¹⁸⁸ (*).

p. 639 ¹⁸⁶(*) On this subject, see the note "Credit thesis and comprehensive insurance", n° 81.

¹⁸⁷(**) With the exception, at most, of Deligne, to whom I had thought I had communicated a vision, which he hastened to bury with the rest in the wake of my departure. I allude several times in Récoltes et Semailles to this part, the earliest of all, of my overall program to lay the foundations of a kind of "all-round geometry" - notably in "Le Rêveur" (section n° 6) and in the notes "Mes orphelins", "L'instinct et la mode - ou la loi du plus fort", "Le compère" (n° s 46, 48, 63").

¹⁸⁸(*) (For some key ideas in Anabelian algebraic geometry, see Esquisse d'un Programme, par. 2 and 3).

By "neuralgic", I mean here a part of this "arithmetic" geometry that brings it intuitions, conductive threads and problems that are entirely new in relation to the "acquis" of the sixties (this "acquis" essentially consisting of a framework and a language, and a homological and homotopic formalism common to the three disciplines encompassed by the "arithmetic" geometry).

Finally, there's a fourth direction of thought, pursued in my past as a mathematician, moving in the direction of a "top-to-bottom" renewal of an existing discipline. This is the "moderate topology" approach to topology, on which I expand somewhat in the "Outline of a Program" (par. 5 and 6). Here, as so often since the distant years of high school, I seem to be alone in sensing the richness and urgency of the work to be done on the foundations, the need for which here seems more obvious than ever. I have the distinct feeling that the development of the moderate topology point of view, in the spirit evoked in *Esquisse d'un programme*, would represent for topology a renewal of scope comparable to that which the schema point of view has brought to algebraic geometry, and this, without requiring energy investments of comparable dimensions. What's more, I believe that such a moderate topology will eventually prove to be a valuable tool in the development of arithmetic geometry, in particular for formulating and proving "comparison theorems" between the "profinite" homotopic structure associated with a stratified scheme of finite type over the field of complexes (or more generally, to a stratified schematic manifold of finite type over this body), and the corresponding "discrete" homotopic structure, defined by transcendental means, and moduli of suitable hypotheses (equisingularity in particular). This question only makes sense in terms of a precise "unscrewing theory" for stratified structures, which in the context of "transcendental" topology seems to me to require the introduction of "moderate" context.

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□ To return to the person of my friend Pierre Deligne, he had ample opportunity, during the years 1965-p . 640 1970 of close mathematical contact with me, to become thoroughly familiar with this set of geometrical ideas and visions, which I have just reviewed in broad strokes. (With the exception of the ideas of moderate topology, which began to germinate and intrigue me only from the early '70s onwards, as I recall). His role vis-à-vis this vast program was twofold, and in two opposite directions. On the one hand On the other hand, drawing on the ready-made tool of *l-adic* cohomology, and on the ideas (which had remained hidden) of pattern theory, he made remarkable contributions to the development of the arithmetic geometry program. The most important of these are undoubtedly the start of a theory of mixed Hodge coefficients, and above all his work on Weil conjectures and their *l-adic* generalization. On the other hand, apart from the **tools** and ideas that he directly needed for his work (and whose origin he systematically endeavored to make people forget), he did his utmost to thwart the natural development of everything else: this is the "chainsaw effect", of which I had ample occasion to speak in the course of my reflection on Burial, including (allusively) in the preceding note (n° 136). This chainsaw effect has been partially blurred by partial exhumations (in 1981 and 1982), "like stunted shoots that have sprouted... . "under the sudden pressure of immediate needs. (These occasional exhumations have just been mentioned again at the end of the previous note). He also did his utmost to constantly give the impression (without ever making it clear...) that the paternity of the ideas, notions, techniques and results he used, and whose origin he was careful to conceal, was his own, when he wasn't generously attributing it to some other of my former students or collaborators.

All in all, after this quick retrospective of what has been so tenaciously truncated and buried by

arithmetic geometry). Perhaps a third such "neuralgic part", intimately linked to the motives, should be added to the previous two, namely the Langlands-style theory of **automorphic forms**. If I have refrained from mentioning it, it is because of my regrettable ignorance of the theory of automorphic functions. (I don't know whether the opportunity will present itself to remedy this ignorance... .)

my friend, I return to the impression that prevailed in the previous note, where I suggested that the interference of the "boss", of egotistical greed in his work, was essentially limited to the choice of work **themes**. After all, the gravedigger's gravedigger's gravedigger's gravedigger's gravedigger's gravedigger's gravedigger's gravedigger is apparent in his work, with very few exceptions

p. 641

And I realize that these "opportunities" are countless! **This gravedigger syndrome** (intimately linked, I'm sure, to the emphasis on superyang values) seems to me ☐avoir

had a truly "invasive" effect on his work and his oeuvre, in no way comparable to that of his pro-yang options; and this effect is by no means limited to the mere choice of themes, which the "boss" would make available to the "worker-child", only to withdraw on tiptoe. On the contrary, it seems to me that the "boss" hardly detaches himself from the "worker" at all during the work, so worried is he that the latter might forget the imperative instructions; in other words, that the work itself is often invaded by **inner dispositions** entirely foreign to the nature of the work of discovery, which is thrust into the unknown. This is something that was strongly felt many times during the reflection on Burial, and which I tended to lose sight of during my long reflection on yin and yang.

18.2.9. The claw in the velvet

18.2.9.1. (a) Velvet paw - or smiles

Note 137 (December 7) It's been over a week since I've continued with the notes, apart from some housekeeping work (including sub-notes to two of the previous notes). I had to have three teeth pulled (that's what it's like to be approaching sixty. . .), a necessary but brutal intrusion, which has meant that I've been operating at a slightly reduced speed lately. I took advantage of the situation to fall back on some overdue correspondence. Now everything seems to be back to normal...

In the four preceding notes (from November 24 to 28), I tried above all to identify more closely the relationships of affinity or complementarity between temperament and mathematical approach in Deligne and myself, in order to situate this "reversal" of yin and yang roles, which I thought I had perceived in my friend's presentation of himself and me, at least at the level of their "mathematical" personalities. Along the way, other aspects of reality came to light, concerning my friend or myself, and beyond our personalities, aspects of the world of mathematicians or, quite simply, of the world of men. In the end, it seemed to me that it was the attitude of service, and the signs of the disappearance of such an attitude in the scientific world, that was the most striking new thing to come out of this stage of reflection, as I'm trying to suggest by the name "Maîtres et Serviteur" (Masters and Servants) that I've given it.

p. 642

☐To get back to the original point of "situating" a certain reversal, I now feel as if I've closely enough the real situation concerning my friend and me, to follow it up. The first thing to note is that this initial intuition of a reversal of yin and yang roles, which came to me the day after the May 12 reflection "L'Eloge Funèbre (1) - ou les compliments", was indeed correct. It had already become clear, as early as the November 10th reflection in the note "Les obsèques du yin

(yang buries yin (4))" (n° 124), that my friend endeavors to give a supervirile image of himself, and superfeminine me. The question raised in the November 24 note "Le renversement (3) - ou yin enterre yang" (n° 133), was whether this presentation actually constitutes a "reversal" of reality. The "new fact" in the note "The rising sea... ." (n° 122) was that, just as in my friend's work, the tonality my basic approach to mathematics was yin, "feminine", could at times make me doubt it.

The reflection of the last three notes, however, dispelled this doubt. It was already clear from the outset that I had always been perceived by Deligne (as by my other students and ex-students), on a conscious level at least, as very strongly (too strongly perhaps. . .) virile¹⁸⁹ (*). But it also became clear that, in the mathematical relationship between Deligne and myself, and against the background of a strong yin-yin affinity, there was also a yin-yang **complementarity** at play (which could be called "secondary", as opposed to this affinity playing the "primary" role), in which it's really me who plays the "yang", virile role, through a "yang in the yin" component that's much more pronounced in me than it is in him.

The deliberate intention I have observed in Deligne, and which seems to me to be eagerly echoed from many quarters¹⁹⁰ (**), seems to me to be ☐ a **deliberate intention to reverse roles**, and more specifically, **yin-yang roles**¹⁹¹ (*). It seems to me that this is another important aspect of Burial, adding to the four already reviewed earlier (in the notes of November 13 and 17 "Rétrospective (1), (2)", n° s 127, 127'). It is these five aspects, all of which are undoubtedly intimately linked, that we now need to assemble into a coherent overall picture of l'Enterrement.

To be convincing, such a painting would also need to bring together, in a common perspective, **three successive "planes"**. In the foreground, there is the lone Deligne, Grand Officier à mes Obsèques, non-pupil and non-heir of the master, declared deceased and having no place to be or to have been. . . Apart from the deceased himself (who is, however, only a deceased, a tacit extra), this is clearly **the** central figure in the funeral ceremony. He is closely followed, in the background, by "the bustling group of my ex-students, carrying shovels and ropes" (to quote from memory the enumeration of the Cortèges, in "L'Ordonnement des Obsèques"). Finally, in the third shot, there's the (almost) entire congregation, who have come to celebrate my funeral (and those of the four co-deceased, standing tall in their "solidly screwed oak coffins"), and to lend a hand at the burial.

☐ Between these three planes seems to reign a perfect harmony, a "**Unanimous Accord**," like those we see. The same atmosphere reigns at any other funeral celebrated in the proper manner, between the priest filled with pious compunction, the family of the deceased displaying the tunes of the occasion, and the bulk of the audience, intoning where it should be intoned, and remaining silent where it should be silent, without ever, ever making a mistake.

p. 644

To continue with this last image, I now see myself placed in the situation (less comfortable than that of the dear departed, decidedly out of the loop. . .) of one who, faced with such a touching ensemble, would impertinently propose to try to guess the true thoughts and motivations that animate and agitate the one and the other, priest, family and common people of the faithful, behind the airs of solemnity or contrition sedants

¹⁸⁹(*) Besides, current values being what they are, I doubt that any scientific prestige can be carried by an image (generally accepted and received) that is not necessarily a "yang" or even superyang image. It's only at an unconscious level, it seems to me, that the "feminine" nature of my approach to mathematics has been perceived both by my friend and ex-student, and by the mathematical public in general (those, at least, who have had any contact with the kind of thing I've been working on).

¹⁹⁰(**) I'm thinking here of the "puffs of insidious disdain and discreet derision" mentioned in the Introduction (see Intr. 10, "An act of respect"). I shouldn't be surprised, when I see some of the most prestigious of my students setting the tone themselves. The thing that seems common to me in the many "puffs" that have reached me over the years is precisely an affection for condescension towards the strongly "yin" traits in my approach to mathematics and in my work. On this subject, see also the comments in the footnote of June 23, in note no. ° 96 "Cercueil 4 - ou les topos sans fleurs ni couronnes".

¹⁹¹(*) The first time this deliberate reversal of roles appears in my thinking, it's the reversal of roles in the master-student relationship, as I'm presented as my student's "collaborator", taking on the role of the **true** founder and master of stale and *l-adic* cohomology. (See the two notes on this subject, "Le renversement" and "L'Eloge Funèbre (1) - ou les compliments", n° s 68', 104.) It's interesting to note that in the "master-student" "couple", it's indeed the master who plays the yang role (as the giver, or speaker), "active", and the student the yin role (as the receiver, or listener), "passive". Here again, the brilliant reversal effected by my ex-student can be seen as a yin-yang role reversal, in the same direction (yin-yang becoming yang-yin) as that which constitutes the main message of my Funeral Eulogy, a message that appeared in the note "The funeral of yin (yang buries yin (4))".

for the occasion.

The reflection has been going on for some time now, with the main unspoken thread being to prepare what is necessary to apprehend the closest of these three "planes" of the painting - that of the priest in chasuble, sorry, of my friend Pierre Deligne I mean. It is on this plane that I would now like to turn my attention.

Let me say at the outset that one of the aspects (or "strands") of the picture that featured prominently in the note "Le Fos- soyeur - ou la Congrégation toute entière" (n° 97), namely the "reprisals for dissent" strand, seems to me to play only the most effete of roles with my friend, if it even comes into play at all. I've never had

p. 645 At the time, I had the impression that my friend Pierre felt in the least "implicated" by my "dissidence". On the contrary, it was a great opportunity - one he would probably never have dared to dream of - to elegantly rid himself of the presence of a master who was a little too present, in this institution where, at the age of twenty-five, he had just achieved one of the most envied (or at least, the most enviable) positions in the mathematical world. The fact that this dissidence became more pronounced in the months and years that followed, was experienced, it seems to me (perhaps not on a conscious level, but it doesn't really matter), as an even greater godsend, which gave him free rein, without any hint of resistance coming from anyone (as in he gradually came to realize over the years), an impressive "legacy"¹⁹² (*). He wouldn't have pretended to complain, even inwardly or unknowingly, about this inescapable boon.

pereated! And it seems to me that the same observation must be valid, all things considered, for most of my students "before" (my departure), and in any case, each of my five cohomologist students. If any of them, whether inwardly or more or less clearly expressed¹⁹³ (*), have hinted at a feeling of dissatisfaction, of frustration with my dissidence, I tend to believe that this is in the nature of a **rationalization** of a grave-digging attitude towards his providentially departed master, rather than a **cause** (albeit one of many) of it. What strengthens me in this conviction, as much for my cohomology students "in general", as for their undisputed leader Deligne, is that the forerunner signs of the Burial that was about to occur (if the right opportunity appeared - and, oh unexpected miracle, it did!), are that these signs appeared in the first place. - these signs were already apparent before I left in 1970, and in any case after the famous SGA 5 seminar of 1965/66, destined for the massacre I know. It's no coincidence, surely, that with such a perfect set-up, all five¹⁹⁴ (**) lost interest in the fate of this seminar where they learned their trade, and at the same time, some beautiful mathematics that they were almost the only ones, for twelve years, to have the privilege of knowing and using. I've gone into enough detail on this subject in the course of discussing the fate of SGA 5, to make it worthwhile to say more here. I will only point out, as far as Deligne is concerned, that in three of the four articles he wrote before I left in 1970, the intention to hide, or at least to conceal and minimize as far as possible the influence of my ideas, is clearly apparent, without having waited

¹⁹²(*) See, on the subject of this "inheritance", the note "The heir" (n° 90) and the sub-note (n° 136.)) of the note "Yin the Servant (2) - or generosity" (n° 136).

¹⁹³(*) The only one of my ex-students to have expressed a sentiment in these tones (with a certain reproving nuance to boot) was Verdier, about a year ago. Back in the days of *Survivre et Vivre*, however, he seemed to sympathize with my dissent. There was even an episode of cordial collaboration with his wife Yvonne, on the occasion (if I remember correctly) of the organization of a traveling exhibition on the initiative of Robert Jaulin (of whom Yvonne had been a student), which I joined as a survivor...

¹⁹⁴(**) (December 12) I should, however, single out J.P. Jouanolou, who ended up writing three consecutive seminar papers, developing notions and techniques that he would need directly and immediately for his own thesis work.

my "dissent".

* *

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□ What, then, is the root and particular nature of this attitude of antagonism, of avid competitorp to supplant, to erase, in my friend towards me - an attitude that coexisted with an affectionate and trusting sympathy, and a communion at the mathematical level, from the very first years of our meeting? I'm even convinced that it must have been present in the background from the moment we met, and probably even before; and also, that it arose much more from the role I was to play for him, than from any particularity in me - if not all the "particularities" that made it possible for me to play this role for him. It's also the role he's been trying to erase for the last twenty years, surely it implied, without any attempt on either side, and by force of circumstance, a "parernal" aspect. And there's no doubt in my mind that it was around this aspect that the conflict arose - a conflict that already existed in him, long before he ever heard my name or even (doubtless) the name of our common teacher, mathematics.

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This conviction, to tell the truth, is not the fruit of reflection, and even less would I pretend to "demonstrate" it. Rather, it came to me over the years, after I'd left - I can't really say when or how myself; little by little, I think, by dint of signs large and small, none of which I dwelt on, even for a moment, but all of which, together, ended up leaving the trace of a knowledge, diffuse and imperfect to be sure, but a knowledge nonetheless, that was there one day... . I could undoubtedly, through painstaking work uncovering half-buried memories and probing them one by one, deepen and materialize this knowledge that remains somewhat imponderable; and it is quite possible (and even probable) that such work would hold many surprises in store for me. Yet I don't feel motivated to do it. This is probably because (rightly or wrongly) it seems to me that this is not really my job, but my friend's - that what I'm probing here concerns him much more than it concerns me. As far as I'm concerned, this intuition or "knowledge" or "conviction" that I've just formulated is enough for my present desire to understand, and I rely on it without reservation.

As so often in my life, I am confronted here with a relationship□ of antagonism to the father, where I figure surrogate father, "adopted" father (much more so, it seems to me, than "adoptive" father¹⁹⁵ (*)). This, plus my friend's deliberate reversal of yin-yang roles, is immediately associated in my mind with the situation evoked in the note "Le renversement (2) - ou la révolte ambiguë" (n° 132) - a situation of which my mother's relationship with her father is for me the most extreme prototype. Yet the differences between the situation in question, and that of my friend Pierre's relationship with me, are immediately obvious. In his relationship with me, I never perceived the slightest hint of "revolt", or even antagonism in the form of virulence, aggression, showing claws or teeth, even in a smile. Of course, there was no lack of smiles on either side, but on his part, they were either smiles of

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¹⁹⁵(*) (December 12) As I write these lines, I'm aware of the need for caution when asserting the "non-symmetry" of roles, especially as these are played out on an unconscious level. I presume that at this level, and apart from the mathematical communication itself, I must at some point have entered into the "paternal" role, all prepared by the context. But this role was clearly not of comparable weight, in my life and in my relationship with my friend, to that of my mathematical passion; it remained episodic, and there should be no trace of it after my "departure" from the mathematical scene in 1970. On the other hand, my ex-student's attachment to me, for better and (above all) for laughs, continued to manifest itself over the next fifteen years, both in his work and in the way he maintained, against all odds, an ongoing personal relationship with me.

sympathy (as I felt them), or sometimes innocent surprise, and sometimes almost pain, when he could see (and I ended up feeling the nuance of intimate satisfaction) that certain blows, delivered with a velvet paw, had hit the mark where it was intended.

To put it another way, this antagonism, whether expressed towards myself or towards third parties (when it was a question of reaching out through them to the deceased master, yet still very much present in him. . .), has always, and without a single exception, taken the extreme-yin form: that which delights (and excels) in reaching out and wounding, even eliminating or crushing, with all the appearances of the most exquisite delicacy. While his deliberate choices for his brand image as a mathematician are superyang (as mine undoubtedly have been, albeit without any more success than his), it seems to me that on the relational level, the basic tone (towards me at least, and those he considers to be related to me) is decidedly and across the board superyin. (I would make one reservation on this subject, however, an important one, on which he I'll have to come back).

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□ Another "eye-popping" difference between Pierre's relationship to me, and that of the "ambiguous revolt": From what little I know of his family, I understand that Pierre's father is a mild-mannered, modest man, hardly the "profile" that would provoke a reaction of revolt, later transferred to a surrogate father.

18.2.9.2. (b) The reversal (4) - or the conjugal circus

Note 138 (December 8) As I finished the reflection last night, I had the somewhat painful impression of one who understands less and less. Before going to bed, I stayed for a while following the associations generated by last night's reflection. I thought I saw a few points of light appear, which I think will serve as luminaries in today's reflection.

Perhaps the most important of these associations relates to the "velvet paw" aspect of my friend, who likes to scratch (and sometimes deeply and mercilessly) with the most innocent airs in the world, and "with all the appearance of the most exquisite delicacy". This image, which came up in the course of a comparison (with a situation of "revolt" mentioned earlier) that had been shipwrecked, immediately struck me as rich in meaning, as an essential aspect of the "antagonism" I had set out to explore. And in retrospect, the image of "innocent smile and velvet paw" - the quintessence of an experience of almost twenty years - seems to me **the** "sensitive point" in yesterday's reflection, **the** unexpected "point of light" as I groped in the dark. If this impression of groping and darkness prevailed beyond that, it's because, too caught up in the ideas I'd had in my head the moment before and which I had to pursue or place, I hadn't been able to pay attention to the delicate "tilt" that had taken place in me, as soon as the image appeared. And in the half-hour that followed, as I pursued a few associations related to this image and one or two other moments of the past reflection, my attention became scattered once again. It's only now, with a day's hindsight, that I can see the thread of my interrupted reflection coming into focus, a perspective that had escaped me only a short while ago, as I reread yesterday's notes.

If I take care to follow the strongest association of all and the one most intimately linked to my lived experience, discarding for the moment others more □ "structured", more "intellectual", it comes this. I see myself back

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suddenly, as if in a single impression that would sum them all up, to this multitude of particular cases (experienced either as a co-actor, or as a close witness) of the **conjugal circus** - the circus of the woman-man couple. The circus of the couple, married or not, with or without children, young or old or young-old or the opposite, in the doldrums pulling the devil by the tail or in ease driving a carriage, it's all the same the circus of the couple doesn't change for all that. Suddenly, I'm back at it again, with one aspect of this circus that struck me

of all things (it took me a long time, it has to be said, before I saw anything but fire in it). . .): it's the very particular, very "innocent mine", "I said nothing and did nothing", "velvet paw" tactic played by the woman, in a certain game where it's always she who leads with perfect dexterity, and where it's always he who follows (and often, cashes in) without realizing anything. I've seen very few couples that didn't work to this tune, with infinite variations it's understood, left to the improvisation skills of each of them, not to mention their particular temperaments and other circumstances. I had the opportunity just today to see a particularly dazzling demonstration of this, which I won't go into here.

It's a somewhat colorful and nuanced description of these circus games, at least in the broad outlines, or even just the evocation of the tones (velvet paw, precisely, on the "her" side) in which which was largely absent from the November 12 reflection I've just reviewed, in the note "Le renversement (1) - ou l'épouse veéhémente" (n° 126). Clearly, I was pursuing this reflection against the grain of a reluctance, so much so that it ended up taking on the appearance of an austere "forces and motivations" - I was definitely not in good form that day! It was also the first time, in "The key to yin and yang", that the "reversal of yin and yang" was mentioned. The extreme case that had obsessed me My mother's was then, and still is as recently as yesterday (see note of November 22, "Le renversement (2) - ou la révolte ambiguë", n° 132). However, in my "four-point analysis essay", I took care to identify the first of these three "points" in such a way as to apply to all of them.

to the vast majority (if not all) of couples I've come to know even remotely closely, without the necessary predominance (albeit in occluded form) of the vehement tone of (ambiguous) "revolt". This p. 650

However, there's another thing in common that I missed that day. It only began to dawn on me last night, during that well-spent half-hour when I let my thoughts wander in the wake of the "in shape" reflection. This important common thing, which I had previously only perceived in the extreme case of "vehement wife", is the subtle play of **yin-yang role reversal**.

I'm not sure whether I should write that this game is the "spring" of the power game I alluded to earlier, or that it's **identical** to the latter. Surely, what for her (and often for him too) constitutes the quintessence of the masculine role, of the role devolved to the man, is the **possession of power** - a possession often fictitious, admittedly, but which in any case draws an element of reality from the social consensus. Perhaps I've tended to underestimate the strength of this element of reality, the strength of the **symbol of** the man as representing **authority** in relation to the woman - and in particular, its strength as a driving force in the woman's motivations. I suspect that for her, "being a man", or "being the man", means above all else, **exercising power**. The "reversal of roles", at the level of egotistical motivations¹⁹⁶ (*), is probably no more, no less, than **the exercise of power by the woman over the man**.

Given the existing consensus, this exercise of women's power can scarcely take place in any other way than covertly.

It does not consist in ordering, nor in ☐faire pretending to decide (with the expectation that the decision will be followed), p. 651

but to **keep things running** - and, above all, to keep things moving, without ever seeming to do so. That's the famous marital merry-go-round, spinning and spinning! Tactics to keep it moving,

¹⁹⁶(*) The reversal of yin-yang roles in the erotic drive and in the game of love has been discussed elsewhere (see note on "Acceptance (the awakening of yin (2))"). The erotic impulse is by its very nature foreign to the games of the ego, and in particular to the games of power, even though the ego is eager to make it an instrument to serve its own ends, and skilful at doing so (within certain narrow limits at least, and by distorting and mutilating the original impulse). If there is a relationship between the two types of yin-yang "reversal", i.e. between, on the one hand, the free play of the two impulses yin and yang in the lover **and** in the lover, and on the other, the obsessive play of an incessant and insidious demonstration of power by one of the spouses over the other, it seems to me that this relationship can hardly be other than this: that each of the two types, at every moment, excludes the other.

passed on wordlessly from mother to daughter, from woman or girl to girl, from generation to generation, is the **"velvet paw" tactic** mentioned yesterday at the bend in the road. If you pay close attention, you'll recognize it in an infinite variety of guises, from the extreme-yang case of the vehement wife, embodied for me by my mother, to the extreme-yin case of the dolent (even overwhelmed) wife, which I saw embodied by another close relative.

It seems to me that there are very few women who don't practice this age-old tactic, and master it thoroughly¹⁹⁷ (*). It's a daily practice, especially in the conjugal circus, but not limited to it. It seems to me that it's rarely practised between women (perhaps simply because it's harder to "get" a woman than a man). On the other hand, for some women, this tactic becomes second nature, in their relationship with **all** men, or at least those who are perceived by them as having a markedly virile character.

If I'm talking about "tactics" here, it's only an accessory aspect, the "tactical" aspect, of a more important reality: that of an inveterate inner attitude, towards "men" in general, or at least towards those, father, lover or husband in particular, who in her life play a privileged role as a **man**, invested (by social consensus, or by her own choice) with **authority**. This attitude is by no means always in the nature of a thirst for domination (as in the case of the "vehement wife") - at the very least, it's an attitude that's in the nature of a thirst for domination (as in the case of the "vehement wife").

p. 652 At least not in the sense in which the word "domination" is usually understood. It's more a case of a craving, which sometimes becomes all-consuming, **to constantly exert an** action \square sur l'autre, to "keep it moving" (implied: in

movement around her own person...). To achieve this, all means are often good. One of these means of exerting action, and thus power, is to **hurt**, and sometimes to hurt as deeply as possible, to knock out outright, and at the limit, to destroy, physically or psychically, if only the occasion is propitious; and this, always, without seeming to touch, with "all the appearances of the most exquisite delicacy". On more than one occasion, I myself have been "sent packing"! Often too, caught off-guard as a co-actor or witness, I've had my breath taken away by the apparent gratuitousness of the act that wounds or destroys, with an innocent smile or an absent air, but always looking as if nothing has happened, seizing with an infallible instinct the moment and the place to touch the other where he or she can be most deeply affected - whether this "other" is the father or the lover, the husband or the child, or a mere acquaintance or even a stranger (provided only that the opportunity is there to strike and to reach...). . .).

18.2.9.3. (c) Ingenious violence - or passation

Note 139 (December 9) This is the extreme, yet by no means rare, case of **violence for violence's sake**, of **gratuitousness** in violence and malice. This kind of violence, whether it strikes a stranger or the person closest to us and supposedly loved, is not characteristic of either men or women; it is neither "yin" nor "yang". But the disconcerting and insidious **form** in which I encounter it here, under the mask of an air of distracted absence or even ingenuous gentleness - this form, which has come to be quite familiar to me, seems to me to be peculiar above all to women. This is no doubt linked to the "patriarchal" social consensus, which invests men with authority and power over women¹⁹⁸ (*). This form is

¹⁹⁷(*) It's also true that there are very few men who don't "walk the walk" when this tactic is applied to them. For most of my life, I've walked without a hitch. That only really began to change with the appearance of meditation in my life, at the age of forty-eight (it's never too late to do the right thing). Even today, I sometimes get caught up in it (not often, admittedly, and never for very long...).

¹⁹⁸(*) This consensus, moreover, and the authority of the man in his relationship to the woman, have been greatly eroded over the last few generations, and more and more so these days. I'd be the last to complain! It doesn't seem, however, that this superficial change in laws and mores has changed much in the deeper workings and "style" of relations between the sexes, and in particular in the visceral and carefully concealed antagonism between women and men. This is undoubtedly due to

its own means of satisfying a will to power which, in order to be forced (by the force of things) to follow paths other than those open to man, is no less imperious, no less devouring within her - quite the contrary! It would seem that not being able to unfold in the light of day, being condemned in advance to an occult existence, only serves to exacerbate and further proliferate this craving within her, to the point, in many cases, of truly "devouring" her life and that of her loved ones.

Fortunately, this craving does not always reach the level of gratuitous, all-out violence, and the registers in which it is deployed are not all in tones of violence. While tones of discreet derision are more often than not the rule, giving vent to a veiled antagonism or secret enmity, simply mischievous tones of indulgent affection, a little mischievous on the edges, are not excluded. And while it's true that the tried-and-tested tactic of the "velvet paw" is a woman's privilege and weapon of choice, this privilege is by no means exclusive. Many times I've

could, and very closely, see this weapon wielded by men¹⁹⁹ (*), with equally perfect mastery²⁰⁰ (**). Remarkably, in all these cases, the man who had appropriated this woman's

weapon was

someone who tended to repress certain virile sides of his being, and (by the same token, no doubt) to mold himself according to the **maternal model**.

This same tactic is frequently observed, and is virtually the rule, in the power games played by children, girls and boys alike, vis-à-vis their parents, or other adults in their stead. This immediately gives rise to an association with the situation of writers or journalists in countries (past or present) where direct or indirect censorship is rife, making direct, unvarnished public expression of one's true ideas and feelings impossible or risky. The main difference between this last case and the previous ones is that, in this case, recourse to indirect, veiled and sometimes symbolic expression of one's true feelings is no longer the work of the unconscious, but of conscious thought. The reason for this, surely, is that there is then a sufficiently widespread consensus in favour of unorthodox ideas and feelings (which need to be "passed on" without appearing to be so), so that the person concerned no longer feels obliged to hide them from himself, for fear of appearing as a hideous misrepresentation in his own eyes. Only in extreme cases of ferocious political or religious terror (such as existed in the Middle Ages, or in the Soviet Union and its satellite countries in Stalin's time) are unorthodox desires forced (by some, at least) to plunge an even deeper notch, evading the gaze of the Internal Censor, as well as that of the censorship instituted in mores and police apparatus.

All these examples seem to suggest that the "velvet paw" style (or "I said nothing, thought nothing, wanted nothing") appears, more or less automatically, in any situation that is even remotely sustainable, where

The fact that this attitude of antagonism, and its means of expression through a certain power play (or reversal of power), is much more the result of the **transmission of an "inheritance"** from generation to generation, than of "objective" conditions within the family.

¹⁹⁹(*) I note, however, that in the cases known to me, when there is apparently "gratuitous" violence (by which I mean unprovoked) towards a close person or friend, it is always a person towards whom the person concerned harbors (albeit unwittingly) a long-standing grudge or animosity, materializing in concrete grievances (even if these remain informal more often than not). The only exception to this is my friend Pierre Deligne, in his relationship with me and those he assimilates to my person, as belonging to my "sphere of influence". This is an attitude of antagonism and violence (muffled, admittedly!) with no "personal" cause, by which I mean no cause in grievances (real or imaginary) that he harbors against those he's trying to reach. On the other hand, this is a behaviour that many women display, and not only (as in this case) towards close friends, acquaintances or even strangers, but also towards those closest to them, such as their lover or husband (of course, and as a matter of priority), or their brother or even their own child.

²⁰⁰(**) It would seem, moreover, that this tactic, implemented by the unconscious, always inherits from it that "tact" and almost infallible sureness, so rarely present in fully conscious action. I don't think I've ever seen this tactic used without mastery.

a balance of power to our disadvantage makes it impossible, or at least dangerous, for us to express candidly, directly, our feelings, desires, ideas, intentions - and, more particularly, feelings of animosity or enmity towards those who are perceived as exerting a constraint on us (and no-tamment, la contrainte justement qui prétendait empêcher nous d'exprimer nos sentiments véritables)²⁰¹ (*).

p. 655 This is not the only [□]case in which the style in question appears, and the inner dispositions that it recover. Very often, this "balance of power" is more or less fictitious, corresponding much less to an "objective" reality, taking into account the real dispositions (or means of power) of those perceived as "oppressors", than to the **idea** (conscious or unconscious) that we have of them. This idea is rarely the fruit of a careful and intelligent examination of a given reality, but is almost always part of the "package" of conditioning of all kinds that we receive at a young age, taking into account certain fundamental choices that have been made in us since that early period. Thus, whether in a girl or a boy, the choice (unconscious, of course) to identify with **the mother** implies the adoption of a whole set of attitudes and behaviours (such as those expressed by the "velvet paw" style), and at the same time the ideas (unconscious most of the time, but it doesn't matter) that underlie them (such as ideas about a certain balance of power, and the antagonistic reflexes that accompany these ideas). In the opposite case of identification **with the father**, but when the father himself has integrated into his person certain typically "feminine" traits (or which are such in our society, at least), it's conceivable that the effect could be quite analogous to that in the first case.

The point I'm getting at here is that in our society today, and in the circles I've been part of at least, it seems to me that this style ("velvet paw"), and this "feminine" inner attitude I'm examining here, are only to a very limited extent the spontaneous individual reaction to relationships of that it's an objective force, instituted by society or by the particular circumstances surrounding our childhood (or even, our ^{age□adult} at a given moment); that it's rather an "**inheritance**" taken from one or other of our parents
p. 656 (if not both at once?), who himself had taken it over from one of his own parents. Clearly, this type of inheritance tends to follow the **maternal** line, being transmitted primarily from mother to daughter. But on more than one occasion, I've seen mother-to-boy transmission up close. There's nothing to suggest that it can't also be transmitted, exceptionally, from father to son, or even from father to daughter.

18.2.9.4. (d) The slave and the puppet - or the valves

Note 140 (December 10) I'd like to return to some associations around the theme of gratuitous **violence**. This was the theme with which yesterday's reflection began, and from which I drew back, in order to return to an examination of the "feminine" (or "velvet paw") style in power games, and as a means of expressing a disposition of antagonism towards others (and above all, towards men perceived as strongly virile or as being, in any capacity whatsoever, in a position of authority, prestige or power). As I reminded you yesterday, (seemingly) gratuitous violence, violence "for its own sake", is no more than a form of violence.

²⁰¹(*) As I was writing these lines, the thought occurred to me that the situation I've just described is precisely the one we were confronted with in the early years of our childhood - all of us, without exception. A large part of our unconscious (the part we might call "the oubliettes", generally perceived at the unconscious level as a sort of "garbage pit"), is nothing other than the response of our child psyche to this pressure from the environment, which forces us (it's practically a question of survival) to bury away from our own eyes, as a sign of disavowal, everything in us that falls under social censorship. This censorship is soon internalized in an inner Censor, whose sullen presence guarantees the permanence of this premature burial. Yet, despite the Censor, unorthodox impulses, knowledge and feelings, duly buried, manage to express themselves, sometimes with exacerbated and fearsome efficacy, in indirect, often symbolic, yet perfectly concrete ways. The "velvet paw" section is a particularly "striking" - and often disconcerting - example... ..

for both men and women. Everyone has had the opportunity to be confronted by it suddenly, at the turn of the road, whether in the guise of the "most exquisite delicacy", or in the form of a boot or a burst of machine-gun fire in the belly. The latter style, the "yang" style, is certainly rarer these days, in so-called "peaceful" times, and in civilized countries like ours. For most of us, well-bred and more or less well-placed people in a country of affluence, this violence that-says-well-its-name is not part of everyday life, as is the case with the other, muffled violence with its ingenuous airs. And yet, all you have to do is peruse the "news" column of any major daily newspaper, or listen to the news at²⁰² (*), to realize that gratuitous violence "lasts", even here, still roams the streets. It doesn't always go so far as to slit the throat par-dessus le marché, the anonymous little old lady

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you've taken it upon yourself to break into. But when young people in search of adventure "borrow" a car left carelessly open in front of the house, it's rare that they don't leave it in a ditch ten or twenty kilometers away, having first carefully ransacked it. Even in the peaceful countryside where I have the good fortune to live without worrying too much about anything, the smallest farmhouse or cottage doesn't remain unoccupied for long, before it's already been looted from top to bottom (that's for utility) and, what's more, copiously vandalized (that's for pleasure). In all these cases, the gratuitousness of the violence is particularly striking, given that the person struck is a stranger, often someone we've never seen before and never will.

This is what we might call "**anonymous**" violence. Since time immemorial, no doubt, wars have been collective orgies of such violence - times when the opportunity to kill for free is king, and when the life of a vague individual is worth zero before the pleasure of pulling a trigger and testing one's power to make a nameless, bland figure slump before one... .

If there's one thing in the world, as far back as I can remember, that has left me bewildered and speechless every time, it's seeing myself confronted once again with violence beyond comprehension, violence that strikes and destroys for the sheer pleasure of striking and destroying. If there's one thing in the world that imbues us with this indelible sense of "evil", it's not death or the suffering the body can endure, but it's this thing. And when such violence (whether it's harsh or gentle, whether it seems "big" or "small") comes at you unexpectedly from one of your loved ones, it's bound to hit hard and deep, to bring out (or resurface. . .) a nameless anguish. The root of this anguish goes deep down, when it finds the soft, fresh soil of childhood, or even infancy, in which to take root. This anguish, "the best-kept secret in the world" in my life as a child and as an adult, appeared in me at the hands of my mother, in my sixth year.

It was at the age of 51, during the month of March 1980, that I uncovered the episode of the implantation of anguish in my life. Anxiety's hold over me had been defused beforehand, to a large extent in my life. sure at least' □ with the appearance of meditation in my life (in 1976), gradually taking a place in it growing. A third decisive turning point in my relationship with anguish came in July and August 1982, during a careful examination of the mechanism of anguish in my everyday life. The anguish-creating situations, from childhood to middle age, were those which, in unknown depths of my being, made me re-experience "that which is beyond comprehension". These were also the times, to be precise, when I saw myself confronted once again with the familiar signs of violence, seemingly inexplicable, elusive, irreducible... . The sudden eruption of this violence suddenly brings back a wave of distraught anguish, which is immediately controlled and repressed. This visceral reaction remained identical to itself.

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²⁰²(*) These are things, it's true, that I stopped doing a long time ago, contenting myself with occasional information through intermediaries.

²⁰³ (*). If anything has changed over the last few years, it's the emergence of a way of **thinking** in the wake of anguish, one that makes comprehensible, and often obvious, what had appeared under the threatening mask of "that which is beyond comprehension", of the delirious ; and above all, in the last two years, by the appearance of a **look at myself**, a look of interest and concern for this anguish itself, which a reflex movement of peremptory force would have me hide from myself. Or, to put it another way, my relationship with anguish has become, especially over the last two years, no longer one of visceral refusal, or of taming wild beasts or gravediggers, but rather and increasingly, one of attentive and affectionate **welcome to** the message it brings me about myself - about my present, my past and its action in my present. This, it seems to me, is the last step I've taken so far, towards an increasingly complete inner **autonomy in** relation to others, that is to say, above all else: in relation to my family and friends²⁰⁴ (**).

p. 659 □ It seems to me that it's the violence-that-doesn't-say-its-name, the "feminine"-style violence, that is most powerful source of anxiety, far more so than the more spectacular violence of a punch in the face. Those who play with muffled violence - and thereby also play with the secret valves that release nameless, faceless waves of anguish in others - hold in their hands a weapon more formidable than any authority or simple power of coercion. And to manipulate these floodgates of anguish at will and at whim, with an air of innocence, represents a **power that is** undoubtedly more incisive and more formidable - even if it remains hidden - than any de facto or de principle power instituted by social consensus. This is woman's "just revenge" on man, in a society where man claims (or has claimed) to dominate her; and this is also the price "he" pays for his illusory supremacy (present or past). If she is a **slave** (and in our country, she is less and less so), he is a **puppet** in her hands, or very nearly so (and he is as much a puppet today as he ever was).

For some years now, whenever I'm confronted with a situation of gratuitous violence (be it directed at myself or others, be it brutal or insidious), the association with **self-contempt** - or rather, I **see** this self-contempt - comes to me with unstoppable force.

even in one who affects, openly or inwardly, to despise others. I have no doubt that this is □ not a simple push-button mechanism in me, a "philosophical" or "psychological" dada that I

p. 660 I'd be quite happy to take the occasional step out, perhaps as a way of exorcising the anguish I was talking about with a convincing formula, by casually sticking a boilerplate label on a threatening stranger. It's simply a **knowledge of** an essential, profound and (once seen) obvious relationship.

²⁰³(*) (December 14) It would be more accurate to say that this reaction remained "more or less the same" **right up to the time of** my meditation in July and August 1982. While the "provocations" that caught me off guard have been numerous since then, the "visceral reaction" in question has only appeared once, a year ago. It was the occasion for a short meditation, lasting a few hours, which completely clarified the situation. As soon as a confused inner situation is confronted with simplicity and acceptance, the anguish that accompanies it and brings us the message of our confusion, disappears without a trace, except that of knowledge and renewed calm.

²⁰⁴(**) This "last step" has already been discussed at the end of "L'acception" (n° 110), in the somewhat different light of a "final step".

liberation from the need for **approval** or **confirmation**, which "is really the hook, discreet and ironclad, by which conflict can 'hang' in us, and by which we are. . . dependent on others. . . by which, in short, it "holds" us, and (in a minor way) manoeuvres us as it pleases... ". (This passage could well have been written on this very day - but I swear I didn't copy it!)

I can't say whether there are still other such "steps" ahead of me, which will give me the hindsight to see my current autonomy as still relative, and not complete (as I would tend, however, perhaps a little naively, to believe. . .).

The emergence and blossoming of a relaxed, attentive relationship with anxiety represents a **liberation** in our relationship with others. In fact (as the following paragraph states), it is the possibility for others to "turn the floodgates of anguish" in us as they please (by alternating between gratification and rejection, in a measured and deftly administered manner), that represents their principal means of power over us.

This knowledge doesn't "evacuate" anything, it simply allows me to **situate** an unknown. It is in no way a sentinel, placed there to block the path of anguish, or to expel it from the square. This is not the nature of knowledge, as I understand it. Knowledge is part of an inner **calm**, and helps to ground it. It is a restlessness within us, on the other hand, that constantly pushes us to want to block the way to "intruders", lest they upset a "calm" of composition. The calm I'm talking about doesn't fear intruders, it welcomes them. And the surface agitation created by the new encounter with anguish does not disturb this calm, but rather contributes to it.

18.2.10. Violence - or games and the sting

18.2.10.1. (a) The violence of just

Note 141 (December 13) With my "joke" in the previous note, about the "slave" and the "puppet", I'm sure I've found another way to displease everyone, and (if I'm read. . .) to be called every name in the book! Unless the hypothetical reader applauds contentedly, who knows, convinced that the image is well sent and applies to the whole world, except to himself (or herself); and except perhaps again, at most, to the sarcastic author. By this supposition, moreover, he would be giving my modest person a credit that in no way belongs to him. At the very most, I'd venture to admit that in the last few years (and especially since a certain meditation on anguish in July and August 1982), I've begun to get out of, or even be out of, the famous "circus" - the conjugal circus, of course, but also the others that resemble it.

like brothers. In the first part of *Récoltes et Semailles*, there's even a section in this vein, called "Fini le manège!" (No.° 41, last March). It wasn't about the conjugal circus, but about a certain mathematical circus, into which I had more than enough time to turn.

a good part of my life, like everyone else. But it's also true that a few weeks after this section □au nom prometteur, on April 29, appears a note "Un pied dans le manège (n° 72), whose name p . 661

would seem to herald a different tune! The difference with before, perhaps, is that if it happens to me again here and there to turn in some merry-go-round (and I hardly see any more than the mathematical merry-go-round which continues to attract me. . .), it's myself (or at least someone within me) and no one else who pulls the threads that keep me going round and round, and these have ceased to be invisible to me.

Having made these reservations, I can say that for most of my adult life (and more precisely, until I discovered meditation), I "walked" on the quarter-turn (like everyone else, again), both in the conjugal carousel (it spun merrily for no less than twenty years!), and in the others. I don't regret it, because the knowledge I have of carousels of all kinds I owe first and foremost to the ones I've been on myself. If I've been on them for so long, it's because the student was slow to learn - and also, surely, because in more ways than one I found bait. In the end, I suppose, they lost their strength and charm. ...

It seems to me that in all these carousels, I was always the one who "walked", and never the one who "made walk". Or to put it another way, I don't think I've ever had the slightest propensity for the famous "velvet paw" style - I've sometimes played hard with my claws, but never, I think, with claws drowned in velvety down. This is one trait, among many others, that attests to the fact that at the level of the structure of the ego, of the "boss", of that in me which is conditioned, the basic tone is strongly "masculine", without any ambiguity whatsoever. The yin, "feminine" tones, on the other hand, dominate at the level of the "child", the original in me, i.e. also in the drive for knowledge and in the creative faculties.

I'd like to say a few more words about the "gratuitous violence" in my life. In the previous

note (from three days ago), I evoke it in the light of the one who finds himself the target of this violence, or at least the one who is confronted with it in others (even as a mere witness), when I write :

"If there's one thing in the world, as far back as I can remember, that each time has left me bewildered and speechless, it has been to see myself confronted once again with that violence that passes understanding, the violence that strikes and destroys for the sheer pleasure of striking and destroying... . "

p. 662 □ These lines, and those that follow them, correspond well to reality, to the reality of my own experience in all I'm sure this is also the case for countless men and women who, like me, have been confronted with this kind of violence. They could give the impression that the person who wrote them is himself a complete stranger to such violence, that all his life he has been free of such delusions. But this is not the case. I recall four relationships in my life, three of which took place in my childhood or adolescence (between the ages of eight and sixteen), marked by an enmity based on no specific personal grievance, and expressed in the form of systematic and merciless mockery, or in roufflés and other brutalities. On the first occasion, the victim, a classmate (still in Germany), was the whipping boy of the whole class. The situation dragged on for years, I seem to remember. The next two cases took place during the war, when I stayed (just out of a French concentration camp) in a Secours Suisse children's home in Le Chambon sur Lignon, "la Guespy", between 1942 and 1944. This time, the "horrors" were one of my classmates (whose parents, like mine, had to be interned as German Jews), and one of our two supervisors, both of whom spoke German like me. They were both a bit of a pushover for a sometimes ruthless group of young boys and girls of which I was a member - but I think I gave them a harder time than anyone else in the whole gang. Living together under the same roof, and as refugees with a precarious status, under the constant threat of the Gestapo rounding up Jews, could have aroused in me feelings of solidarity and respect, but it didn't happen.

In all three cases, the person I took as a target of malice was of a gentle, rather shy, non-combative nature, which I then classified as "soft" or "cowardly", and which therefore formed part of the traits that were supposed to make him or her a less-than-stellar character. In an age devastated by the breath of violence and contempt for the individual, and myself filled with aversion to war or concentration camp violence, and everything that goes with them, I nevertheless felt entirely justified in the contempt and violence I inflicted on others, for the simple "reason" that I had taken pleasure in classifying them as "unsympathetic" (and other adjectives to match. . .), after which everything (or almost everything) became permissible, not to mention the fact that I had to be careful not to get too close to them. not to say, highly commendable. I used to pride myself on being "logical" and fair-minded,

p. 663 □ I didn't see then that my behavior, and its justification by an antipathy (which I wouldn't have I'd certainly thought to probe their true nature), were exactly the same as those of the good-natured German of the thirties vis-a-vis "dirty Jews" (things I'd seen up close in my childhood); and that it was these too that made possible the unprecedented outburst of violence that was then sweeping the world. Of course, I pretended (following in my parents' footsteps) to distance myself from this violence as if it were some strange aberration (sometimes even "beyond comprehension"). I was full of haughty condescension towards all those, soldiers or civilians, who in one way or another consented to be active or passive cogs in the heroic mass graves and accompanying abominations. And at the same time, at my modest level and within my own limited sphere of action, I was doing what everyone else was doing... ..

If I try to discern the cause of such a strange blindness in the service of a deliberate purpose of contempt and violence, it comes down to this. The violence I myself had had to endure during my childhood since the age of five, without ever having been designated as such to my attention as a child, had ended up in my mind's eye.

by creating a state of chronic tension, unconscious and carefully controlled by a strong will. This tension, or accumulation of aggression with no particular target, created the need for a release of aggression. This "need", however, was not bodily in nature - there was no shortage of opportunities to let off steam through appropriate bodily activity in any of these cases - but **psychic**. Surely there must have been some accumulated resentment, mostly unconscious of course, and not materialized in palpable grievances towards a particular person (one of my parents, let's say, or one of the people who took their place), on whom I could then have transferred feelings of resentment, and given them concrete, perhaps violent, expression. There must have been a "vacant" violence in me, a diffuse, wandering violence, looking for a target on which to vent. It often seems to be animals (insects, toads, dogs or cats, even oxen or horses. . .) that bear the brunt of such wandering violence, in search of a victim. This was not the case for me; I don't remember ever having martyred an animal, big or small, in my life. Apparently, I needed a scapegoat closer to home, a **person**! When you're looking for one, it's always easy to find one.

□ I have no doubt that what I have just written describes a certain aspect of reality. Yet I feel that this description still remains on the surface of things, only identifying a certain "mechanistic" aspect, without really going any further into the unconscious experience. For the moment, in place of this experience, there is a kind of great "blank", a void. This is not the time or place to go beyond that, to probe further into what this "white" covers, what dissolves in this "void". Is it this famous "self-contempt", which was so peremptorily asserted in the note three days ago, and which suddenly, now that it's **me**, seems to have vanished without a trace? Now or never, at last, would be the time to get to the bottom of it, to elucidate this tenacious and ambiguous "vagueness" that continues to mark my knowledge of myself, just as the "vagueness" that once surrounded the role and very existence of anguish in my life. It seemed to me that anguish was the "best-kept secret" of my entire life. Is there another, even better-kept secret, one that I've barely touched on here and there, on two or three occasions, since I've been meditating? I feel like I've got everything I need to get to the bottom of it - including this sudden surge of familiar interest, which tells me that the time is ripe to get started! However, I have a feeling that I'm not going to do so here, in this meditation that is in some way "public", or at least intended for publication. This one, among many others, will at least have had the virtue of unexpectedly bringing to maturity a question that has suddenly become very close, recognized at last as crucial to an understanding of myself, whereas previously it had seemed like one question among a hundred, on a long waiting list whose end I may never see... .

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It's not out of the question that I'll still have the opportunity to meet one or other of the three men (two of whom are about my age) who were once the innocent targets of my own violence and aggression; or if not, at least that I'll have the chance to write to one of them. It will be good for me to be able to make amends, and to do so with full knowledge of the facts. Perhaps it will be good for him too. Strangely enough, though, I don't get the impression that any of the three of them ever really held a grudge against me, or that my violence had triggered in him any personal animosity towards me in particular. a kind of calamity, from which there could be no escape, and which my own person has was perceived more as one among extras in this calamity, than as □ a ruthless tormentor (that I was) and hated. Of course, I may be wrong, and I may never know - just as I may be lucky enough to be confronted one day with this karma, which I sowed in blindness.

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I think there must have been a maturing in me in the years following the "Guespy" episode, with no "Guespy".

And yet, as far as I can remember, there was no reflection whatsoever on the subject. Still, there were effective reflexes in me afterwards, which would have prevented me from ever again associating myself with acts of collective violence by an entire group against one of its members. I don't think it ever happened again in my adult life, nor that I was ever tempted to play such a role again, which I must have sensed to be false and spineless under its cheerful, "sporty" exterior. But even after the war, life was full of situations full of veiled violence and anguish, perpetuating the deep tensions that had marked my childhood and adolescence. This is the context of a fourth relationship, marked by occasional movements of animosity and violence that I can call "gratuitous" - not founded or provoked by concrete grievances, nor even (I believe) by acts that could pass for "provocative". It concerns my relationship with one of my sons. I know that I was no less attached to him, and that I "loved" him no less than my other children. But at some unconscious level, I must have rejected certain aspects of him, precisely those that made him softer and more vulnerable, and harder to apprehend, than his brothers and sister. Decidedly, he didn't "fit in" at all, even less than my other children, with the beautiful superyang images I would have liked to find in my children - and all the more so, as certain very harsh circumstances that had surrounded his first two years and left a deep impression on him, made it more difficult for him to form trusting relationships with his parents. During the time he lived with me under the same roof, right up to his tenth year, I sometimes subjected him to humiliating punishments, imposed in a thunderous voice. These were things that had faded entirely into oblivion, as had a certain atmosphere that had come to permeate the family air - a few dialogues with his sister and two brothers, two or three years ago.

p. 666 years, which very conveniently brought back so□soit little of these things in my memory. Perhaps the day The time will come when he, too, will be ready to talk about it with me - he who, perhaps, among my children, has borne the brunt of a family atmosphere charged with hushed anguish and unassumed tensions; or at the very least, the one who has most "coped" at the hands of his father, while each of them has had his ample share of the parental "package". At the very least, I know - and I'm glad to know it - that what's preventing any of my children from having a simple, trusting relationship with me, their father, and from talking together about a heavy past and probing it, is not some fear they've kept from me, and which they've tried hard to hide.

But then again, this is not the place in these notes to delve further into a complex situation, which involves six or seven other people as much as myself. What I wanted to do, above all, was to make an unvarnished observation of the occasional appearance, here and there in my life and in my own actions, of the same apparently gratuitous violence, which so often "left me bewildered and speechless", when I encountered it in others. This observation is not made with any particular "intention", nor is it meant to "explain" or "excuse" gratuitous violence in anyone, any more than it is meant to explain or excuse mine. It's not impossible - indeed, it's probable - that, with further reflection, the two violences - that in others and that in me - will end up shedding light on each other. It's the kind of thing that eventually comes on its own, out of the blue, without being sought out. If I've made this observation, it's simply because it was in the way, and (on pain of ceasing to be true) I couldn't not make it here.

18.2.10.2. (b) Mechanics and freedom

Note 142 (December 14) Last night's reflection was a timely reminder of something we all tend to forget, and especially (in this case) of something **I** tend to forget: that I'm not "better" than anyone else, that I'm cut from the same cloth as everyone else.

like so many of my friends whom I'm about to put in the hot seat, the focus of uncompromising attention. ...

Yesterday, I gave a sort of description of the appearance of (seemingly) "gratuitous" violence, such as the discharge of tension and aggression □ accumulated on some scapegoat who, for one reason or another another, finds herself in charge. This "mechanistic" and superficial description, surely "well known", can lend credence to an equally "mechanistic" **attitude** towards this violence, in oneself or in others. It is then seen as a kind of inescapable inevitability, rooted in the very structure of the psyche - alas, what can we do about it! Such an attitude, under a "rational" or "scientific" guise, seems to me to be nothing other than the rationalization of an **abdication**: an abdication before the presence of a creative **freedom** in ourselves and in others, which opens up the option for each of us **to assume** the situations in which we find ourselves, instead of passively following the slope lines of ready-made mechanisms, ready to take us over at any moment. While it's true that we rarely make use of this "freedom" option, the very **presence** of this option and of the creative possibilities within us, whether we choose to make use of it or not, changes the nature of things completely. It is in **this way**, and in no other, that situations involving relations between people, or between a person and himself or the world around him, have a dimension that is absent when, instead of people, we're dealing with (say) computers, however sophisticated they may be. This is also where the privilege of **responsibility** for our actions and the motivations behind them comes into play for each and every one of us. This responsibility is in no way removed by the fact that we often resort to the convenience of hiding our own motivations. p. 667

To return to the case in point as an illustration, if I was able to play the great soul while making use of my power to torment a comrade who had done me no harm, it's because behind a surface "good faith", I had chosen an attitude of crass, phenomenal bad faith, which was just as obvious at the time as it is now, forty years later. It was indeed a **choice**, which nothing forced me to make, and which amounted to turning a blind eye to the tensions and aggression that had built up inside me (while, of course, claiming to have nice "non-violent" ideas), and "sneaking" (sic) them out onto the scapegoats at hand. Violence of this kind - which is to say, almost all violence and violence against abominations raging in the world of men - can only take place, and their secret function can only be fulfilled, on **condition** that it remains rigorously secret precisely (while □ even as it croaksp . 668

We're encouraged to do this by the air we've always been surrounded by, while we've always seen those around us eager to endorse our subterfuges, no matter how crude. It's true that we've always been encouraged to do this by the air that surrounds us, while we've always seen those around us eager to endorse by consensus subterfuge, however crude, in the service of fictions that had their assent. And my own subterfuge, in the cases I have mentioned, did indeed have the assent or tacit encouragement of those around me, without which I could not have maintained it and continued my game.

Assuming a situation, on the other hand, is no more and no less than approaching it **in good faith**, in the full sense of the word, i.e. without taking advantage of the facility offered to us to conceal the obvious ins and outs of the situation through crude subterfuge. It also means, quite simply, making use of our healthy faculties of perception and judgement, without taking care to conceal them for the needs of one cause or another. It may seem strange, but it's also simple and obvious - when we approach a situation with such an "innocent" attitude, it is immediately and profoundly transformed, however confused and knotted it may have seemed. Or, to put it another way, if it was indeed "knotted" and hadn't moved a muscle for a long time, it's because we ourselves were preventing it from evolving, from "flowing" according to its own nature; that we were obstructing its spontaneous movement, following in the footsteps of the "innocent".

This is the concordant example of all those who have surrounded us since our earliest childhood. It's enough to **stop** stiffening, to **stop** obstructing, for things that seemed frozen to start moving again, for what was stuck to become unstuck, and for the hard accumulated tensions to finally free themselves and resolve themselves in a new and ample movement, finally reappearing.

This "ease" or "convenience" we have, with everyone's encouragement, of "taking bladders for lanterns", and thereby blocking what is made to sink, is in fact nothing "comfortable"! We're paying an exorbitant price for the cushy inner immobility we've been allowed to enjoy - the price of inner tension,

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and the enormous investment of energy required to maintain both this tension and the fiction of bladders = lanterns. That said, everyone does as they please, at any given moment - that's our privilege. And at any moment, because of what we

What we do, we sow, for ourselves and for others. And the harvest of what we **sow** begins right now.

18.2.10.3. (c) Greed - or the wrong business

Note 143 Perhaps it's time to return to the "foreground" of the Funeral, i.e. the ins and outs of the role played by the Grand Officiant at my funeral, my friend Pierre. I had already returned to it a week ago, in the note "Patte de velours - ou les sourires" (n° 137, December 7), only to move away from it.

again with this digression (on five consecutive notes) on "la griffe" and "le velours". I feel that this This "digression", like many others that preceded it, was not in vain.

If I've been led to this conclusion, it's precisely because the most striking apparent trait, perhaps, in the way my friend has taken on his role, is the persistence, without any hint of rupture at any time, of the purest "velvet paw" style, in the service of a flawless antagonism that never says its name²⁰⁵ (*). Another salient fact is that, behind the pleasant, well-tempered appearances of a knowing smile and friendly airs, my friend often expressed an unequivocal, and seemingly gratuitous, intention to **harm** or **injure**, **either** myself or those he considered "mine" (in terms of mathematical work). I have gone into enough detail on concrete facts in this sense in the first part of Burial, for it to be worth returning to them here. What we're talking about here is malevolence (strictly circumscribed within the realm of scientific activity, it would seem), "**violence**" in the strongest sense of the word, even though it remains rigorously concealed - the claw always drowned in exquisite downy silks. And this violence, this malevolence, has all the appearance of the most disconcertingly **gratuitous** - it

It would seem that they are exercised for the sole pleasure of harming and injuring,

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□As ^{with} any situation, it seems so unbelievable that often we hesitate to believe the testimony of our healthy faculties²⁰⁶ (*). Denying this testimony, as is common practice, is one of the innumerable ways of not taking on a situation, and thereby perpetuating it, so it's surely preferable to put the matter down, to look around it, perhaps in search of aspects that may have escaped us and which provide an approach to it, enabling us to integrate it into our experience. It seems to me that very few of us have ever been in such a state of causeless malevolence - and to be willing to remember this is already a possible step **towards approaching** a factual situation, which common reflexes would rather encourage us to evacuate straight away. It's also a good idea to

²⁰⁵(*) As I've already had occasion to point out elsewhere, the fact that antagonism, or deliberate rejection or derision, "never says its name" is in no way peculiar to my friend Pierre, but (as far as I'm aware) applies to all participants in the Funeral, without exception. And so, in this "Yin funeral" of derision, the underlying note in each of the participants (and as befits such a funereal occasion) is itself - yin!

For the "occult" nature of the Burial, see also the note "The Gravedigger - or the entire Congregation", n° 97.

²⁰⁶(*) On this subject, see the note "The Emperor of China's robe", n° 77'.

probe further, to see if there might not be some hidden grievance that is the cause and springboard of violence that seemed to have no cause - just as it's good, if need be, to recognize bogus "grievances" for what they are, of the kind (for example) that I myself have practiced, knowing that so-and-so is an awful character who deserves no mercy, etc.

But in this particular case, no matter how hard I probe, I can't see anything that remotely resembles a **grievance** that my friend might (rightly or wrongly) harbor against me, or against any of those he has chosen as targets of malice. He himself has never hinted at anything remotely resembling this; not to mention the fact that, when probed by me on more than one occasion about some of his actions which had left me speechless, he never admitted that there was the slightest hint of enmity in him towards anyone. I ended up sensing a secret gratification in him, during my occasional encounters, when he would serve me his good reasons, all objective, with his very own air of innocent, slightly amused surprise... . In short, I entered into a game that he played as he pleased, and with an intimate satisfaction that took me a long time to perceive. (And yet he was far from the first person to make me squirm in this way!) Still, better late than never, I finally got off that merry-go-round²⁰⁷ (**)!

If, on the other hand, I probe myself, reviewing my relationship to my  ami since our meeting a Nearly twenty years later (in 1965), I can't find a trace of anything that might have been the cause of any grievance against me. In the conventional, superficial sense of things, I can say that during all this time, and more particularly in the first five years of close contact, I "did him nothing but good".

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But this observation immediately reminds me of another, less superficial one - that of a **complacency** in me towards him, which emerged in the course of reflection in the notes "Being apart" and "Ambiguity" (n  s 67' and 63"). Clearly, this complacency was by no means "a good thing" for him - and also, that the my brilliant young pupil and friend's attitude towards me developed in close symbiosis with my own attitude, and more specifically, with this complacency. It's not impossible, even, that this complacency, at some unconscious level, was (not only perceived, which is obvious anyway, but also) felt by my friend as a "grievance", as a scenario perhaps too well known and replayed over and over again, in his youth as a child who was a bit of a prodigy around the edges, and which was served up to him (albeit discreetly) once again. Perhaps he'd naively believed that, once he'd set foot in the mathematical "big wide world", everything would be different from what he'd known - and then no, it was still the same tobacco! (And by his own deliberate choice, today it's still the same tobacco, and even bigger, which is more... .)

I'll probably never know exactly what's going on here. Besides, it's not my job to find out, assuming I have the antennae to do it on my own. If there was a "grievance", it was, at most, an "auxiliary" grievance, helping to set "something" in motion - a certain **game**, driven by a force of quite another magnitude; a force whose presence I've long felt, but whose nature remains enigmatic to me. Before leaving this "foreground" of the Burial painting, I'd like to at least try to surmise the nature of that force.

Clearly, there's a **greed** to supplant, oust and erase, as well as a greed to **appropriate** the fruits of others' labors and love affairs with lady mathematics. Yet it's clear to me that it's **not** a simple "bulimia" for prestige, admiration, honors, or even power, which is the mainspring of his role in the Burial. How often, in the course of my reflection on this  r le, have I been It's hard to believe that his **obsession with** burying was actually burying himself! Thanks to his exceptional gifts and an equally exceptional situation, he had been blessed with everything he needed to

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²⁰⁷(**) This was in 1981 - the "second turning point" referred to in the note "Two turning points", n  66.

to far surpass his master, and to leave a profound imprint on the entire mathematical world of his time. All he had to do was let the child in him play to his heart's content, without bothering him with instructions, barriers here and forbidden directions there - simply taking care of what was necessary, strictly stewardship. In doing so, and without having to push, pull or elbow, the "boss" in him, no more or less greedy than in anyone else, would certainly not have lacked all imaginable marks of prestige, admiration, honors, and power to boot, not even knowing what to do with them, whereas it's the dullard who gives it his all, leaving the boss little leisure to play the boss... .

Decidedly, in simply "utilitarian" terms, it was a bloody bad deal to get embroiled in a Funeral that had been sticking to him for fifteen years or more, and was going to stick to him for the rest of his life, if the cumbersome deceased hadn't suddenly decided to disrupt the ceremony, by lifting the lid of his coffin, when (as expected) it was least expected! (All bets are off as to how this unfortunate incident will affect Pierre's future bets... .) Or to put it another way, my friend had the makings (by his intellectual means, at least), and the credentials, to be a mathematical Peter the Great, and chose instead to play the little Peter. Sounds like a bad deal indeed, at least if the goal was indeed, first and foremost, that of vanity.

18.2.10.4. (d) Both knowledge or fear of knowledge

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Note 144 (December 15) Towards the end of last night's reflection, I felt the slight uneasiness of someone who, with a peremptory air, serves up a reasoning of impeccable logic, while dismissing the diffuse feeling that there is nevertheless something wrong. This "something" became apparent, moreover, as soon as I was stopped writing. One vague way of putting it is this: the "logic" of the unconscious, the one that presides over our most crucial choices, is by no means that of ^{conscious}□ordinary reasoning, and even less that of orthodox" reasoning. In this case, the perception I have of the "assets" of the young man Deligne in the second half of the sixties (let's say), and the weight I give them (which goes in the same direction, at least, as the weight any reasonably well-informed mathematician would give them) - this perception and this weight (which I would like to call "objective") are unrelated to the dispositions and feelings of the interested party himself; with those, in particular, concerning his own abilities, which certainly form the key asset among all those at his disposal.

I have the impression, however, that on a conscious level at least, and with all the modesty that modesty demanded, my friend had integrated and made his own the flattering echoes that had surely been coming back to him for a long time about his unusual gifts. But there's no doubt in my mind that at a deeper level, where the great choices that dominate a life are made without words, this "objective" version of things became (and still remains today) a **dead letter**. In its place, there is an insidious **doubt**, which no "proof" of value (or of superiority over others. . .) will ever uproot - a doubt all the more tenacious because it remains forever unformulated. I've seen it in my friend, as I've seen it in others less brilliantly gifted, and it's the same. This doubt is the stubborn messenger of an **intimate conviction**, which also remains unspoken, even more deeply buried than this doubt itself: an intimate conviction of powerlessness, fundamental and irremediable. This too is the "self-contempt" of which I spoke at the very beginning of Récoltes et Semailles, in the context of a reflection that remained "general"²⁰⁸ (*). It reappeared, again in an impersonal context and under a different guise, a month or two ago, as a "feeling of cracking"²⁰⁹ (**) - this diffuse feeling of "cracking".

²⁰⁸(*) See "Infallibility (of others) and contempt (of self)", n° 4.

²⁰⁹(**) See note "La moitié et le tout - ou la fêlure" (n° 112), October 17.

which I had first noticed in myself, the day after I discovered meditation. And several times during the reflection on Burial, there was a sudden and acute perception of this "intimate conviction of powerlessness" in my friend, throwing new light on a situation that seemed to defy common sense... .²¹⁰(***).

□ I know that this intimate conviction, in my friend or in any other, is itself like **the shadow of a knowledge** - the knowledge of a "crack" that actually exists, of a "mutilation" suffered, and sanctioned and maintained to this very day by its own acquiescence. The shadow does not, however, restore the knowledge from which it springs, beneficial in itself like all knowledge - it is rather like a deformed, gigantic caricature of it, a scarecrow version. What deforms knowledge and makes it unrecognizable is **fear** - the fear of making contact with knowledge itself, of letting it rise from the depths where it has always been repressed, and of assuming the humble reality of which it is the faithful reflection.

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To make contact with this dreaded knowledge, to become aware with a fully conscious gaze of this reality known in its deepest layers, and shunned - this is what it really means: to make full contact with that in us (whether we call it "the force", or "the child"), "believed lost and dead for a long life". For it is this strength and nothing else, the strength of childhood, that enables us to take on the knowledge of that in us which is cracked, mutilated, paralysed. Assuming this knowledge also means reconnecting with that **other knowledge**, which predates our mutilation and is even more essential than it: the original knowledge of the presence of this "force" that lies within us, a force that is neither muscle nor brain, and which contains both.

Strangely enough, this lost knowledge of the presence within us of this "force", this **creative power**, as an obvious, indestructible part of our true nature - this knowledge is rediscovered through the discovery and humble acceptance of a **state of powerlessness**, resolved by this very acceptance. The knowledge of a state of powerlessness covers and conceals the even more deeply-rooted knowledge of our creative force. The latter is like the key that opens us to the former, both indissociable in truth, like the front and back of the **same** knowledge²¹¹ (*), both objects of the **same** fear.

□ When I speak of "the force" buried in each of us, this is by no means an abstract thing and vague, with the verbal subtlety of a "philosopher", or a psychologist with a touch of philosophy about him. It's this strength that allows you to "do math" (or "make love". . .) like a child breathes - that is, without prudently obliging yourself not to leave the wake left by your predecessors, and to repeat with application the gestures and recipes (or the clichés. . .) that were theirs.) that were theirs; and it's also one that gives you the courage and humility, in your own home as well as in that of others, to call a spade a spade and not take bladders for lanterns, even if in doing so you go against the most established consensus, or the most inveterate and well-honed mechanisms within yourself.(*)

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²¹⁰(***) On this subject, see the note "Le renversement (3) - ou yin enterre yang", where (among other things) certain such "sensitive moments" of reflection are evoked.

²¹¹(*) In this image, of course, the "**right side**" is the knowledge of powerlessness, of inauthenticity, of the "crack", while the "**left side**", even more hidden, is the knowledge of our undivided nature and creative power. I've found again and again over the years that it's the "flip side", the more deeply buried knowledge of the two, that is the object of the greatest fear, and the most vehement denial. It's not so much the familiar, anodyne state of being a trained and (more or less) "learned" monkey that worries anyone, but rather the innocence of the child who feels things as they are and calls them by their name, and who does and says as he feels, without shame at being different from what's "expected" of him.

²¹²(*) (December 16) The action of the creative force in everyone, the force of renewal (or "child force"), can be recognized by its fruits, both in the works of the hand or mind, and in the facts of everyday life, in our relationship with others and with the beings and things around us. Over and over again, I've noticed that creativity in everyday life is much less of an issue.

The first example I've come across is one that's sure to get the heart racing of any young (or even not-so-young) glory-seeking researcher. Who wouldn't want to be the intrepid pioneer of sciences still in their infancy, and as such feature prominently in every textbook, like Kepler, father of modern astronomy! But when it's a question (as Kepler and others did) of tenaciously spinning one's own yarn in solitude and indifference (if not disdain or hostility), for thirty years or even just one - then suddenly there's nobody left! We don't mind being in the

p. 677 manuals, in good company in short, but one is also **afraid of** being alone, if only for a year or even *seulement* one day. But he who "knows" the presence of the force within him (and to know it he hasn't had

never to speak of it, either to others or to himself. . .) - he also knows that he's **alone**, and that being alone doesn't worry him. And whether he'll be in the textbooks is the least of his worries - especially when he's working.

As it happens, this same Kepler, in his very work, "went against the best-established consensus" in his science, and established for millennia at that. In his day (when the Inquisition still existed), this was even more inconvenient than it is today, when you have a good chance of losing your job, or not finding one, but without the risk of ending up at the stake. Coming back to Kepler, I don't know what he was like in his everyday life, with regard to the "best-established consensus"; perhaps he kept his nose to the grindstone, like everyone else. What's certain is that today, as in the past, there aren't many people who would deviate even a hair's breadth from this consensus. It's undoubtedly the same old tobacco - the **fear of being alone**, the flip side of a deep-seated need to be alone.

We're not just talking about "works" (in the conventional sense, i.e. tangible "products" shaped by the hand or mind, of creativity).

The presence of continuous creativity in a person's life is a sign of continuous "contact", however fragmentary and imperfect, with the creative force within him or her. This is something different from the mere presence of "gifts", and of a continuous investment of energy to take advantage of them, expressed by a more or less important production, also more or less "rated", but which does not have, in itself, a creative virtue, a virtue of renewal.

In my intellectual pursuits, and particularly in my mathematical work, with modest "gifts" (but considerable investment), it seems to me that this "contact" with the force within me, i.e. the tacit and profound knowledge I had of it, was virtually intact. In other words, I was pretty much "functioning" on my full (creative) capacity in this (admittedly very fragmentary) area of my life, with virtually no loss, detour or blockage of energy by the usual "friction effects". One of the most common of these is a certain pusillanimity, which so often renders us deaf to the inner voice telling us what to do, when what it's teaching us is precisely "new", that is, leading us down paths that only we tread. This kind of inhibition, almost absent from my relationship with mathematics (and, it seems to me, more and more so as the years go by), has, on the other hand, existed in other areas of my life just as much as in anyone else's, and particularly in "everyday life".

Returning to the subject of mathematics, I see a kind of reversed relationship in my brilliant ex-student. He has "gifts" that have always amazed and enchanted me, in no way comparable to my own. (It's true that the longer I live, the more I see that this **is** by no means the essential thing, to be innovative in science or elsewhere; see on this subject the reflection in the note "Yin the Servant (2) - or generosity" (n° 136).) His investment in mathematics is considerable, as was mine in the past, and from an early age he benefited from exceptionally favourable conditions for the development of his gifts, and for the conception and elaboration of a body of work commensurate with them. Twenty years on, I'm still waiting for this work, and I'm still not satisfied! Surely there is some "contact" with the creative force within him, attested by the beauty of such things he has made - but this contact is disturbed, tormented. My friend's relationship with his work, and even within his work itself, is one of conflict - work becoming, more and more over the years, an **instrument** in the hands of the "boss" to satisfy **his** cravings, alien to the child's thirst for knowledge and discovery.

I doubt that such a conflictual relationship can be resolved without first being assumed - that is, first and foremost, acknowledged. At least, not once in my life have I seen such a thing happen, without the other. This is what led me to write that the knowledge of our powerlessness was "the key" to regaining full knowledge of our creative power, and thereby also full creative power itself. In my mathematical work, the question has not arisen, because there has been no deep blockage in this work, equivalent to partial impotence, which would have made me "function" on only a small part of my possibilities. On the other hand, the question arose for me as it does for everyone else, at the level of my daily experience, in my relationship to others and to myself, to my body and to my body's impulses. It was at this level that I experienced, over and over again, that the realization of a blockage, a "powerlessness", was indeed the **key** to freeing imprisoned creativity.

universal in man: the need for approval, for confirmation by others (and would there be only **one who** approves and confirms). ... ²¹³(*)

18.2.10.5. (e) The secret nerve

Note 145 But I've strayed from my point again! I had started from the realization that my "reasoning" of last night was off the mark, when I wanted to "get across" this conviction of mine, that my friend's motivation for playing the role I know in my Burial, and in the way I know, was not **greed** (for prestige, admiration, honors, power). It's true, of course, that by trading a child's impulse for a **role**, he'd made "a bad bargain", even from the point of view of "returns", prestige etc. But that proves absolutely nothing. But this proves absolutely nothing. Such "miscalculations" are, moreover, the

almost absolute rule, it seems to me, and by no means the exception, in the choices (at the unconscious level) of our principal investments and options. But even though the reasoning is worthless, I nevertheless p. 678

There's no doubt that what I wanted to convey is the perception of a reality: that it's **not** this very real greed, which has taken a growing and truly devouring part in my friend's life, that it's not this **greed** that constitutes the **nerve** in this role played by my friend, as **the** key figure in the implementation of my funeral.

If I take a closer look at this clear-cut feeling (without any further attempt to "establish" its validity!), I come to the following conclusion: it's this **gratuitousness** in the antagonistic or malevolent act, a gratuitousness that has often left me speechless, that doesn't "fit" at all with the all-purpose "explanation": greed. As far as prestige, admiration and honors were concerned, at least, and even "power" in the ordinary sense of the term, my brilliant ex-student and friend gained nothing, either in the moment or in the longer term, by playing on his former master's "discreet and delicately measured disdain", of which he had the secret; or by using the same disdain (perhaps less delicately dosed) towards a researcher of lesser status than himself, or towards his present or past work, in such a way as to discourage the one whose confidence in his own faculties of judgement was not as firmly anchored as it was in me; or for yet another, who had courageously persevered against the general disdain of which my friend set the tone, by robbing him of the fruits of his perseverance against all and sundry. While it's true that in this last case, as in others, my friend pretended to appropriate the fruits ripened by others in solitude (and sometimes in the disdain of his elders), this "benefit" (in the "Pouce" style²¹⁴ (**)) is so derisory, when one considers **who** the appropriator **is**, that the "explanation" put forward goes up in smoke itself!

As far as I'm concerned, I know for a fact that it's not **this** benefit that's the "nerve" of the company. of such appropriations. On the other hand, I sense in it **the intoxication of a certain power** - a power more delicate, and no doubt more exhilarating, than power in the conventional sense, as a man of science and importance.

commonly exercised by sitting on Committees, Councils, Juries and the like, directing an Institute, or p. 679 research of brilliant young researchers, or talking into the ear of a minister. The "intoxication" of which I speak appeared (for the first time in the reflection) in the note "La Perversité" (n° 76), when I suddenly find myself confronted with "an act of **bravado**, a kind of intoxication in a power so total, that it can afford to even to display (symbolically. . .). . . its true nature of "perverse" spoliation of others".

It was a dazzling act of bravado, ostentatious and yet at the same time **hidden**, informal, slipped in there casually, with even a semblance of an explanation for the strange name "faisceaux".

²¹³(*) Here I'm reiterating, by another means, observations that had already appeared in the sections "The forbidden fruit" and "The solitary adventure" (n° s 46,47), and also, in passing, in the note "Acceptance" (n° 110).

²¹⁴(*) See the notes "Pouce!" (n° 77) and "Appropriation et mépris" (n° 59) about this style of appropriation in my brilliant friend and former student.

perverse", what could be more natural? We're going to shed some light on this in three words, plus a short list of "things that should have found their place" in our modest but brilliant article. ... ²¹⁵(*).

Once again, I recognize the purest "velvet paw" style, a.k.a. "thumb" style! - and behind the uniformity of a **style** that has become familiar to me in more than one person, I also sense the **common nerve**: this imperious, all-consuming **thirst** to wield power; a **certain power**, and in a certain mode - the power of the cat over the mouse, when he plays his Great Game with that perfect grace (which only the mouse is unable to appreciate to its full value), and with "the most exquisite delicacy" for sure - or the power also of a clever wife over her big dodo of a husband. . .

Based on my friend's case, I've already been led to talk about the "style" in question, and its meaning, in the general context of couples of all kinds. This was the subject of our reflection a week ago, in the note "Le renversement (4) - ou le cirque conjugal" (n° 138, December 8). Here, for the first time, the "nerve" of the "velvet paw" game (a.k.a. "Thumb!") appears with all the clarity it deserves, as in a **game of power**. A game of power, however, of a very particular nature: the fascination of the game for those who play it, its often all-consuming charm, consists precisely in the **occult nature of the power** that is exercised through it, this "neither seen, nor known" character, which makes it possible to play the other (**of him, never with him**).

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him. . .), making him go round in circles as he pleases, always leading the dance, where the other baldly follows shot after shot.

□ **coup**, in pathetic response to those little blows delivered by invisible wires that one wields at one's whim and according to one's enjoy...

All I had to do was write down in black and white what I'd felt obscurely for years, without ever having bothered to formulate it clearly - all I had to do was make this short effort to condense into words what had long remained diffuse, so that what only yesterday seemed "enigmatic" to me (namely, the nature of a "certain force" in such and such a friend), suddenly opened up its obvious meaning to me! This "force" in him, or (as I wrote earlier) the "nerve" behind such acts which may seem "inexplicable" (or even "beyond comprehension"), I had already clearly identified in the reflection of December 8. But while the starting point of this crucial reflection was indeed a certain "enigmatic" game played by my brilliant friend, it was **another** experience, richer and more intense than the one associated with his person, that fuelled this reflection; an experience that had been fully assimilated (or very close to it), and which gave me an already-formed knowledge that the more epidermal experience of my sporadic relationship with my friend Pierre could not then have communicated to me.

Of course, in the end, it was this experience that I had to understand, and thereby fully assume; and if I launched into a digression on the "couple's carousel" without any inner reservations, it was because I felt that this carousel had something to tell me about my relationship with my friend. His thoughts continued to linger in the background, like a discreet background note.

However, the two didn't come together completely that day, or in the days that followed. No doubt the moment was not yet fully ripe. For the junction to take place without reserve or effort, with the ease of the obvious, I first had to "clear the ground", by stubbornly and unhurriedly following, one by one, the most compelling associations that demanded my attention. I didn't rush things, and I knew that this was what I had to do - attend to what was calling me insistently, without letting myself be diverted by a "propos" or a "fil" (of reflection), or even by a program to complete.

While I'm weeding and hoeing, the forces of earth and sky are at work. When evening comes, all you have to do is pick up the ripe fruit, which falls into the open hand that welcomes it. ...

18.2.10.6. (f) Passion and hunger - or climbing

²¹⁵(*) See note "Le Prestidigitateur" (n° 75").

Note 146 □ (December 17) It seems to me that with the day before yesterday's reflection, there was a kind of unblockingp

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of an understanding that had remained undecided, a little stunned, in front of a quantity of facts and intuitions piled up before me in a rather amorphous heap - like a puzzle of which I had only succeeded so well in to assemble a few pieces here and there. Now I feel as if I've stumbled across **the** key "piece" of the unknown picture that needs to be reconstituted, around which the others will finally fit together effortlessly. In any case, I have no doubt that I have touched the "nerve" behind the role played by my friend Pierre in the burial of the master and his (more or less) faithful followers, and at the same time, the "nerve" of his relationship with me, the deceased master.

This craving to play with a certain power, discreetly pulling invisible strings with an air of candor - this craving must surely have been present long before I met him, ignored by himself and everyone else. If I didn't see it manifest itself in the first years we knew each other, before the episode of my departure (in 1970), it's undoubtedly because in those years of intense learning and the blossoming of a delicate and powerful thought, my friend's energy was totally absorbed elsewhere. The conditions were ideal, in fact, to serve as a springboard for his exceptional abilities. The episode of my departure, first from the institution of which we were both a part, and then (in the year that followed) from the ma- thematic scene, was a crucial turning point not only in my own spiritual adventure, but surely in his as well. It was this episode that suddenly opened him up to means of power that only the day before he wouldn't have dared to dream of: firstly, the power to "oust" from the scene an ex-master who was taking up a great deal of space there, and from whom he had previously confined himself to discreetly distancing himself²¹⁶ (*); then, when it became clear that the latter was disappearing from the scene, the even more exhilarating power to make a certain School bearing the name of the deceased master vanish without a trace; and, finally, to cut off, in all its main branches (except the one on which he himself was perched), the blossoming of a vast program in the service of a vast Vision, which he himself had long nurtured²¹⁷ (**).

The meaning of this great turning point in my friend's life appears to me as a kind of reversal in the mutual relationship of hegemony of the two dominant forces in his person, those which seem to me to take precedence over all others: mathematical passion, and the "craving" for power play ("à patte de velours"). The first of these forces is essentially "pulsional" in nature²¹⁸ (*), the second is egotic, "ac- quised". Before the turning point, it's the drive for knowledge that dominates my friend's life (as far as I know), while the drive for power is more or less dormant, in a state of vacancy. At the end of a vertiginous social ascent in the space of a few years²¹⁹ (**), and in a situation that suddenly presented a draconian choice, it was the temptation of power and its secret intoxications that prevailed (with the hand held high, I believe, and without any desire to fight) over the passion for knowledge. The latter does not disappear

²¹⁶(*) On the subject of this concern to distance oneself, then to evict, see the notes "Eviction" (n° 63) and "Brothers and spouses - or the double signature" (n° 134), as well as the sub-note (n° 134₁) to the latter, and finally the section "The unfinished harvest" (n° 28).

²¹⁷(**) See, on the subject of the liquidation of a "School" and the "chainsaw" effect, the notes "L'héritier", "Les cohéritiers... ", ". . and la tronçonneuse" (n° 90, 91, 92) and the first four notes of the Cortège "Fourgon Funèbre" (coffins 1 to 4), n° s 93-96. On the subject of the vision that was buried, see the two glimpses (in two different lightings) given in the two notes "My orphans" (n° 46), and the sub-note n° 136₁ to the note "Yin the Servant (2) - or generosity".

Note that in the main text, the expression "et ce faisant. . ." (" . . . to cut short... the blossoming of a vast program. . ") is not adequate. The liquidation of a School was the **first** radical "chainsaw stroke" to "cut clean" a set of master branches, but not the last (as witnessed in particular by the notes-cercueils cited, n° s 93-96).

²¹⁸(*) The fact that mathematical passion is "pulsional in nature", that it is an expression of the "child" (aka the "worker"), does not prevent it (as is forcefully pointed out in the same paragraph) from also being invested more or less strongly by the "cravings" of the "boss" - and this is part of the common lot (from which I have been no more exempt than anyone else) in the relationship between "the worker" and "the boss".

²¹⁹(**) On this subject, see the note "L'ascension" (no. 63').

not from the stage, but is now a vassal and humble servant of Fringale, an **instrument** in the latter's hands. Passion (aka "the worker") goes about her work under the jealous eye of Fringale, aka "the boss", who never leaves her side. As the worker has good tools (not all of which are forbidden to him), and good hands, even if he's kept short in this way, he continues haphazardly to maintain production and the company's reputation. But it's not as it used to be, of course, when the (sometimes very childish) worker took his

The boss was far away and only came once a season!

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□ The subsequent evolution seems to me to be more quantitative than qualitative. It's the progressive-
The boss's **tactics**, following a style that remains uniform, while the boss-worker relationship doesn't change a bit. This type of boss is cautious by temperament, and only likes to venture where he's sure of winning. To do this, he needs to be sure of the ground - or, alternatively, to be sure of the tacit approval of the entire "Congrégation", starting with the smaller group of ex-students of the deceased. The evolution of the personal relationship maintained with the latter, against all odds, is a faithful reflection of the evolution of "local knowledge". There is a gradual **escalation** in the boldness of the game of power and contempt, culminating after twelve years (in 1981) with the prowess of the Colloque Pervers, where all restraint (and even, all caution) are cheerfully thrown overboard in the general euphoria²²⁰ (*). And so it took twelve years for my friend to convince himself that the ground was so fertile that no caution was called for: any shot wins! The time was ripe, decidedly, to finally bring out the secret weapon, the **motives** - exhumed under an alternative paternity the following year²²¹ (**).

I don't feel motivated to retrace here the successive steps of this twelve-year climb, even though I have everything in hand to do so. That would be the work of a chronicler, as I did enough of it in the unexpected "investigation" pursued in the first part of L'Enterrement (or "La robe de l'Empereur de Chine"). These "steps" of an escalation seem to me like so many **probing shots**, launched by my friend in the direction of a mute Congregation, with the same answer each time: he could go there! For nearly fifteen years, she has been his silent ally and guarantor, while he has been, without realizing it or caring, her docile instrument²²² (***).

18.2.10.7. (g) Daddy-cake

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□ **Note 147** I don't know if this craving in my friend is exercised against others as well as myself, and younger thematians in whom he smells my "scent". I haven't heard anything to that effect. However, it's clear to me that it was through his relationship with me, and thanks to a situation that is certainly unusual in the scientific world, that this propensity in him, which had been living in the shadows, became, overnight, an all-consuming craving. During the episode of my departure, when he explained to me, with all the appearance of seriousness, that he had given his life, totally, to mathematics²²³ (*), he undoubtedly "believed" what he was saying, and I myself, a little stunned though I was, didn't think of questioning his words. And yet, if I'd had a finer ear, or to put it better, if I'd had the maturity to listen and trust a "finer ear", which does exist in me as it does in everyone, I would have known that what he was telling me about himself might have been true the day before, but that it wasn't true that day. It was a noble reason given for a dubious deed, a deed that neither he nor I had the simplicity to face up to, even though its meaning was obvious. It was **something else** than such a passion, which had in those days seized the hearts of both of us.

²²⁰(*) On the subject of the "Perversity Colloquium", see Cortège VII "Le Colloque - ou faisceaux de Mebkhout et Perversité", notes n°s 75-80.

²²¹(**) On the subject of the exhumation of motifs, see the notes "Souvenir d'un rêve - ou la naissance des motifs", and "L'Enterrement - ou le Nouveau Père", n°s 51,52.

²²²(***) See note "Le Fossoyeur - ou la Congrégation toute entière", n° 97.

²²³(*) On this episode, see the note "Brothers and spouses - or the double signature" (n° 134).

the reins of his life, never to let go until today.

So it was my person, or rather something in my friend's relationship to my person, that (given the right opportunity) triggered this drastic change in the nature of the force dominating his life, and in the direction of his investment in mathematics. This is the moment to remember the famous "strands" or "aspects" of Burial, highlighted in the reflection of the 13th

November (in the note "Rétrospective (1) - ou les trois volets d'un tableau" n° 127), and in the note that follows it ("Rétrospective (2) - ou le nœud du tableau", n° 127'), which had time to get a little lost along the way.

since then. I pretended to remember it, just a little, in my note of ten days ago, "Patte de velours ou les sourires" (n° 137, December 7). In particular, I reconnected with the intuition of the eternal role of "adopted father" that I had to play with my young friend, and which, it seems to me, has remained active and intact.

to this day. On the occasion of this reflection, I would like to reiterate my unreserved conviction,

which must have formed and taken shape gradually over the course of at least the last six or seven years (since p. 685 even longer, perhaps): that it was "around this aspect (the paternal aspect in his apprehension of my person) that the conflict arose - a conflict that already existed in him long before he ever heard my name...". (So that's the famous "Superfather" part, while the "Supermother" part is still in limbo, at least for the moment).

In fact, it's barely a page later that the famous "smiles and velvet paw" style makes its first, quick appearance, as an object of attention. In the days that followed, the associated associations seemed at first to distance me from my friend's person, as well as from the occult "paternal" aspect of the role my friend had assigned me in his life. This aspect has not been mentioned again until today - you can't think about everything at once, let alone talk about everything at once! In terms of thinking, however, it seems to me that somewhere, in the indistinct but nonetheless present and active background, the thought of this paternal aspect must have been present, it must have acted as an effective and discreet stimulus to this long digression on a "claw in velvet" style. After all (I'm making this clear to myself now, after the event, but it must already have been there in the form of a diffuse yet peremptory motivation...), the "father" figure is no stranger to this famous style, quite the contrary. In fact, it's fair to say that the very first person in a little girl's life (or boy's, for that matter) to be led gently and smoothly (though not always tenderly) by this style is none other than Dad!

And as long as the innocent kid (or boy) adopts and makes his (or hers) own this style and know-how - which must become second nature almost at the same time as learning to speak, or almost - the very first guinea pig and beneficiary, no doubt, will be that same big daddy! More often than not, when I've seen this game played, it's been accompanied by the hidden anger of a grudge, as well as a deliberate attempt at derision. And of course, in most families, there's no shortage of reasons to hold a grudge against the father, or even those cleverly suggested (or even created out of thin air) by the tender mother.

wife. In my friend, however, I never at any time sensed such a nuance of rancor or spite. When I saw him injure or harm "for pleasure", it was **really** (so I felt) **for pleasure alone** ;

not (I think) the pleasure of the suffering or humiliation itself that he inflicted, but rather the secret intoxication of exercising, at his own pleasure and in that particular style in which he was a master, a **power** - more exhilarating or even more piquant, no doubt, by this ingredient with a "**perverse**", "**forbidden**" connotation (harming, or causing suffering **for pleasure**), and yet which he could indulge in, delicately and casually and apart from that, to the hilt and gogo. . . ²²⁴(*)

²²⁴(*) For a detailed illustration, see the note "La Perversité", n° 76.

18.2.10.8. The nerve within the nerve - or the dwarf and the giant

Note 148 (December 18) With last night's reflection, I feel that this "foreground" of the Burial painting, centered on the relationship between my friend Pierre and myself, continues to emerge from the mists of misunderstanding and confusion. For some time now, I've been faced with the task of inserting a certain "Superpère" section into this foreground (among others), and although I hadn't really formulated it clearly, this section didn't really seem to want to fit in willingly. If there's one student I've always felt completely "at ease" with, not tense at all and at no time that I can remember, it's him! Admittedly, I have little recollection of our very first encounters, and I can't claim that there wasn't that tension in him then - often barely perceptible, yet very real - which arises when we first approach someone invested (in one capacity or another) with authority or prestige, and towards whom we have a particular expectation. It is at least probable that such a tension must have been present, and that I paid no more attention to it than to any other young researcher I happened to meet. What is certain is that, if there was any tension at first contact, it quickly vanished without a trace. To use the image that appeared last night, he was as comfortable with me as a kid (or ex-kid) is with a sugar daddy he's never had to fear, and who has rarely refused him anything.

I thought about the situation again last night, after stopping to write. It now appears to me that my friend's relation to me was operating on two quite distinct levels, and (it would seem) without communication mutual. One of these levels, which undoubtedly became established in the weeks and months following our meeting, was that of the personal relationship - that of the "sugar daddy", therefore, kind as can be, not impressional at all, himself a bit of a child on the edges, including in his work, to such an extent that there is a nuance, I would almost say, **maternal** towards him, which I have already had occasion to mention once or twice: that of a child, giddy and a little boisterous, and above all as naive as any. It's also true that, in terms of his work, and objectively speaking, he really had no reason to be impressed. Of course, I knew a lot of maths that he didn't (and that he'd learned in a few years, by playing around), and above all, I had an experience of mathematics that he still lacked. But he had a speed of assimilation, and an acuity of vision to quickly recognize himself in muddled and confusing situations, by which he often amazed me, and which I lack. If I myself sometimes impressed colleagues, it was above all due to the uncommon **slaughter** that I have in my work, due above all, I believe, to a certain approach that I have to mathematical work. But there was certainly no reason for my brilliant young friend to be impressed, when his own slaughter, provided he started writing (which he didn't mind at all), was far more effective than mine.

This level of my friend's relationship with me, the "sugar daddy" level, seems to me to include the totality of his conscious image of me, and a good part of his unconscious image too. It's this image, it seems to me, that elicits in response, following paths no doubt established since childhood, a kind of reflex craving, that of the famous "claw in the velvet" game - a game that requires us to be entirely "at ease" with our partner, entirely "sure of him" and thus also sure of ourselves²²⁵ (*). This is the level of complete assurance, based on an intimate knowledge of a situation, corroborated again and again

²²⁵(*) (December 29) This assertion is only apparently contradicted by cases (which do not include my friend) where the "playmaker" seems (at first sight at least) to be impressed, even subjugated by the person he's leading. This is, however, a **pose** for the sake of it, of which the actor himself is the first dupe (on a conscious level, I mean) - which is essential to give this pose a certain air of "truth" that can't be improvised! The most extreme case of this kind of play that I've ever known is that of my mother in relation to my father. On this subject, see the two notes "Le renversement (1) - ou l'épouse véhémence" and "Le renversement (2) - ou la révolte ambiguë", n°s 126, 132.

still by experience, which is interpreted \square *tée* in a fully concordant way by the faculties of perception and appreciation, both conscious and unconscious. The game itself is occult, unconscious to the player himself (I presume so, at least), but the feeling of assurance and the perception of reality that underpins it are in the conscious, rational, "objective" realm. p. 688

The other level, on the other hand, is entirely unconscious (at least that's my impression), uncontrolled and uncontrollable, of an irrational nature that seems to defy and make a mockery of any reasoned or reasonable knowledge of "objective" reality (which I've just recalled). At this level, the personal relationship itself, linked to any realistic perception of the Other, disappears. I myself appear as a giant, powerful and secretly envied, and my friend feels like a dwarf, overwhelmed by the conviction of his irremediable insignificance, and consumed at the same time by the insane desire, not to be a giant himself when he is a dwarf by immutable condition, but somehow to **rise to** his level, to **pass himself off** as a giant at the very least, or, more secretly and insidiously still - the insane desire **to be that giant himself**, or at the very least, to **pass himself off as one**. I think I detect yet another nuance in this desire, which is like the echo, in deeper layers, of the desire present in the layers close to the surface, which finds symbolic satisfaction precisely in this "velvet paw" game, and is its nerve and spring: the desire for **role reversal**. In the upper layers, it's the reversal of yin-yang, dominated-dominant, object-subject roles that's at stake. This relationship is not the case here, however, as the giant has no desire to dominate the dwarf - he's content to be a giant, and thus, without knowing or caring, to be a perpetual, burning challenge to the one who feels overwhelmed by his irremediable dwarf condition... . This superb ignorance in which he feels himself held, he feels as a tacit contempt and as an affront. It's this relationship that he's determined to overturn, himself appearing as the giant, and consigning the latter to insignificance - insignificance through **oblivion**, if not insignificance through **derision**, in return for the ignorance and contempt in which he feels himself held.

I said earlier that the two levels, "papa gâteau" and "géant", "would seem to have no mutual communication". On reflection, it seems to me \square *plutôt* now that there is indeed communication between the two, p. 689 if only by this desire for reversal: the desire at one of the two levels now appears as an "echo" of the similar desire already seen at the other. At first glance, it seemed to me that this reversal of roles, at the deeper "dwarf-giant" level, was not a yin-yang reversal of roles. What is true is that this reversal is not of the dominated-dominant type indeed. And yet, on further reflection, there's no doubt that the **values** embodied by the giant are yang and superyang values, while the dwarf appears as the embodiment of yin non-values - in terms, I mean, of my friend's ideological options, not so very different from the options that were still mine in the early years of our relationship²²⁶ (*).

This statement will become clear, no doubt, once I've established a bridge between the image of "the dwarf and the giant" and reality, or at the very least, explained the origin of this image in the history and prehistory of the relationship between my friend and me. As far as "prehistory" is concerned, it's hardly necessary to point out that a conscious or unconscious image of this kind only comes into being as a result of the deep-seated "self-contempt" I've already mentioned several times in my reflections; or, to put it more accurately, that such an image is nothing other than a tangible, more or less concrete **materialization** of this contempt. Perhaps I could even say that this "secret conviction" is on the lookout for a situation to support it, while at the same time

²²⁶(*) This concordance in the choice of "yang" or "superyang" values lasted until I left the company in 1970. In the years that followed, my value system at the conscious level "swung" towards "yin" and "superyin" options - see the note "Yang plays yin - or the role of Master", n° 118.

the scarecrow-image that expresses it. I believe that in everything in the psyche, however deeply buried, there lives a force that prompts it to express itself, often symbolically. This expression may often remain unconscious, but it is no less active, quite the contrary, in the facts and gestures visible in everyday life.

To return, this time, to the **story** of my friend's relationship with me, I'm sure she is too, begins even before we met. He must have heard of me around the time of his first contacts with the world of mathematicians, in Brussels, around 1960 - so four or five years ^{before} we met, when he was sixteen or seventeen²²⁷ (*). It's no coincidence that he asked me, and no one else, to teach him mathematics, or at least to teach him what was to become the central theme and tool of his work (namely, algebraic geometry). Before we met, the way I appeared to him (at least as a mathematician) could hardly have been anything other than my own brand image, making me a kind of heroic and prestigious embodiment of the core values of the mathematician world, and this at a time when he himself was a modest student, fresh out of high school. This image he had of me, and which was the very one I liked to portray, was no mere Epinal image, made to make glory-loving high-school students dream. It was based on tangible realities, and he certainly had enough flair to smell them in those years, in contact with mature mathematicians who were well into the game. From 1965 onwards, he was better placed than anyone else to take my measurements himself. I sensed in him a fascination for a vision that was opening up to him, born and matured in me over the past decade, and which continued to unfold and develop before his eyes. There was no doubt in my mind that these visions, which he made his own "as if he'd always known them", would serve him in the full light of day as inspiration and tools to develop even more far-reaching visions and work, within his means. This was not to be - and it is only in the light of this long meditation on a Burial, almost twenty years later, that I can glimpse how the fine, passionate perception of what I had to convey to him, must have served **at the same time** to flesh out and support' by first-hand elements of irrefutable reality, a **scarecrow-image**, aberrant; an image likely to **paralyze**, like the "intimate conviction" of which it is an expression. The very acuity of his perception of a "greatness" and depth in what I was transmitting to him, and which he was the only one to have made his own (and without effort) in its entirety - this acuity and vivacity which were his strength, then turned against him, making the aberrant image even more striking and peremptory.

Three days ago, I thought I'd touched the "nerve" of the role my friend has been playing for nearly fifteen years - and there was no doubt then that I'd just touched a nerve center: this all-consuming **craving** for a certain **game**, a delicate game of power, which was at the same time the symbolic and ephemeral satiation of the desire for a certain role reversal. . . With today's reflection, going down into deeper layers, it seems to me that I'm now touching on the **nerve within the nerve**, the even more secret **sting** that ceaselessly arouses and sustains this craving. For at the level of the "sugar daddy" there is certainly the opportunity and

²²⁷(*) (December 29) I found this chronological information in the "Note biographique" (two pages long), by Pierre Deligne, written in 1975 on the occasion of the award of the "Prix Quinquennal" by the (Belgian) "Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique" (Rue d'Egmont 5, 1050 Brussels). I intend to return to this biographical note in a later post, where I'll talk about Deligne's visit to my home last October. It was during this visit that I learned from him of the existence of this notice, which he was kind enough (at my request) to send me later. It was in this note that I also found the concrete form "the dwarf and the giant" of a certain image in my friend, a diffuse conception of which had gradually emerged in the course of reflection on L'Enterrement. It began to appear in the note "L'enterrement" (n° 61), and became clearer, notably, in the course of the reflection in each of the notes "L'éviction", "Le noeud", "Le renversement", "Le massacre", ". . . and the chainsaw", "L'Eloge Funèbre (2) - ou la force et l'auréole". It is only with the present note that this perception begins to "settle" into a coherent overview of the "foreground" of Burial.

(March 1985) For Deligne's biographical note, see "La profession de foi - ou le vrai dans le faux" (n° 166).

to play this game in complete safety, leading the dance with nonchalant delicacy, and sure to win every time. But no doubt the charm of easy opportunity dulls in the absence of a spur. And as I noticed only yesterday, there's no sting of pent-up grievance, of secret resentment - which is why we call him "cake"! This missing sting, in short, is something I've just touched on, when, in the course of associations, and as if under the dictation of a knowledge that would have been there all ready long ago, I was led to describe this "other level", "uncontrolled and uncontrollable", where a dwarf and a giant live side by side.

And the initial impression of a still confused intuition, that between the two levels there was no mutual communication, suddenly disappears, giving way to an understanding, expressed and aroused at the same time by the double image of the "nerve within the nerve" and the "goad". In terms of "layers", some superficial and others deep, I'd like to use a third image again, saying that these nourish or maintain the movement of the others, that they are the deep foundation, firmly anchored in the structure of the ego. Without this foundation, the surface agitation would quickly dissipate and fade away, giving way at last to something else. ...

18.2.11. The other Self- even

18.2.11.1. (a) Rancune en sursis - ou le retour des choses (2)

Note 149 □ (December 20) Since the reflection of five days ago, and that especially continued in the second p. 692 from that day's notes, "Le nerf secret" (n° 145), I feel that work on the famous "foreground" of the Burial painting has suddenly taken another turn. Before this reflection, I'd felt in the position of a It's a little embarrassing to be faced with a jigsaw puzzle, where you don't seem to understand much at all. Since April, I'd been gathering the pieces one by one, and taking careful inventory. It wasn't that I was short of pieces, no, it was more that I felt I had too many! In any case, there had to be enough to make a picture, partial perhaps, but a picture that would stand up. The last piece of the puzzle I threw on the table was that of "reversal" (of yin and yang), held in reserve from the very beginning of "The key to yin and yang" (as an "association of ideas" to which I promised myself I'd return), and finally bursting out with unforeseen force in "The key to yin and yang".

note "Les obsèques du yin (yang enterre yin (4))", November 10 (n° 124) The thirty-five days that followed, until five days ago, were spent turning over and over the pieces already uncovered, as the most compelling associations demanded my attention²²⁸ (*). I expected that, in doing so, the pieces would eventually come together, revealing the unknown picture. Nothing of the sort happened. On the contrary, they continued to thumb their noses at each other, as if fragments of ten different newspaper clippings had been thrown in a jumble and I had been left to assemble them! I was beginning to wonder whether I wouldn't be obliged, at the end of the day, to make a final inventory of the pieces, and another of the question marks concerning their assembly, and call it a day. ...

The situation changed five days ago, when, by dint of turning and flipping these famous coins, some palpating them and smelling them, something finally "clicked", when one of them (that of a **craving** behind a certain **style**) was suddenly recognized as "neuralgic". I had the immediate impression of a **qualitative change**, that a **perspective** that had hitherto been lacking was already being organized p. 693

²²⁸(*) The "piece" that had been the starting point for all our thinking on yin and yang since the beginning of October only came back to the fore fourteen days later, on November 24, in the note "Le renversement (3) - ou yin enterre yang" (n°

from that particular piece. That's how I put it the following day, taking up my thoughts in the following note ("Passion et fringale - ou l'escalade", n° 146). And my premonition began to be confirmed the very same day, with the appearance of the "**papa-gâteau**" piece, which was said to have been called the "neuralgic part" precisely for the purpose of fitting it without burrs!

The "**Superpère**" piece, which had always been there (already inherited from the first part of Récoltes et Semailles, and taken up again in the early days of "La clef du yin et du yang"²²⁹ (*)), now seems to have been written off, as if it had simply strayed there by accident. Under the fresh impression of the new "cake" piece²³⁰ (**), I tend to forget that this famous Superpère (not "cake" at all, as it happens) did indeed have something to do with the relationship between my friend Pierre and me, even if it didn't take center stage (which was not by a long shot. . .). I ended up remembering it at the next session, of course - at the very moment, in fact, when I was about to explain to myself why this eternal piece of the puzzle had nothing to do with it! It was, in fact, "just the opposite" of the cake-piece, which had just placed itself with such ease. And then no, on closer inspection, this supposedly foreign piece, whose contours had remained the vaguest, suddenly clarified its shapes, "taking on those of the image-force (conjured up by none other than my friend Pierre himself²³¹ (***)) of the **dwarf and the giant**. At first, when I saw it reappear in such strongly marked features, I expected it to be "uncommunicative" with the double neuralgic piece already in place (made up of daddy-cake, and the imperious urge to "make it work" - a little phone call here, a little phone call there. . .). And now, on the contrary, it appears as "the nerve within the nerve", as an even more neuralgic piece, fitting together without friction or detachment with the part of the puzzle already in place!

p. 694 This piece, under its former name "Superpère", had already been □ maintes fois frôlée, and even taken in the hand and turned over and over like the others, and even (I remember now) declared to be the centerpiece, the "heart of the picture" and all that; but, perhaps for want of a striking image (provided by the interested party himself), and above all, no doubt, for its absurd, aberrant nature, entirely ludicrous even in terms of the coarse "common sense" of the current and universally accepted consensus, I was embarrassed and ashamed of the damn thing, it burned in my hand: no one (including a certain "myself" who tenaciously continues to live on inside me. . .) would ever take it seriously! I might as well pack it in and "play" with more manageable pieces!

When I just spoke of "pièce maîtresse", "cœur du tableau" etc., in connection with the play that became "Le nain et le géant", it's the "self-contempt" aspect of course that I'm thinking of, rather than the "Superpère" aspect. For the moment, the latter designation for this piece-aiguillon, or "nerve within a nerve"-is hasty and unjustified. I mean, it doesn't seem, at first sight at least, that this famous faceless giant with oversized hands is anything like a father figure. If he needs a name, it's "Superman" or "Supermale", rather than "Superfather". So all things considered, the latter is still very much on the cards, for the time being at least, as is the "Supermère" piece (or "part"), to which I'll also have to return.

For the moment, the most urgent thing seems to me to be to try and situate the part of the picture already placed, with the "secret nerve" and the even more secret "nerve within a nerve", in terms of a yin-yang dynamic in the person of

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²²⁹(*) See sections on "The enemy father (1) (2)" (n° s 29,30) and the note on "The Superfather (yang buries yin (2))", n° 108.

²³⁰(**) The term "new" piece may not be entirely justified. But it is a piece, at least, that had previously escaped inventorying, so obvious was it!

²³¹(***) For further details, see the last footnote of the preceding "The nerve within the nerve - or the dwarf and the giant" (n° 148).

my friend. On this subject, I have three hard facts. Two are expressed by the yin-yin "double signature"²³² (*): my friend Pierre's basic tone is "yin", both in what we might call the "acquired personality", expressed above all in the tone of his relationships with others, and in the "innate personality" or drive, expressed above all (for an outside observer such as myself, at least) in his spontaneous working style, free from the interference of the "boss". The first fact, concerning the acquired personality, or the "structure of the ego" (or in more graphic terms, "the boss's **head**"), seems to indicate that this structuring took place in childhood, and from the very first years of life, by identification with a "yin" model. This does not exclude

a priori, that this model was the father, if he had himself (as seems to me to be the case) p. 695

an "acquired personality" with a basic yin tonality. But on the other hand, my friend's predisposition to a craving for a kind of power game which, in our country if not everywhere and always, is typically (if not exclusively) "feminine", and more precisely, which is **the** game among all others that the wife is wont to play with the husband - this predisposition makes me suppose that the identification was made with the person of the mother, and that it is from her that he has "inherited" this craving (or a propensity for such a craving), and that it is also from her that he has taken on the appropriate "style" (or "tactic"), that of the "claw in the velvet paw".

It's possible that the father was both a husband-cake and a father-cake, and that my friend had long since had ample opportunity to make him his first "guinea pig", and to get his claws (and velvet!) on him. But it's also possible that the propensity or predisposition in question in my friend remained unused until after his meeting with me, because the first designated target, namely his father, had yang aspects strongly enough marked to **"provoke"** this craving, and at the same time **give rise to** the tried-and-tested tactic of "making strong heads work". To tell the truth, none of the impressions I remember from the first years I knew my friend suggest that he was familiar with this game, or even that he had played it before. In any case, even with the benefit of hindsight, I can't detect any trace of it in his relationship with me, or with others, in his "spoiled brat" manner. So I'd be inclined to think that this propensity in him was still latent, and that it only developed and took the hold I know it has on his life and work, after my "death" in 1970 (when he was twenty-six), and thanks to a particularly tempting conjuncture.

The "third fact" to be recalled here is my friend's choice of a value system in line with generally accepted values, his choice of "virile" (or yang) values. Over the past fifteen years, these values seem to have increasingly turned to "superyang". In his case, there's an obvious contradiction in this choice: while adopting "official" **yang** values, he has nonetheless modeled himself, in most essential traits, after a **yin** model²³³ (*). And it's not just that that this choice of values is purely "bogus", that it's nothing but a false flag, flaunted for reasons of circumstance, and which would have course only in □the peripheral layers of the psyche. The image-force of p.

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the dwarf and the giant, acting from deeper layers, would lose its meaning, and also the imperious urge to overthrow that it arouses, if the valorization of yang were not also internalized in these layers. There's no doubt that this contradiction must give added impetus to this "intimate conviction" of crackedness, of insidious powerlessness - when (for want, perhaps, of an adequate "model" in his childhood on which to model himself) he knows (in his innermost being) that he is fundamentally **different** from what he **"should be"**!

If my friend, as seems plausible to me, didn't find in his father the traits that, according to the current consensus around him, should **have** been there, and that he could then have made his own, this must have aroused in him

²³²(*) The idea of a "double signature" is introduced with the note "Brothers and spouses - or the double signature", n° 134.

²³³(*) This is a kind of contradiction common especially among women, and one from which my own life has been exempt.

a diffuse **resentment**, a resentment that couldn't cling to any concrete grievance against a father whose only fault was that he was too much of a "cakewalk"! This resentment, lacking a "hook" to hang on to, would then have remained "**vacant**", **waiting for** a suitable target - a target who, first of all, was (by context) a father figure, and moreover, whose **aptitude** for this role was obvious, through the undeniable presence, perhaps even excessive, of those traits that were lacking in his "original" father. It's these traits, too, that make the newcomer "father" the ideal **target**, in the kind of "game" that's already all set in motion here, waiting only for the right partner, aka "the spare father", aka (here we go at last!) "the Superfather"!

All of a sudden, I seem to be back on very familiar ground, which I only now recognize. It's a terrain in which I've been a prisoner for twenty years, during the only marriage of my life (the marriage from which three of my five children were born). In the lines of the preceding paragraph, and without any deliberate intention (but rather as one who, cautiously, groped in the shadows to become aware of his surroundings), I have **also** just described in turn the neuralgic forces in the relationship to her father, and then to me, **of the woman who was my wife**. I can't say when or how the knowledge (or rather, the irrefutable intuition) of the silent, obstinate presence of these two forces in her, and of their mutual relationship, came to me. One day I knew, without ever having given it a moment's thought, that the inexorable force dominating my wife's relationship with me, from the very first days of our marriage, was driven by resentment towards me for not having been there for her, like **another real** father, in the days of a distraught childhood... .

□ It's true and I know, certainly, that there was nothing "clueless" about my friend's childhood, and that the personality

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that he developed and that I've known, from the sixties until now, bears little resemblance to that of my ex-wife. Yet, beyond the obvious dissimilarities, I see in the part of the picture that is emerging from the shadows, a striking similarity with another "picture", which is well known to me. This similarity appears in the nature of the relationship with the father (linked to a temperament of the father where yang traits are deficient), and in the repercussion of this on a relationship of adulthood which, in both of them, dominated his life, as the focus of the forces of conflict in both²³⁴ (*).

For a moment, I was about to overlook a third "similarity", which is not without consequence in my own life: in both the relationships in question, the **protagonist** was **none other than myself**. And what, in both cases, designated me for the role of "Superpère" that I was called upon to play, was (in addition to immaturity) that which since my childhood had been dearer to me perhaps than anything else in the world - that in which I had also invested myself most inordinately: a "build" that was more virile than nature... .

So once again, in a different and more penetrating light than eight months ago, I find myself with the feeling of a "return of things"²³⁵ (**) - with, today as in the past, a nuance of incredulous astonishment (it seems too "right" to be true!). And also, this time again but in more restrained tones than the sudden burst of laughter of yesteryear, there's the perception of a comic, adding to these inexorable "returns" the gentler note of humor.

²³⁴(*) (February 19, 1985) There is a striking kinship between my friend Pierre's relationship with me, and (since the early days of their marriage) that of my former wife. Moreover, this kinship extends beyond the relationship to my person alone, in the sense that both have developed a propensity to make certain beings, to whom bonds of affection bind me (my children in particular in one case, pupils in the other), **instruments** for reaching me through them.

²³⁵(**) See the note "Le retour des choses - ou un pied dans le plat", n° 73.

18.2.11.2. (b) Innocence and conflict - or the stumbling block

Note 150 (December 22) Yesterday again, I didn't find the time to work on my notes, except for the careful rereading and correction of the previous day's notes. Over the last few days, my energy has been diverted by tasks of □correspondence and the like, and I'm gnawing at the bit (this is nothing new!) of myself p. 698 to find myself face to face with myself, to push forward the reflection I had begun. The writing is decidedly slower in this third part of *Récoltes et Semailles*, centred on the present reflection, "The key to yin and yang", where the dynamics of yin and yang are the constant thread for penetrating further into the meaning of Burial. If I didn't take the precaution of setting the alarm clock, to allow for an interruption in the work after about three hours (just to stretch the body, or to warn me that the clock is ticking and it's time to stop), the whole night would pass like an instant! The three hours have gone by each time, and I feel as if I've barely started (or restarted), with two or three unfortunate pages I've just typed, if not just one or two, just long enough to get round to some seemingly innocuous association I thought I'd step over in the process... ..

There's an impression of extreme slowness in progress, counted in pages per hour or per day - and the natural reaction to this impression, with a hot substance right in front of my nose pulling me forward, would be to double and triple my efforts, as I used to do until just a few years ago. But I know that this is the trap to avoid - the trap of this extraordinary "ease" in the work of discovery²³⁶ (*), when it's enough just to "push" forward, to be sure of moving forward indeed, slowly perhaps but surely ; like a man holding the ploughshare of good, hardened steel, pulled by a pair of powerful, impassive oxen, and slowly and surely making his way, furrow after furrow, through dense, sometimes rough earth, yet at the same time supple and docile to the shiny ploughshare that delicately and unhurriedly opens it up, penetrates it and turns it over in wide, brown, steaming swathes, bringing intense, teeming subterranean life out into the open. The pace may be slow, but the field is vast, and each furrow dug seems to barely make a dent in the expanse that remains uncultivated. Yet at the end of the day, furrow after furrow, the field is ploughed, and the ploughman returns happy: for him, the day has not passed in vain. His toil and his love were his seed, and his joy at work, and his contentment at the end of each furrow and at the end of a long day, are his harvest and his reward.

* *

*

□With the reflection of the day before yesterday, and perhaps for the first time in the writing of *Harvest and Sowing*, p. 699

I feel as if I've stepped onto the uncertain terrain of that which is not yet directly perceived or felt, and which remains (and perhaps will remain) **hypothetical**. Lacking eyes that know how to see in what seems to me darkness and night, I groped my way along a hesitant path, with no assurance that it was "the right one". When the path forked, I didn't flip a coin to see which way I'd go; I relied on my intuition and common sense to point me in the most plausible direction to continue, though I had no idea where it would lead. The path I was following, or tracing out for myself, seemed to "stick" to the facts I knew, and that was a good sign. But it wasn't out of the question, especially where these facts were tenuous, that another, quite different path would not have "stuck" just as well, on condition perhaps that I delved a little deeper into this or that raw fact... . Then, at the bend in the road and to my own surprise, I found myself

²³⁶(*) See note "The trap - or ease and exhaustion", n° 99.

suddenly found myself back on "very familiar ground", which I had long and painstakingly traversed, and which I had come to know and leave behind. A situation which, only moments before, had seemed obscure, shrouded in the uncertain mists of "without doubt" and "perhaps", was suddenly illuminated by the light of another situation which, for its part, was understood. As I wondered about the distant origins, in myself and in the other, of the conflict in the relationship between this friend and me, they seemed to be revealed by a deep similarity, suddenly glimpsed, between this relationship and another, which had weighed on my life with a completely different weight, for twenty long years.

The appearance of this similarity was so powerful, I confess, that this feeling of hesitation, uncertainty and trial and error vanished immediately, to be replaced by a feeling of assurance and conviction. When, at the end of the reflection, I speak of the feeling ("of incredulous astonishment") that it "fell too right to be true", this feeling was the response to another, in the background, which said that "it fell too right **not to be true**"! And this feeling, surely hasty and unjustified in the present state of the facts at my disposal, has not been readjusted in the meantime; it is still present as a background note, whether I like it or not. Surely, without the help of certain experiences that I've come to understand and accept, and above all the long experience of my married life, the thought could hardly have occurred to me of this "vacant grudge" (of a grudge "on probation", in short); and this very thought was also the "detour in the road" that, in the space of a few moments, brought me once again onto the "very familiar ground" of my married experience.

p. 700 □ O^{ne} could say, certainly, that an unconscious deliberate purpose will have brought me to a place already designated in advance,

which perhaps teaches something about me and this deliberate intention, and nothing about motivations in others. Just as it is possible that an assumed experience will have enabled me to apprehend a reality in others, which would otherwise have remained entirely enigmatic, for lack of my own sensitive "antennae" (and for lack of tangible facts concerning my friend's childhood, and the personalities of each of his parents).

It seems to me that I'm very close to completing my rough sketch (à bâtons rompus!) of the "foreground of the picture" (of the Burial.) To assemble the last pieces of the puzzle that remain in my hand, I'll use as necessary the elements of apprehension (however hypothetical they may be) that appeared in the reflection of the previous note. This will also be a way of testing their coherence with all the other facts known to me.

The day before yesterday's reflection, the "Superpère" piece of the puzzle clarified its shape and contours. I had first identified it, somewhat hastily, with the piece "The Dwarf and the Giant", where the giant nevertheless appears more as a kind of "Superman" in overwhelming format, and not as the "father", or a "Superpère". But this last piece ended up appearing again in the same reflection, this time as the target of a "resentment in abeyance", a resentment in search of a target, as if the aforementioned "Superpère" had been **called** by this very resentment and had appeared in response to this call, in fulfillment of a diffuse expectation. If that's the case, it's fair to say that if the Superpère (borrowing my build and features, which were apparently tailor-made for the occasion) hadn't appeared in my friend's life, he'd have had to be invented! That's what it's all about, with nothing more hypothetical for me, in the case of the woman whose husband I was - and whose target I was, moreover, "expected to be during a young life...".

Thus, the Superpère appears as the "face side" of that "faceless giant with oversized hands" from the play "Le nain et le géant". "The dwarf" must see him mostly from behind, the giant, no doubt doing his famous "demonstrations of strength" (referred to in the October 5 note "Le Superpère" (no.° 108)). So here we have the "Superpère" piece at last, fitting in with the "giant" side of the "Le nain et le géant" piece.

As for the "dwarf" aspect of this one, its outline has also been made clearer by the reflections of the day before yesterday, which join here those of the note of October 17 "La moitié et le tout - ou la fêlure" (n° 112). Again, as

so -often, the endless rejection of "yin", "feminine" traits, in favor of "yang", "masculine" traits'□ which makes p . 701 my friend finds himself "fundamentally different from what he '**should**' be", even though he has modeled himself on a predominantly "yin" model.

It's important to emphasize here that at no time in the past did I think, nor did I want to suggest, that my friend's person was marked by a predominantly yin **imbalance**, i.e. by a deficiency, a "void" on the side of the yang, virile traits in his acquired personality. Let me remind you that the main impression I got of him, at least during the first years I knew him, was that of a **balance**, a harmony, which made him so endearing to me and to all those, it seemed to me, who knew him at the time. This impression is very closely associated with another, which I've mentioned elsewhere²³⁷ (*) - that he seemed to have retained something of the freshness and innocence of a child, in his approach to things (mathematics in particular) and also, it seemed to me, to people. This balance, and this "freshness" or "innocence", are not subject to the slightest doubt in my mind - they're **facts**, and there's no question of trying to disguise them. They were expressed in my friend by a delicate sensitivity, and, when the occasion presented itself, by the nuanced and unambiguous expression of what was perceived and seen. There was a firmness, as there was a gentleness. The gentleness has faded over the years, leaving only the empty, muffled shell of a vanished gentleness - and the firmness has become closed and hard, behind a façade of precious, borrowed half-tones. A delicate yin-yang balance was transformed over the years (probably without anyone noticing) into the eternal yang imbalance - the same one, but in a different style, that had dominated my own life since childhood. That was his choice, and those choices can change - there's no such thing as a foregone conclusion! The fact remains that I've never known my friend to have gone through a period of yin imbalance, or to have been sluggish, careless or inconsistent, and I don't think he ever was.

All this makes it at least likely that the person who served as his childhood "role model", and who surely had strongly marked yin traits, was not lacking in yang traits to balance them out. If (as I'm inclined to believe) this person was his mother, then I presume she had fairly strong yang traits (in contrast to such traits, which are probably less pronounced in the father) to appear as□ "the best choice", as a "masculine" role model for a boy; and at the same time p . 702 time, to encourage the blossoming of a harmonious temperament.

At this point, all would seem to be well in the best of all possible worlds, in a close-knit family (perhaps) untroubled by any misunderstandings. All would be for the best, were it not for one tiny stumbling block, in the form of a mute and seemingly innocuous consensus: a boy is supposed to look like his father, not his mother...

18.2.11.3. (c) Providential circumstance - or Apotheosis

Note 151 (December 23) It seems to me that to finish assembling the "puzzle" of the foreground of the Burial painting, I only have to place one last piece. This is the one I called "la Su- permère", in the note "Supermaman ou Superpapa?" of November 11 (n° 125). This "Super" appellation had been inspired, first and foremost, by the "portrait" painted of me, with superlatives, in my Eloge Funèbre²³⁸ (*). A symmetrical reflex must also have been at play, since there's a

²³⁷(*) On this subject, see the note "L'enfant" (n° 60), in Cortège V "Mon ami Pierre".

²³⁸(*) See notes "L'Eloge Funèbre (1) (2)" (n° s 104,105), and "Les obsèques du yin (yang enterre yin (4))" (n° 124).

already had "Superpère" in the air, in more ways than one! On reflection, however, the name I gave to the image that had just appeared wasn't quite right. What was evoked by this superyin image had no maternal connotations whatsoever. If it was in symmetrical relation with another image, it was that of "Superman", with muscles of steel and an IBM software brain, rather than that of "Superfather". In this case, it would be "Superwoman" or "Supernana", with heavy tits up to her navel and beyond (not to say, up to her knees. . .), and asses to match, to make Hercules dream - as for the brain, let's not talk about it. ... a bit in those tones. The inadequacy of the language, too, must have forced my hand a little, given that there's no ready-made "female" counterpart to the famous "Superman" (itself a recent invention, incidentally, a modern version of a Hercules decidedly out of his depth). I'll go for "Supernana" anyway, for want of anything better. ...

It has to be said that I've been dragging this misnamed piece around for almost a month and a half, without really doing anything with it, other than recalling it here and there for memory's sake, as a promise that it would be taken care of, □

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but later. In the end, she wasn't going to inspire me all that much, and it might well be because of that. name that didn't really fit. After all, of all the friends, (ex-)students and other colleagues I've had in the mathematical world up to the present day, I'd be hard-pressed to find a single one with whom I've played even the slightest bit of a "maternal" role, or for whom I've had the impression that they assigned such a role to me. Even those with whom I played a more "yin", receptive role, rather than the predominantly "yang" role of one who teaches, communicates and transmits, must be very rare - as far as I can see (after the years 1952, 53, when I did my thesis), only Serre, and even then. . . . If I try to remember what my current, not to say permanent, arrangements were in relation to other mathematicians, it was above all that I always had brand-new "carpets" to "place" (to use the image that was current in my time), not counting the "carpets" (also of my own making) that were less new but which (to my mind) hadn't really been used, so to speak. To put it another way, in my relationship with my fellow mathematicians, and even though we hardly ever talked about anything but maths (I must have been even worse at it than any of my colleagues and friends!), the yang predominance (or rather, the superyang imbalance) in my acquired temperament was back in full force, as in any other relationship. Perhaps even more so, given my inordinate investment in mathematics, an investment of an egotistical nature (needless to say) and motivated precisely by my long-standing superyang options!

It's these obvious aspects, manifested at every step in my relations with other mathematicians, that must have obliterated, to my colleagues as well as to myself, this **other** fact, in the opposite direction: that my style in mathematical work, and my approach to mathematics, are strongly predominantly **yin**, "feminine". It's this particularity, it seems to me, apparently rather exceptional in the scientific world, which also makes this style so **recognizable**, so **different** from that of any other mathematician. That this style is indeed "unlike any other" has come back to me through countless echoes, ever since I started publishing maths, and at least since my thesis work (in 1953). Moreover, this style has not failed to arouse resistance, which I'd like to call "visceral" - I mean, which didn't seem to me (nor do they seem to me today).

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be justified by "reasons" that might be called "objective" or "rational". This reminds me that my thesis work (in which I introduced, among other things, nuclear□spaces), which I had submitted to *Memoirs of* the American Mathematical Society, had been rejected by the first referee, a well-known mathematician who had worked in the same field, and who had considered my work to be more or less muddy. It was thanks to Dieudonné's energetic intervention that my thesis was published, despite the unfavorable opinion.

and rejection) that go with these values. The reaction of resistance to my particular style of work, the embodiment of a creative approach with a "feminine" underpinning, simply stems from the common conditioning of the scientist in the world of today and of recent decades - the scientific world, at any rate, as I've always known it.

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Like any other reaction resulting from conditioning, there is nothing "rational" about it, and in the one where it manifests itself, there's considerable resistance to even thinking about examining its meaning. It's strongly felt to be **its own justification** - a bit like the aversion to "faggot" in most good-natured circles, or that to "metèque", which is also very local. And yet, in my case, I didn't sense in this reaction a hint of (conscious or unconscious) enmity towards me, but rather an attitude of **reserve**, of unfavorable prejudice, **towards my work alone**. Only when it became clear that I was doing things with my style (or in spite of my style, never mind!) that people hadn't been able to do before (and that they couldn't really do anything else either, after the fact) - only then were these reservations relinquished, as if with regret perhaps... . In any case, if in some people these reserves remained in tacit, unconscious form, I was too locked up in my work and my tasks to perceive them.

To tell the truth, it seems unlikely to me that such a "visceral reaction" could magically disappear, simply because Mr. so-and-so has demonstrated theorems that we hadn't been able to demonstrate before. At the level at which deliberate statements of acceptance and rejection are made and unmade, one thing and the other ("such and such a way of working should not be allowed", and "Mr. so-and-so has demonstrated such and such theorems") are really unrelated!

You might say that it's only natural that things changed after I withdrew from the mathematical scene - once I was no longer there, in short, to "cut a rug" for those who would pretend to be picky about my style, but couldn't do the same with their own. This "explanation" is flawed, however, because it doesn't take into account the nuance of derision, of hushed malice, which didn't exist before. Nor is there anything in what I know of that would lead me to suppose that between 1957 and 1970 I had the time to make myself so disagreeable to the entire congregation of my fellow members that a grudge or revenge motive might have come into play after my departure. With many friends in the world I was leaving, I had maintained warm, sometimes affectionate relations, and (as I have said elsewhere) I cannot recall a single relationship of enmity with a fellow mathematician from before 1970.

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There was, however, a **subsequent** grievance against me on the part of the Congregation, the cause of a kind of collective "rancor", and in any case, a collective act of "reprisal", which, though it remained unspoken, was nonetheless

of "unfailing efficiency". I probed this "reprisals for dissent" aspect in the May 24 note, "The Gravedigger - or the whole Congregation" (n° 97). In this note, I left out a certain tone in these reprisals, with regard to myself and those who had the imprudence to claim to be me.

the tone of derision, which goes beyond the simple "end of refusal". And every time I felt this "puff", **it was a certain style that was the designated target**. To put it another way, it's the particularity that distinguishes this style from any other, its "yin" or "feminine" nature, that has been the providential circumstance, eagerly seized upon by the collective unconscious to wash away the affront of dissent, adding to the reprisal of **exclusion** the extra dimension of **derision** - derision that is supposed to designate, through a certain style, the irrefutable signs of **impotence**.

And now that the word "impotence" has finally named a certain unspoken fact, it becomes apparent how this same "providential circumstance", added to that of my "death", becomes the opportunity to

for my friend and ex-student and ex-heir Pierre Deligne, to make **this** role **reversal** tangible, credible and **raw**, this insane and seemingly hopeless desire of the man who feels like a "**dwarf**" in front of a "**giant**"! "Perched on the shoulders of a giant" (to use the very words that appear as the final word in his curriculum vitae²⁴⁵ (*)), from now on he will be the "giant" for all to see, and he will point out to the derision of the entire Congregation, like a "dwarf", a great braggart and a great vacuum-breaker, this giant of pure junk - but yes! - and yet he had been (and remains in spite of everything...) "a perpetual and burning challenge for those who feel overwhelmed by the irremediable condition of a dwarf... .".

This spectacular reversal in the distribution of the roles "dwarf" and "giant", between himself and the Other (the One who is felt to be a **challenge**, and who must be supplanted at all costs) this reversal is also at the same time **the reversal in the roles "feminine" and "masculine"**. It is indeed as an incarnation (pletho- of the **feminine** (never clearly named and yet ardently repudiated), than that of the feminine (never clearly named and yet ardently repudiated), than that of the feminine (never clearly named and yet ardently repudiated).

who was (and remains despite everything. . .) a giant, is designated to the □foule (and above all to the Prestidigitateur himself. . .) p. 708

as a pitiful dwarf and an object of derision; and it's also as a heroic and exemplary embodiment of **virility** that the one who was a dwarf (and who, despite everything and deep down, "knows" that he is and remains one, by immutable condition. . .) finds himself a giant with hands of steel, acclaimed by the same crowd that has come out to boo the Other.

This reversal, however symbolic it may be, is visibly out of all proportion to the "private" reversal operated by virtue of a tried-and-tested tactic (known as the "velvet paw") in the restricted and inconsequential circle of "between four eyes"; a gentle little merry-go-round where he feels he holds the strings that "make the Other walk" and turn... . The dwarf making the giant walk, all right, but still and irremediably a dwarf! Whereas the apotheosis of the dwarf who finds himself giant and even higher perched, and who designates to the derision of all the very one on whom he is perched - this apotheosis takes place in the middle of a public square, before a large and jubilant crowd, who have come to acclaim the Eulogy of a deceased and buried "dwarf", as the "highlight" of a superb and delectable Funeral Ceremony.

18.2.11.4. (d) Disavowal (1) - or reminder

Note 152 (December 24) With yesterday's reflection, I feel I've just about finished "assembling" this first plan of the Burial picture, at least as well as I feel able to do so with the "pieces" of the puzzle I now have. It goes without saying that in this second part of my reflection on the Burial (the third part of Récoltes et Semailles), my aim has been, no longer to gather material facts (I have gathered enough of these in the "investigation" part, in Cortèges I to X), but to arrive at an understanding of the **inner workings** of the Burial, through the secret **motivations** (most often unconscious, no doubt) in each of the many protagonists²⁴⁶ (*). These motivations derive, first and foremost, from the nature of the interested party's relationship with my modest person (as the "deceased"); or, more precisely perhaps, with what I represent for him/her for one reason or another, linked or not to my departure from the mathematical scene and the circumstances surrounding it.

□The "foreground" consists, apart from myself, in the one of all who played at my funeral the role of the "priest in chasuble", or of the "Grand Officiant aux Obsèques". He is also, among those who were friends or students in the mathematical world before my departure, the one with whom I was most closely linked,

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²⁴⁵(*) On this subject, see the last footnote in "The nerve within the nerve - or the dwarf and the giant", n° 148.

²⁴⁶(*) (December 31) This "statement", taken literally and given the number of its "many protagonists" (and would there be

only ten!), would of course be entirely out of reach. Apart from my friend Pierre, the best I can do is to get a general idea, by identifying "motivations" and "intentions" as best I can in a "collective unconscious", which at best only approximates those of a particular "protagonist".

by mathematical affinities of exceptional strength; and the only one, too, who continued a personal relationship with me after I left, a relationship that continues to this day. For all these reasons, I have a wealth of "data" about him that is unmatched by anything else known to me among the participants in the funeral. Finally, of all the mathematicians I've known²⁴⁷ (*), he is undoubtedly also the one, by far, whose role in his life he assigned to me weighed the heaviest - much heavier, visibly, than that commonly assigned to his teacher, even in the practice of an art to which one would have devoted oneself body and soul (as I myself had devoted myself to it). I've come to realize this over the last ten years or so, and that the role he assigned me also spilled over into his mathematical passion (and into what ended up taking its place). This perception in me, which had remained diffuse for all those years, became considerably clearer and fleshed out in the course of my reflection on L'Enterrement, and right up to yesterday.

It seems to me that with yesterday's reflection, along with this first plane of the picture centered on the relationship between my friend Pierre and myself, the "third plane" has finally been put in place and assembled, consisting of "the whole Congregation", rushing in jubilant to participate in the Funeral and Burial with their eager acquiescence. As I wrote yesterday, what was still missing from the image that had emerged in the course of the reflection of the note (of May 24) "The Gravedigger - or the whole Congregation", was the nuance of **derision** put into the exclusion of the one treated as deceased and as a "stranger", an "outsider". The meaning of this derision, made clear as early as the note (November 10) "Les obsèques du yin (yang enterre yin (4))", was recalled and put into perspective yesterday: it's derision of what is felt (on an informal level) to be "feminine", and which is therefore the object of a "visceral" reaction of rejection, by equating (equally informal) the "feminine" with "impotence" - man alone, in his triumphant virility, being supposed to be the bearer of "power", of creative force. I've also emphasized the entirely refractory nature of the "feminine".

We can't deny common sense and reason to such visceral assimilations, the result of conditioning, when the ideas and images it arouses are felt with such force of conviction and evidence, that they're as their own justification.

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There is one aspect, however, which appeared in a sudden flash with the final word in the note "Les obsèques du yin", which has not yet been taken up. Here are the lines that end the reflection in that note:

"These are no longer the funerals of a person, nor those of a work, nor even those of an inadmissible dissidence, but the funerals of the 'mathematical feminine' - and even more profoundly, perhaps, in each of the many participants applauding the Funeral Eulogy, **the funerals of the disowned woman who lives within himself.**"

It even seems to me, now that I think about it, that this aspect was more or less overlooked in the case of my friend Pierre himself, about whom I have no shortage of first-hand facts! If this aspect was even remotely present, and perhaps felt by an attentive reader, it must have been between the lines rather, when attention was mostly absorbed by the various angles of the "reversal of yin and yang" aspect - (an aspect which, at first glance at least, seems specific to the person and particular role of my friend in the Burial). This omission reminds me that I'll have to talk again (in a few days 2) about my friend's last visit, from October 10 to 22 (reported in the note of October 21, with a promise to come back to it "in a few days". . .). This will be the most propitious moment, it seems to me, to examine one last (?) angle of the "reversal" - with the reversal of the original yin-yang balance **in the very person of** my friend. This is yet another **burial** of certain original yin traits in him, under the iron rule of yang traits that appeared later and took possession of the place. I find myself here, in a new and more

²⁴⁷(*) And even among all the people I've known, with only two exceptions.

deep, in the face of this startling realization that had already occurred to me more than once²⁴⁸ (*): that in believing he was burying the man who had been his master (and who still remained a friend), it was none other than **himself** that he was actually burying with his own hands!

So if I return once again to the "third plane" or "background plane", to this "Congregation" alias "mathematical community", the few lines quoted earlier would suggest that what I felt so strongly in the case of my friend Pierre, could well also be true for "each of the many participants applauding the Funeral Eulogy". It is this aspect, it seems to me, that I still need to examine somewhat, p. 711 before I felt fully satisfied and (provisionally?) considered the "background shot" (as well as the foreground) of the painting of my funeral to be complete.

(December 25) Yesterday, on the pretext that it was Christmas Eve, I treated myself to a real "high", staying on top of my notes until just after 3 a.m. (for once!). It's true that the whole day had been scattered with other tasks, and (having reread the previous day's notes) there were only a few hours of the night left, if I wanted to continue the same day. As is often the case, in the end I didn't even manage to tackle anything I had in mind when I sat down in front of the white paper! Instead, I took stock of where I was in the "picture" of the Burial, and highlighted an aspect, in both the "foreground" and the "background", that was still unclear: that of the "**burial of the disowned woman**" who lives in each of the participants in my funeral.

Clearly, in this quotation, the expression "burial" is used as an image to designate an act of **disavowal** and **repression** (or "repression", to use a received terminology). In order to disavow and repress something (in this case, something that "lives" within oneself), one must first make sure that this "something" is indeed present, "alive" (even if miserably). We're talking here about the "woman" in every being, whether male or female, i.e. the "side" of the person that is made up of traits, qualities, impulses or forces of a "feminine" or "yin" nature. This simple, essential fact - that in every being, woman or man, lives **both** "the woman" **and** "the man" - is an extraordinary fact that is still generally ignored today. I myself only learned it eight years ago, when I was in my forty-seventh year²⁴⁹ (*).

Of course, "psychoanalysts" have "known" about it and talked about it for a long time now. There are certainly plenty of books about it, and everyone has heard a little about it, just as I had. In fact, "everyone" is quite willing to admit that there must be some truth to it, as long as it's people with recognized expertise who say so, and there are books written about it, and everything. Yet to have heard of it and be "all ready to admit... ", and even having read a book or even p. 712 ten on this subject, or even (I'd venture to say) to have written one, or even several, does not in itself imply that you "know" the thing; at least, not in a stronger and, above all, less useless sense, than that of a simple memorization of ready-made formulas, like "Freud (or Jung, or Lao-tzu. . .) said that. . . ". Such formulas constitute a certain cultural baggage, a kind of calling card for a "cultured" person, "in the know" about this or that, or even sometimes (with diplomas to match) an expert in this or that, and as such they can even be admitted to have a certain "usefulness"; what's certain is that everyone is very attached to it, to the baggage they've accumulated left and right, at school and in books, in "interesting conversations" etc., and which they carry around with them, and which they carry with them through thick and thin, like a bulky, flashy trophy, for the rest of their lives. When I irreverently implied earlier that this precious baggage was "useless", I meant: useless for something that, in any case, nobody

²⁴⁸(*) This "observation" appears for the first time in the reflection in the note "L'Enterrement" (n° 61).

²⁴⁹(*) On this subject, see the note "Acceptance (the awakening of yin (2))", n° 110.

and is even shunned like the plague by everyone, namely, learning about oneself. Or to put it another way: that this baggage is useless if you want to **take charge of your life**, that is, if you want to digest and assimilate the substance of your own experience, and thereby mature and renew yourself... .

If I were to sum up in a few words the essential content of my long reflection on yin and yang, it would be by "recalling" this "simple and essential fact", which I have just recalled. If there's a reader who's followed me this far, and if he hasn't yet sensed, in terms of his own experience, this fact : that there is "woman" in him, even though he is a man, and that there is "man" in him, even though he is a woman - it's because, in making this vain effort to "follow" me, he would have wasted his time overloading a baggage, no doubt already heavy, with yet another weight, labelled "Harvest and Sowing". And if he were a man, and even if he weren't one of the participants in this funeral, of which he would have had no knowledge or suspicion before reading me, it's a safe bet that he too, day after day and without his own knowledge, "buries a disowned woman who lives inside himself" (just as I myself had done in the past and for most of my life).

p. 713 There are a thousand and one ways for a man to "bury" the woman who lives inside him, as also for a woman to "bury" the man who lives inside her²⁵⁰ (*), that is-□à-directly : to disown and repress him. One of the most

The most common way of "burying" something that is alive in oneself is through attitudes or acts of rejection of that same thing, when it is apparent in others. This rejection is none other than the "visceral reaction" I mentioned yesterday in a case in point. What gives the reaction of rejection its strength ("visceral") is **not** really (as I seemed to imply yesterday) because the thing rejected in another person simply goes against a set of "values" that would have our full and undivided support. Those who know themselves to be "strong" are not offended by the sight of "weakness". On the contrary, the strength of the reaction comes from the fact that this thing, observed in others and "out of place", **calls us into question ourselves**. It's like an insidious **reminder**, immediately rejected, of something concerning us, which deep down **we know**, even though we'd like to hide it from ourselves and from others; a reminder which then takes on the tones of a silent and fearsome challenge. In such a context, a benevolent attitude of tolerance towards the apparent "flaw" in others would appear to us as a perilous admission of connivance, to be avoided at all costs. On the other hand, by rejecting them, we unequivocally disassociate ourselves from the other person, in short, we give convincing proof (first and foremost, to the inner Censor within ourselves) that we ourselves are free of reproach, that we are and remain conformist and "good-natured". At the same time as **an act of unconditional obedience** to certain value **norms**, distinguishing what is honorable from what is inadmissible, the reaction of rejection is at the same time a **symbolic act of burial**, whereby the thing in ourselves "that doesn't belong" is eagerly "classified" as something that **"isn't"**. **Not in us, anyway!**

In this picture, the infinitely variable form that rejection takes seems to me to be of no consequence. It can be outraged rejection, with all the signs of indignation or disgust, or it can be rejection through irony or "delicately dosed" disdain. It can be expressed in clear, unequivocal words, or it can be merely suggested, with allusive or double-entendre words, or even without words, with the right smile (or lack of smile. . .), placed where it's most appropriate. Rejection can be fully conscious, or it can be confined to the penumbra of what is barely visible to the eye, or take refuge in the complete shadow where the eye never penetrates.

p. 714 The intensity of the rejection reaction, too, is infinitely variable'□ depending on whether the "questioning" in question

²⁵⁰(*) The same goes for a man who "buries the man living inside him", or for a woman who "buries the woman living inside her", attitudes that are far from as rare as one might think.

is felt to be relatively harmless, or indeed frightening. The ones that provoke perhaps the strongest reactions are those that directly concern **sex**. This extreme susceptibility has diminished somewhat over the last few generations. I have noticed, however, that things as universal in nature as the so-called "homosexual" and "onanistic" (or, to put it more kindly, "narcissistic") aspects of the amorous impulse are as strongly rejected today as they were in the past. This is the case, at least, if one is confronted with it, not in an "interesting conversation" about Roman mores or depth psychology, but in everyday life. Even between the eyes, it's rare for us to talk about the manifestations, in our own person, of these aspects of the sex drive (generally experienced as rather embarrassing "burrs", to say the least).

In the case in point, the rejection I experienced before I left the mathematical scene was certainly not as strong as the one I've just described. It's true that the object of this rejection, namely, "feminine" ways of being and doing things when we're supposed to be "among men", does have a "sexual" connotation, in a broader sense of the term than that linked to the mere evocation of actions and gestures revolving around "the buttocks" and the rest. I have no doubt that this connotation was generally felt, at an unconscious level²⁵¹ (*). It was, however, discreet and indirect enough to exclude any brutal reactions, going beyond a simple "reserve" with regard to my "seriousness", my "solidity" as a mathematician. What's more, the fact that my "cross" was a purely intellectual activity made it seem relatively harmless, far removed (what would you expect? . . .) from any disturbing, scabrous association of a man-woman belly-dancing up her skirt! Nevertheless, after my first contacts with the mathematical world (in 1948), it took almost another ten years for the reservations my style aroused, even within a benevolent microcosm, to finally disappear - from my sight, at least. The situation changed again after my departure, however, as an atmosphere of benevolence, friendship and respect for me was suddenly altered (without my realizing it for the next six years) by what was felt by this same microcosm to be "dissidence", and disavowal.

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□ I'm not sure, to tell the truth, if this change of mood was really as "sudden" as I've just to say. Or to put it another way, I don't have enough facts to give me any idea of **how the** change I was suddenly confronted with after I left in 1970, in 1976²⁵² (*). It's true that all that time I'd had little contact with the world I'd left, which might have given me a sense of its "temperature" and evolution. What is clear to me is that in this evolution, the attitude of the group of all those who had been my students, and of their uncontested leader Pierre Deligne, played a decisive role. The Burial could only have taken place, and the atmosphere that gave rise to it, thanks to a "unanimous agreement"²⁵³ (**) and without fail, encompassing the "three planes" of this Burial: "L'héritier" (aka Grand Officiant aux

p. 715

²⁵¹(*) On this subject, see the note "Les obsèques du yin (yang enterre yin (4))", n° 124.

²⁵²(*) It was, I recall, during my unsuccessful efforts to get Yves Ladegaillerie's thesis published. This episode is mentioned in the two notes "On n'arrête pas le Progrès" and "Cercueil 2 - ou les découpes tronçonnées", n°s 50, 94.

²⁵³(**) For the first appearance in our reflections of this observation of "unanimous agreement", see the note of the same name (capitalized!), n° 74.

Obsèques), the group of "cohéritiers" or "proches", formed by the eleven other "élèves d'avant", and finally "la Congrégation" (perhaps not "toute entière" - we'll have to come back to that. . .). How this perfect harmony came about remains unknown to me, and perhaps will remain so. At present, I don't feel prompted to probe it, and I doubt that anyone else will do it for me (quite the contrary!).

This reminds me that, when writing the previous note "The providential circumstance - or the apotheosis", the question had occurred to me as to **which** of the two, "The Congregation" or "the priest in the chasuble", ultimately represented **the** master force at work in the Burial, of which the other would have been the "instrument", as it were²⁵⁴ (***). I didn't dwell on it then, not being sure even if the question made sense - it had

p. 716

It's a bit like the famous chicken-and-egg question! What is certain is that neither of them (the "priest", nor the "Congregation") could do without the other's help in implementing the Funeral.

Another question, however, which seems to me to have a clearer meaning, is which of the two was more heavily involved in this work. It's true that "the Congregation" is not a person, and it's improper to speak of "his" investment in a task. But it's also true that for me, this personified entity takes on a concrete form, through ten or twenty **people** I've known well, with each of whom, for a decade or two or more, I've been in close, friendly relations. So when I speak of the "investment" of the Congregation, I'm thinking in concrete terms of the "sum" of the investments of all those former friends who were involved in my funeral. Thus clarified, it seems to me that the question is no longer rhetorical.

The answer that comes to me, without a hint of hesitation or doubt, is that there is **no common ground** between the investment of the "heir" and that of the Congregation - any more, in fact, than there is in an ordinary funeral. This is all the more true when the inheritance is important to the heir (while no-one in the Congregation has anything to gain for himself), and when the ties (of attraction or conflict) that bind him to the deceased are strong and play a vital role in his life. If there is any doubt in such a situation, it can only stem from the presence of "co-heirs" among those close to the deceased. (We're talking here about the "second plan", rather than the "background" formed by the bulk of the Congregation). In my case, the only one of these "close relations" and co-heirs whose part in my funeral could be of comparable weight to that taken by the principal heir Pierre Deligne, seems to me to be Jean-Louis Verdier, playing the role of Second Officiant aux Obsèques. This appellation is not gratuitous, as on more than one occasion during the funeral, I saw both of them officiate in perfect harmony! But as I've already written elsewhere, apart from some of J.L. Verdier's public acts, I know very little about him since we lost touch; too little, no doubt, to be able to form even the slightest idea of the ins and outs of his relationship with me, or with his prestigious "protector" and friend.

p. 717

Note 153 (December 26) In yesterday's reflection, I tried to clarify this intuition, which appeared "in flash" on November 10, that in "each of the many ^{participants}" at my funeral, it represented the burial-the "disowned woman who lives within himself". When I have spoken and spoken again here of "each" of the participants, it's a rather exaggerated expression, which it's perhaps best not to take entirely literally. At the very least, I'm convinced that this intuition is right for everyone.

²⁵⁴(***) I recall that in the May reflection, in the note "Le Fossoyeur - ou la Congrégation toute entière", I had realized that my friend had been an **"instrument"** of a **collective will** of flawless coherence". The lines that follow do not really contradict this intuition, but rather complement it, leaving open the possibility of a certain symmetry in the relationship between the "Congregation" and "the priest in the chasuble".

of those (and I'm sure there are many) in whom this "visceral reaction of rejection" to my particular style of mathematics has taken place, a reaction that has been the focus of my attention over the past three days.

On the other hand, it's clear that such a reaction is **not** present in my friend Pierre, or at least, that there was no trace of it, quite the contrary, in the five years preceding my departure. It was the deep **kinship** between my style of approach to mathematics and his own that gave rise to such perfect communication during those years, and was also the cause of that uncommon affinity between us mathematically, an affinity that he and many others must have felt, as I myself did. It was this kinship, too, that was surely the cause of the **fascination** that my mathematician persona and my work exerted on him, not only in those years (when it was expressed "positively"), but also in the years that followed and right up to the present day (when it has been expressed mostly "negatively", but just as eloquently²⁵⁵ (*)). I have no doubt that if there had been in him the slightest reservation, the slightest unease about my style of working and approach to mathematical things, in those early years, I wouldn't have failed to sense it.

It's true that from those years onwards, my friend did his utmost to erase from the outside world the role I had played for him, if only as the person who had taught and passed on something important to him, and from whom he had drawn important ideas for his work - and a fortiori, to erase this relationship of affinity, even fascination. After my departure, there was a gradual escalation in the disavowal of my person, not only through silence, but also through the affectation of disdain towards my style of working, and vis-à-vis many of the ideas and notions I had introduced. The first trace of such an affection that is \square connue to me was in 1977, on the occasion of "operation SGA 4"¹²⁵⁶₂ (*). p. 718 I haven't tried to follow the progression of this climb step by step, and I don't feel inspired to do so (as I said yesterday, on a related matter).

This disavowal of a style of approach closely related to his own, and of a body of work from which his own emerged, is akin to a **disavowal of himself**. When I first thought about this disavowal of my style and my work (while I'm still mostly under the impression of the five years of close mathematical contact before I left in 1970), I was inclined to play it down, to give it only a kind of **tactical** significance, as a particularly tempting **means** of supplanting and satisfying antagonistic impulses, by seizing the windfall of a certain "providential circumstance". This is indeed the tone of the note from il three days ago, "La circonstance providentielle - ou l'apothéose" (N° 151). And what I just remembered, Knowing that in the years before my departure there was no trace of rejection of her own style or of mine, also points in this direction, and not in the direction of the situation examined yesterday: that of a disavowal of "the woman who lives within oneself" (if only, among other things, through a certain approach to mathematics), a disavowal that would have **pre-existed the implementation of L'Enterrement**.

This does not prevent the person who chooses such means from **paying for them**, whether he likes it or not. To be operational, this "affectation of disdain" for a certain style had to be played out, not only in relation to others, but also and above all, **in relation to oneself**. But one cannot disavow, before others and oneself, a "style" that is also profoundly one's own, **while practicing it** as if nothing had happened. This "tactical disavowal" of others, by the logic of things, involves a disavowal, a **repression of** a part of oneself - in this case, by the repression of the style of approach to mathematics that is one's own, by virtue of one's "own" culture.

²⁵⁵(*) Or at least, this fascination must have been, at the outset, the force in the "positive sense" (that **of identification** with the one who is felt to be similar) among the two forces at play in the establishment of this ambiguous, conflicting relationship of identification with my person.

²⁵⁶(*) On this subject, see "Two turning points" and "The clean slate", n°s 66, 67.

nature of the creative force within him.

p. 719 This observation is not the result of a direct perception of a fact. It is the result of a short reflection, making use of known facts and drawing common-sense "conclusions" from them. I've learned to be careful with such conclusions (and especially, outside mathematics!), and not to rely on them. only if they are confirmed after the fact by other facts. But I remember here, very opportunely, that I had been led, in terms of what is known to me of Deligne's work, to note that there is no trace in this work of certain inclinations (of a "yin" nature) in my friend, which were nonetheless quite apparent in the years before my departure, and which I also recognized in myself. I wrote about this in some detail in my notes of a month ago (November 26 and 28) "Yin the Servant and the new masters", and "Yin the Servant (2) - or generosity"²⁵⁷ (*). Perhaps the most important of these things is a certain humility, which allows us to see (and describe, without fear of looking foolish) simple, silly things to which no one has ever deigned to pay attention. The best things I've brought to mathematics myself²⁵⁸ (**) are just such things. Most of my work, and that of my most brilliant pupil, would never have been written if I had disavowed this inclination of my nature, which was not to everyone's liking. ... This propensity (or "inclination") is intimately linked to another, without which its effect would remain extremely limited. It's an attitude of humility again, and of "service": when it's a question of getting to know and describing with delicacy and under all its facets this new thing scorned by all, of not finding one's time too precious to devote ten pages to it if necessary (instead of being content with two lines: here's the thing - you can do what you like with it!), or even ten thousand; to spend a whole day on it (for a man who has plenty of other things to worry about. . .), or a whole life, if need be.

When I spoke of "new worlds" to be discovered, in a somewhat haughty tone perhaps, I was talking about nothing other than **this**: seeing and receiving what seems infinitesimal, and carrying and nurturing it for nine months or nine years, the time it takes, in solitude if need be, to see a vigorous, living thing develop and blossom, made itself to engender and conceive.

If this propensity, which could be called "maternal", is today the object of derision, it is to the "benefit" of attitudes felt to be "virile", which tolerate only one possible type of approach to mathematics: that of "muscle", to the exclusion of "guts". Real math", also known as "hard math".

p. 720 (or "**hard** maths"), as opposed to the (unappetizing) "**soft** maths", □c' est les démonstrations en dix ou cinquante pages serrées, de théorèmes-au-concours (of proverbial difficulty, or it's no game at all!), making use of all the "well-known" theories, notions and facts available on the left and right. As for the "wood", it's just there, that's what it's there for! And as for those who have patiently cleared the land*, who have sown, planted, smoked and pruned throughout the seasons and over the years, to make these spacious, slender-trunked forests grow and spread out, so much in their place (where the bush was thick and impenetrable) that you'd think they'd been there since the creation of the world (as a backdrop, no doubt, and as a reserve of "all wood") - these people, who are only good for producing fluffy articles (or even fluffy books or series of fluffy books, if they find publishers foolish enough to print them), and unreadable to boot, are "soft math" retards, not to say "flabby" - but no matter how virile we may be, we're no less polite...

With this beautiful flight of fancy, I suddenly feel like I'm back at the starting point of this long meditation on the

²⁵⁷(*) These are notes n° s 135, 136. The sub-note to the second cited note (n° 136) should also be added.

²⁵⁸(**) See sub-note no. ° 136 cited in the previous footnote.

yin and yang - to the very first note of early October, "Le muscle et la tripe (yang enterre yin (1))" (n° 106). It's the same burial again, at parade pace and to the sound of a bugle, of what is "feminine", buried by the male disdain of Bras-de-Fer aka Cerveau d' Acier aka Superman. This burial doesn't just take place in the small mathematical microcosm, that's for sure, and its scope goes beyond any specific case, which can however be used to smell it a little closer. And that smell is one of the main lessons I've learned from Burial, in which I appear to be dead before my time.

When I narrow the focus of my attention even further, to focus on the particular role played by my friend Pierre, I see in Burial yet another meaning. Once again, I see a **reversal**. As I said yesterday, without thinking I'd come back to it so soon, it's no longer a reversal in a **relationship** (real or fictitious) that links him to another, but a reversal that takes place **in his very person**. He is not sought after for his own merits (as the object, perhaps, of a "foolish desire". . .), and he is no longer limited to being purely symbolic (while, at the end of a magnificent sleight of hand, the one who felt "dwarfed" does not cease to feel just as dwarfed, as if he hadn't just been "dwarfed").

convinced himself that he had become a "giant". . .). It's a reversal, I wouldn't say irreversible, but at least perfectly **real**. It starts from a state of harmonious balance of creative□"feminine" and "masculine" impulses, p. 721 with a predominantly feminine note. The result is a state of war and repression, where **attitudes** and **poses** (egotistical, like all attitudes and poses), flying the "virile" flag, obstinately repress the **creative force**, derided and symbolically "buried", in the form of a grotesque, flabby effigy, with the features of the "Superfemale".

In less nuanced terms, but more vivid and striking perhaps: a "**feminine**" being, slender and vigorous, supple and **alive**, has been metamorphosed, by a permanent trick of prestidigitation, into a "**virile**" being, indomitable- sand, stiff and **dead**.

18.2.11.5. (f) Staging - or "the second nature

Note 154 (January 1, 1985) Five days have passed, taken up by various occupations. The end of the year was the perfect opportunity to write letters that had been outstanding for weeks or months, not to mention a few cards of good wishes, in response to those received around Christmas. We also had to build compost heaps with manure that had already been brought in two or three months ago, and plant waste from the garden and the landfill, or brought in from the municipal dump, to have good compost ready for the garden in early spring. As the site is on a slope, an additional terrace had to be built next to the one already provided for the "day-to-day" composting of household waste.

With all this going on, I've hardly found time to work on my notes, except for housekeeping work. I have reread with great care, still making a few alterations here and there, the entire reflection since the "Masters and Servants" section (i.e. since the November 24 note "The reversal (3) - or yin buries yang").

(n° 133)), adding the footnotes already provided for the last fortnight's notes. He The main aim was to have a manuscript ready for typing, but quite apart from any practical issues, this re-reading was useful in regaining an overview of the thinking that had taken place over the past four or five weeks. As is also the case in long-term mathematical reflection, while the particular "moment" of reflection in which I find myself on a day-to-day basis is placed under the strongly focused beam of intense attention, the "thread" of reflection and the sinuous line it has followed in the weeks, or even in the years, that have passed since I first wrote this book, is still visible.

the months gone by, tends to get lost along the way, to drown and dissolve in the vagueness of a penumbra. I cannot say whether this is a general fact in any long □term research work, or whether it is related p. 722 to this systematic mechanism of "burying the past" in my life, to which I've already had occasion to refer.

allusion²⁵⁹ (*). In any case, as the days and weeks, even months, of long reflection go by, I lose touch with the earlier stages of my work, resulting in a growing sense of unease. This discomfort is eventually resolved by a more or less thorough retrospection of the work that has just been done, which re-establishes the contact that had gradually been loosened. I've found that these retrospective "halts" play an important role in my work. Each time, I leave with a fresh wind in my sails, relieved of the "malaise" that had signalled a gradual loss of an overall perception of **continuity in the time of** the work I'm pursuing. In my mathematical work, it's not uncommon, not to say the rule, for such a step backwards to lead me to rethink the work already done from top to bottom, and to see in a new perspective both the work done and the work still to be done²⁶⁰ (**). But whether it's a mathematical task or a meditation on my life, the "malaise" I'm talking about is always the sign of a still imperfect understanding, not only (and for good reason) of the work still to be done, but also of what has been done in the course of the work that has already been done. This imperfection is by no means reduced to a faulty memorization of each of the various stages of reflection, and of their chronological order (aspects that are relatively incidental in the case of mathematical reflection, where the object of attention is a mathematical situation, itself foreign to the psychic particularities of the person examining it, and to the events of that examination). It seems to me to be more a sign of a lack of **unity**, of insufficient **integration** of all the partial understandings that have emerged as a result of the mathematical process.

p. 723 successive stages of reflection. These partial understandings also remain imperfect, even hypothetical, as long as they are not integrated into an overall vision□, where they become clearer. mutually. To use the image of a **jigsaw puzzle** again, investigating an unknown substance is akin to putting together a jigsaw puzzle whose pieces are not given in advance, but have to be discovered in the course of the work. What's more, each piece uncovered appears at first only in a vague and approximate form, even grossly distorted in relation to the "correct", as yet unknown, form. The "local" work of reflection consists in identifying the pieces one by one, and trying as best we can to guess the contours of each one, guided above all by assumptions of internal coherence within the piece examined, or between it and other, presumed neighbouring pieces. But each of these pieces only reveals its true nature and its precise, final form, once they are assembled in the as yet unknown overall picture from which they originate. The "uneasiness" I was talking about is that which, in the presence of a multiplicity of perfectly well-spotted pieces, presented in a more or less shapeless heap, signals to me that it's time to finally assemble them - or also, if (more or less partial) assembly has already taken place, that it's still too fragmentary, or that it's out of kilter and needs to be completely reworked. To find **the** right assembly, the chronological order in which I came across the pieces of the puzzle is no doubt often incidental. But taking the pieces in hand one by one (and in that order, while we're at it), in the attitude of someone who knows they have to fit together and who is waiting for each one to be placed in its proper place, is undoubtedly an essential step in the work, to finally see them fit together. The "final word" in the previous note (from six days ago) tried to capture in words a certain strong impression in me - that of a **metamorphosis** that had taken place in my friend Pierre over the years, in the fifteen years since I left the mathematical scene. I'd seen signs of it here and there over the years, which sometimes left me flabbergasted, but not at any point.

²⁵⁹(*) This mechanism was set in motion at the moment of the "changeover" that took place in my childhood, which I place in the summer of 1936 (when I was in my ninth year). This crucial episode in the structuring of the ego is alluded to in the note "Le Suprême (yang enterre-yin (2))" (n° 108), and in the sub-note n° 108₁.

²⁶⁰(**) For similar thoughts on the role of occasional "retrospectives" in long-term work, see also the second part of the note "Rétrospective (1) - or the three sides of a picture" (n° 127), and in particular the footnote referring to it.

At the time (as far as I can remember), I stopped by to get a **general** idea of what was going on. It has to be said that, while I sensed a certain "wind", and a particular role my friend was playing in it (with the burial of motifs in particular, which I was dimly aware of(*)), I was very far from suspect the large-scale burial of myself and my entire body of work that my

²⁶¹ □ami was deftly orchestrating. It was the gradual discovery of this burial during of the past year, which was finally enough of a **shock** to shake an inertia in me, and to motivate me to finally "put down" on a situation that had seemed drowned in the mists of a distant past. So it was also in a very different frame of mind from the somewhat "routine" frame of mind that had been mine during our past encounters, in a frame of bemused attention, that I received my friend during his recent visit in October. It was during this visit that this impression appeared, or rather, this sudden perception of something that had surely been present for a long time, and which I had until then been happy to ignore: the perception of this "metamorphosis" - the very one I came back to by a different route in the reflection of the previous note. If I have rediscovered this impression, this time through what I know of my friend's mathematical work, it is surely not by the greatest of coincidences, but guided by what direct contact with him has taught me over the last two months. The force of evidence of this impression of a metamorphosis, culminating in a "virile, indemoluble, stiff and **dead** being", could certainly not come as the result of a reflection comparing and assembling facts (or partial impressions of another nature), but only through immediate experience, which remained unspoken. And this experience remains unspoken to this very moment²⁶² (*).

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In the previous note, I wrote that this "reversal" (in the very person of my friend), or this "me- tamorphosis" (to use the expression that appeared in □le "mot de la fin"), was not "sought for itsp own merits", adding in parentheses: "as the object, perhaps, of a 'foolish desire'. . . " (of this desire for reversal, therefore, mentioned in the note "The nerve within the nerve - or the dwarf and the giant"). Yet, on re-reading the notes the next day, I wasn't so sure, or whether my deliberate pro- posal of **opposing** these two "reversals" I'd discerned in Burial was really well-founded. After all, in this image of the dwarf and the giant, the "giant" embodies (as I've pointed out more than once) "virile" values, and the "dwarf" is overwhelmed by "female" de-values. And even though this image **is located** outside my friend's person, plastered as it is on his relationship with another person (me in this case), this doesn't prevent it from having no "objective" existence outside his person, but rather from being the **projection** onto the outside (onto his relationship with so-and-so) of a conflicting reality played out in **none other than himself**. To put it another way, this image of the dwarf and the giant appears as a symbolic staging of the **real conflict** at play in deeper layers than those in which the image lives, which is none other than the never-ending **conflict between the yin and yang "sides" of his person**.

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²⁶¹(*) (February 30) For echoes of this feeling, which remained in an informal and diffuse state (until the discovery of "l'enterrement dans toute sa splendeur" from April 19 last year), I point in particular to the occasional allusions, in the first part of Récoltes et Semailles (written in February and March last year), to the fate of the notion of **motif**, notably in Introduction, 4 ("A journey in pursuit of obvious things") and in the section "Le Rêveur" (n° 6). The formulation of this sentiment becomes considerably clearer in the final pages of the final section of this first part, "The Weight of a Past" (n° 50), starting with the passage "I might consider the 'Letter to . . . ' " (read: Daniel Quillen), which represents a sudden turning point in our thinking. The first "notes" to emerge from this final stage of today's reflection, and above all the double note "My orphans" and "Refusal of an inheritance - or the price of a contradiction" (n° s 50,51), written at the end of March, take stock of what was previously felt to be a diffuse state, concerning the fate of my mathematical work and a certain "wind" of fashion towards it and myself.

For a description of a particular form this "diffuse feeling" had taken in relation to the motifs, see the note "Le tombeau" (n° 71) and the following one, "Un pied dans le manège" (n° 72).

²⁶²(*) (February 30, 1985) It's still unspoken at this very moment, even though I've just given an account of my friend's visit, in the note "Le devoir accompli - ou l'instant de vérité", n° 163.

Such an **externalization** of an inner conflict, which must remain rigorously concealed, is one of the few all-purpose procedures used by the unconscious to "evacuate" the original real conflict as far as possible, substituting another that seems more "acceptable", or at least less disturbing. In this case, the chosen image-paratone remains itself unconscious (I presume so, at least); and even, I'd tend to believe, it remains confined to relatively deep layers of the unconscious, yet closer to the surface than the knowledge of the real conflict. (The latter, moreover, is none other than the "place" of this "double-sided knowledge" referred to in the note "The two kinds of knowledge".

- or the fear of knowing", n° 144.)

This suggests that the "insane desire" recalled in parenthesis in the previous note, that **"to be that giant himself, or at least to pass for him"**, - that this desire is merely the "externalized" **transposition**, in terms of the lightning rod-image of the dwarf and the giant, of the desire for a "metamorphosis" in himself; a metamorphosis if not real, at least apparent - that or a predominance in his being felt as unacceptable, the predominance of "yin" tones (felt to be "soft" and contemptible), would find itself

p. 726 □ "reversed", metamorphosed into a predominance of "yang" or "virile" tones (felt as "heroic", and as the only ones worthy of envy). Far from being in any way opposed in their intimate nature, these two desires now appear to me as inseparable, one being like the shadow, the **symbolic** and tangible **expression of** the other. As for the "metamorphosis" I came to perceive during my friend's visit (better late than never!), it now appears as the symbolic and tangible expression of the other.), it now appears as the **realization** or fulfillment of this "insane" and imperious desire; fulfillment, not through the intervention of a providential grace, but as the long-term effect of the "boss's" stubborn determination to "rectify the situation", to **remodel** himself according to borrowed traits, and to impose these same traits on the worker-child (who, as you can imagine, is never consulted for this kind of typically "boss" operation).

In the previous note, I emphasized the **reality** of this "reversal" (or "metamorphosis"). I can now see more clearly the nature and limits of this "reality". It's the reality of a **pose**, striving to mold itself according to a model, felt as the ideal to be attained. The choice of model, i.e. the type of pose adopted, undoubtedly predates our meeting. But it seems to me that the energy invested and dispersed in this pose was minimal at the time of our meeting, and in the years that followed. There was, I believe, a sudden and drastic change in the dimensions taken by this investment, by the extraordinary "occasion" created by my departure; the departure first, from my institution (where overnight my friend had to appear to himself as having surreptitiously **substituted himself for his "rival"**), and shortly afterwards, my departure from the mathematical scene. A second, even more important aspect of reality is that, by virtue of an inordinate investment, this pose ended up becoming **"second nature"**. And that's exactly what this "second nature" is, as I perceived it during our recent meeting. It's burdened with an immense inertia - just as it had been for myself. In my case, this hasn't prevented a renewal from taking place, and the fact that it has taken place in me doesn't detract from the inertia in my friend, which stands in the way of a renewal in himself.

This "new" reality that has gradually taken root in him has not "resolved" the conflict within him, any more than the occupation of a country by a neighboring country "resolves" a conflict. Rather, the conflict within my friend is "frozen".

p. 727 in a certain "balance of power", and chances are it will remain so until □ the end of its days. You could say that the structure of the ego, i.e. the mechanisms of behavior, have indeed changed, sometimes dramatically. Such changes, however, imposed by the will of the "boss", change nothing of the original nature of the worker-child's creative forces. They're simply like shackles imposed on the worker, who has to manage as best he can to work anyway, under the watchful eye of the "boss".

suspicious of the "boss", when the latter doesn't take the tools out of his hands, to show the worker what he has to do!

But that doesn't stop the business from running and making money, and the boss, by and large, is happy. There's a nasty atmosphere, sure, but like most bosses, he's thick-skinned and doesn't let it get to him, as long as the returns stay good.

18.2.11.6. (g)Another self - or identification and conflict

Note 155 (January 2) It's been over a week, since the December 24 note "Le désaveu (1) - ou le rappel" (n° 152), that I've had the impression of being just about finished with the foreground of the Burial painting. And then no - three times in a row already, I've had to come back to one point or another that doesn't seem to be right.

just three words to add, no doubt, to put a final point on a final point.

i. And each time, this "last point" kept me busy for an entire evening, when it turned out that what had seemed "not quite clear" had even remained rather obscure, and that it was by no means a luxury to return to it and find its own light. I suspect it will be no different again today, as I propose to return to a (final?) point, touched on in passing in the note "Disavowal (2)".

- or metamorphosis" (n° 153). This is one of the aspects of a relationship in which I play the role of "father". adopted" the aspect of my friend's ("ambiguous") **identification** with me. This aspect is mentioned in three or four lines, in a footnote to the note quoted. There was no further mention of it that evening, but the very next day, rereading the previous day's notes, I felt I had to come back to it. When I started thinking about it again last night, I thought I'd follow up on it, but in the end it was another of the "last points" left open since the previous reflection, which kept me busy late into the night.

On the many occasions in the course of Harvesting and Sowing when I've been led to note, in relation to such and such a friend or pupil, an aspect of adoptive or ☐adopted father, this was each time on the occasion of the appearance of

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conflictual features of this relationship. So, without any deliberate intention, it was the **conflictual** aspects of such a relationship with a "paternal" connotation that were at the center of my attention and were highlighted. I was well aware that in such a relationship, there is always a more or less strong component of **identification with the father**, with the only reservation that this identification can sometimes take a "negative" form, through identification with the "negative" (or opposite) image of a repudiated father²⁶³ (*). This knowledge remained in the background, without intervening in a visible way in the reflection, while nevertheless contributing its share to a diffuse apprehension and to the formation of a still blurred, unformed image of this or that relationship. I'm only going to say this once,

I believe, and in general terms, in the sense of identification, at the end of the section "The enemy father (1)" (n° 29):

" . . . it was the reproduction of the same archetypal conflict with the father: the Father both admired and feared, loved and hated - the Man to be confronted, defeated, supplanted, perhaps humiliated . . . but also the One we secretly wish we were, stripping him of a strength to make it our own - another Self, feared, hated and shunned. . . "

It hardly needs saying that in these lines, written on the occasion of a "retrospective on my past as a mathematician", if there was a precise case in point that guided my pen as I wrote, it was that of the relationship with my occult "heir" and ex-student-who-doesn't-say-his-name, Pierre Deligne - at a time, however, when I had no suspicion, on a conscious level at least, of the Big Show Burial orchestrated

²⁶³(*) This was notably the case in the relationship to me of three of my sons, who were by no means "adopted", let alone "adopters". . .

by him! In reproducing these lines, written over nine months ago, I was struck by the extent to which they seem to prefigure and "call forth" (as it were) the image of the dwarf and the giant, which seems to have been formed and materialized for the sole purpose of giving tangible form to the intuition that has just been expressed. However, I have no doubt that it is not in me, the chronicler-researcher, that the image has been formed, but in my friend himself.

here it is²⁶⁴ (**)!

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□ Conflicting identification is clearly seen in the words "The one you secretly want too being" and, even more strongly and unequivocally: "another Self". In the image of the dwarf and the giant, as it came to my attention on December 18 (in the note "Le nerf dans le nerf - ou le nain et le géant", n° 148), it's a question of the "insane desire **to be that giant himself**, or at least, to **pass for him**", lines that seem to come in response to the "Celui qui secrètement on voudrait être" quoted just now. But this time I'll stop here (every day has its time!), one step short of the "another Self" that came nine months earlier as a matter of course! It's true that this time, while it's a question of "working on parts", in a very specific case, it's a question of being far more careful and circumspect than in a context where we're pretending (as if nothing had happened!) to make an assertion of a general nature, which wouldn't concern anyone in particular... .

But when you think about it, it's true that it's a very small step indeed, for the unconscious hungry for **symbolic** satisfaction, which it can buy with mental images of its own making, between the "insane desire" (and obviously of considerable strength) to be this or that, and **the act of identification** with the very thing one wants to be. For identification, however unconscious, to be even remotely credible, and for the satisfactions it brings to be savoured with a minimum sense of security, it must undoubtedly be backed by certain "objective" characteristics of resemblance to the person (in this case) with whom one identifies. I presume that, in the case of my friend's relationship with me, the first "objective characteristic" likely to foster a feeling of resemblance, and an act of identification, was the strong affinity between his approach and mine to our common subject, mathematics. This would be the force "in the positive sense", "that of identification with the one who is felt to be **similar**", mentioned in passing in the footnote quoted at the start of today's reflection.

However, as I've already pointed out several times in the course of reflecting on the relationship between my friend and me, from the very first years of this relationship, he didn't fail to perceive aspects of "superyang" imbalance in the character I'd been playing since childhood, which had long since become my "second nature". I can't say whether, at the level of conscious perception, my friend was able to distinguish clearly between these two entirely distinct aspects of my person. □

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to doubt it). In any case, the superyang aspect of the "boss" in my company must have aroused in him two quite distinct types of reaction. One, the only one I perceived until the last few months, and the only one conscious in him (I presume), expressed itself occasionally in a slightly pained attitude of regret, which I've had occasion to evoke, an attitude that never left the friendly or affectionate tones. On closer inspection, the other reaction itself appears "ambiguous", made up of two apparently opposing components. One was "positive", in the sense of an unreserved **valorization of** my person as the embodiment of heroic, "larger-than-life" "values"; generally accepted values, to be sure, which one assimilates in one's early years like the air one breathes, but for which one's immediate childhood environment had probably not provided any inspiring "model". This component-la, like the feeling of **affinity** (of an altogether different nature) mentioned earlier, went hand in hand with a sense of identity.

²⁶⁴(**) On this subject, see the final footnote to "The nerve within the nerve - or the dwarf and the giant", n° 148.

the sense of **identification** with myself, without any element of antagonism. On the other hand, this antagonistic element is part of the other component, or rather, the other side (or "**reverse**") of this identification I've just described, and it remains more enigmatic for me. This is surely where the "paternal" role my friend has assigned me, by virtue of my conformity to a certain ideal "profile" supposed to embody such values, plays a crucial role. In groping my way, using the few tenuous elements at my disposal, to fathom the root cause of the strongly antagonistic content of this identification with an "adopted father" (with very "Superpère" features!), I came across (two weeks ago) a plausible, but still hypothetical, "scenario" in the December 30 note "Rancune en sursis - ou le retour des choses (2)".

This is not the place to revisit this scenario. It seems more interesting to revisit the image of "the dwarf and the giant" (which had just appeared in the note of the day before), from the point of view of this conflicting identification of my friend with myself. It then becomes clear that the two protagonists in the image, the dwarf and the giant, are none **other than himself**, or rather, **two distinct aspects of himself**. "The dwarf" represents what my friend feels to be **the original**, "unchanging" **aspect** of his being, rooted in his childhood as far back as he can remember, and no doubt even further... . It's also what is felt as the banal, insignificant, not to say derisory aspect of his person. It's **the aspect that's been disowned**, and therefore also felt as "irremediable", as "overpowering", as the "**pole**" of a person's identity.

shameful and contemptible of his being. "The Giant", on the other hand, represents **the vertiginous ideal** we despair of ever attaining' ^{to which} we can, at best, hope to resemble in the slightest, even if it means giving the lie to p. 731

to himself and to others, by every means at his disposal. One of these means has been to supplant the One who appears as the prestigious and envied embodiment of this ideal, and to "prove" his superiority over the Rival by every conceivable means. As for the Giant himself, he now appears as distinct from the Rival and Father, and is **the pinnacle, the ideal, heroic pole of the self**. The supreme gratification of the "boss" is anything that feeds the illusion that you **are** indeed this ideal pole, this projection of a spirit eager to enlarge itself. But the very craving for this gratification reveals an anxiety, "a deeply buried doubt" - it tells us that the person concerned "is not fooled, deep down inside, by these factitious signs of importance, of 'value'... . ."²⁶⁵ (*).

At a more superficial level of the psyche, these "factitious signs"²⁶⁶ (**) are, however, part of those "objective (more or less) characteristics" mentioned earlier, which are supposed to "lend credibility" to an act of identification with an ideal model (whether this remains in the impersonal form of a faceless "Giant" who lives within oneself, or takes on the familiar face of the enemy Father, the Rival).

18.2.11.7. (h) The enemy brother - or the transfer (2)

Note 156 (January 3) Yesterday afternoon, taking advantage of a little free time while waiting for friends to come by, I leafed through C G Jung's autobiography, which a friend had just brought me by chance. I was hooked by what little I had read. It was the first time I'd held a text by Jung in my hands, and until then I'd had only the vaguest idea of him - a dissident pupil of Freud, who had managed (according to scattered echoes that had come back to me) to reintroduce the shifting chiaroscuro of mystery into the straight alleys of the Master. That was about as far as it went. Now I had the impression of a living person like you and me, who doesn't waste his time bringing it back, and above all: one who will right to the real questions, ^{those which} he feels essential from his own lights, and who is not content p. 732

²⁶⁵(*) Quotations in quotation marks are taken from "Infallibility (of others) and contempt (of self)", n° 4.

²⁶⁶(**) These signs may be "factitious", but they often end up forming a "second nature" of unyielding solidity, "indémolissable" (to use the expression of the endnote in "Le désaveu (2) - ou la métamor-

(when the adventurous question is as old as the world) ready-made answers from learned people.

The "biography" aspect (intended for publication) was of course of particular interest to me, since the notes I'm currently writing are indeed somewhat akin to a biography, and in a spirit very close to Jung's: the external event remaining constantly subordinate to the inner adventure, of which it is both a revelation, and the occasional stimulus. It struck me that Jung didn't write an autobiography (or, more accurately, contribute to one) until he was 83, and, more importantly, that at no earlier point in his life did he take the trouble to examine his own childhood in depth. It would seem to me that for Freud's students, it must have been self-evident that one of the first things, if not the very first thing, to familiarize themselves with the ways of the unconscious, would have been to explore those ways in their own person! There's no doubt in my mind that a so-called "knowledge" of the unconscious that is limited to what is learned in a university curriculum (even if taught by a prestigious master like Freud himself), and to the analysis of a certain number of "clinical cases", remains a non-integrated knowledge, a fragmented, "dead" knowledge - a knowledge that by itself does not provide, or even promote, an understanding of oneself, or of others, or of the world.

But it's also true that self-exploration is an undertaking which, by its very nature, cannot be the subject of an institutionalized "program" - any more than the restoration, at its very root, of a disturbed psychic equilibrium (in a "patient", let's say) can be the fruit of the intervention of an "ogue" of any kind, confined to implementing boilerplate techniques. Disturbed equilibrium" is by no means confined to the socially unacceptable stage of a nervous breakdown or neurosis, but can be found in virtually everyone (to a **greater** rather than lesser degree). Psychologists themselves (or ethnologists, sociologists and other "ogues"), of all persuasions, are no exception! And a genuine restoration of disturbed equilibrium is by no means in the nature of a simple "medical act" performed on a third party. It is **an act of the person himself** and of no one else - **an act of love**, which he is free to do or not to do. It is not the result of the inexorable unfolding of psychic mechanisms (with or without the intervention of an expert in psychic mechanics), but an act in the full sense of the word, a **creation**, a **re-birth**.

p. 733 □ Before I finish writing the peremptory sentence above, about "so-called 'knowledge'" of the unconscious", I realized how the context can make her seem overconfident. Without knowing anything about Jung's work (which we've just been discussing), I seem to be dismissing him and his "so-called" knowledge of the unconscious - given that he apparently hadn't bothered (until he was 83) to explore the soil in which his own unconscious had grown. I assume, however, that when you read his biography, it will become clear that, without having devoted himself to such "exploration", Jung must have had **other** ways of making contact with his own unconscious (ways which themselves no doubt remained unconscious for a long time), so surely the premises of the offending assertion don't apply to him.

Something else of a completely different order caught my eye as I leafed through the glossary. Under the term "quater- nité" (NB this is the French edition), Jung insists on the "totalizing" character of the number four. Until about ten years ago, I was very resistant to the idea of a philosophical or "mystical" use of numbers - any speculation or discourse in this direction seemed to me nonsense, childish, "Hokus- pokus" (as we say in German, for fourpenny magic tricks). The little I've learned about the Yi-King (or "Book of Transformations") has made me less peremptory. Yesterday I made the connection between the "cosmic" character attributed to the number four, and the spontaneous grouping that had taken place, when writing "The key to yin and yang", in "packets" generally of four or eight notes, united under a common title. The

phose", n° 153)!

The first group is reduced to a single note; this is true, but (as I had noted with satisfaction on completing the sixth group, "La mathématique yin et yang", which has seven notes instead of eight) if we combine it with a later group, into which this isolated note seems to fit most naturally, we still find a package of eight notes ($7+1 = 8$), so again a multiple of four. This pattern has continued to the present day, the last group to be completed being Group 10 "Violence - or Games and the Sting" (156₁). It has to be said that, from group 7 onwards ("The reversal of yin and yang"), I let myself be guided by this "pattern" which had just emerged without my looking for it, and without seeking or assuming any "meaning" other than that of a certain mathematical "regularity" in the form, felt to be harmonious.

This reminds me of the only other text I've written on a theme that could be described as "cosmic", focused again on the dynamics of yin and yang in human life and in the creative act²⁶⁷ (*). This text p. 734 grouped together, apparently without initial deliberation and certainly without effort at any point, in a rigorous numerical order. I'd forgotten what it was, but looking at it now (you're either curious or you're not!), it turns out to be seven "stanzas" of four "stanzas" each. So, once again, they were grouped by four. It's true that the number of stanzas is seven, which is not a multiple of four - so according to the Jungian criterion, the character of totality would not be satisfied for the work as a whole²⁶⁸ (**), but only for each of the seven "stanzas" that make it up. But I've still got enough to get away with, given that the famous "poetic work" was also provided with a providential "epilogue" (not to mention an interminable prologue, which I had the good sense to leave out), so we've still got $7+1 = 8$, we're saved!

It's time to return to yesterday's reflection where I left off. I had tried to understand the image of the dwarf and the giant in my friend, in terms of his identification with me. It appeared that "the dwarf" and "the giant" represent (or "**stage**", to use the expression in the note preceding yesterday's) the two extreme "**poles**" in my friend's person (I mean: what the "boss" has **instituted** as "extreme poles"): one "shameful, despicable pole", and another "ideal, heroic pole". To tell you the truth, with a difference of emphasis or lighting, I agree with the interpretation I found the day before for the same image-force of the dwarf and the giant, in the note of the day before yesterday "La mise en scène - ou la "seconde nature"" (n° 154). It was then a question of of the "staging" of the conflict instituted by the boss, the ego, between the two "sides" yin and yang of being. This formulation of the original conflict, in terms of the two "sides", would correspond to an undistorted knowledge of this conflict - and I'm convinced that this knowledge must indeed exist, in deep (but by no means inaccessible) layers of the psyche. The formulation in terms of two "extreme poles", yesterday, represents a **distorted view** of the conflict - distorted by a deliberate statement by the boss, valorizing one of the "sides" □ to make it an ideal, heroic "pole", and devaluing the other to make it a pole again, p. 735 extreme opposite to the previous one, a shameful, contemptible pole. I presume that this intermediate image lives in shallower, intermediate layers, perhaps partially cohabiting with the externalized image, the "staging" of the dwarf and the giant, even closer to the conscious surface, and partially encroaching on the superficial layers²⁶⁹ (*). In these layers, the idyllic image of "daddy" reigns.

²⁶⁷(*) This is the "In Praise of Incest", discussed in note n° 43 (referring to the section "The Guru-not-Guru - or the three-legged horse", n° 45), and especially in the note "The Act" (n° 113), pp. 507 - 509. See also the beginning of the note "The dynamics of things (yin-yang harmony)", n° 111.

²⁶⁸(**) The projected work (under the provocative name "Eloge de l'Inceste") was in fact to comprise three parts (L'Innocence, le Conflit (or la Chute), La Délivrance (or l'Enfance retrouvée)), of which only the first was completed. That's what we're talking about here.

²⁶⁹(*) This presumption regarding the image of the dwarf and the giant stems, of course, from the very explicit expression of this image, in the final word of Pierre Deligne's biographical note written by himself (alluded to in the last footnote to the note "Le nerf dans le nerf - ou le nain et le géant", n° 148).

cake" a little soft around the edges, from a respectful and considerate son, with visible velvet and an invisible velvet claw. ...

Compared to the day before yesterday's reflection, yesterday's seems to me to have nuanced it, and thus to have sharpened its contours somewhat, without yet bringing anything essentially new to it. It's true that when I stopped the reflection because of the prohibitive hour, I didn't feel that I'd reached the end of the path I'd embarked upon, that of "ambiguous identification". In retrospect, I realized that, no doubt as a result of my inveterate habit of "seeing myself as a yang", it seemed to go without saying that any identification with myself could only concern my yang traits. In this case, in the stage image of the dwarf and the giant, it was the **giant** that I had recognized myself in, in a distorted but still clearly recognizable form. If, however, I am insistently presented as "**the dwarf**"²⁷⁰ (**) by the effect of the "reversal" syndrome in my friend, this assimilation (with obviously malicious intent) was immediately rejected by me, by a reflex of universal naturalness and great strength: to be confronted with a desire for derision, targeting traits (yin, in this case) that are perfectly real in me, while passing over in silence the complementary traits that are just as real (which, for their part, benefit from a valorizing consensus) - such a situation elicits in me the never-ending reaction, if not to deny the incriminated traits entirely, at least to tacitly minimize them, by putting forward, as if to **oppose** them, the unjustly retracted traits.

With this "visceral" reaction, I'm well and truly entering the round of conflict, just as I'm supposed to! It alerts me to that eternal "hook" where I'm taken for a ride. My

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I also find my own vision of reality distorted, in response to a provocative distortion. So it was in vain that I wrote yesterday, from the tip of my lips (or the keys of my typewriter), that

"the first "objective character" likely to foster a feeling of resemblance and an act of identification, was the strong affinity between his approach and mine to our common teacher, mathematics".

In writing it, I was forgetting that this "strong affinity" consisted of a **yin, feminine** approach to the discovery and knowledge of things - that this was precisely the aspect by which, as "similar" to him, I too appeared as a **dwarf**, just like him: it was the secret, vulnerable, shameful side that he reserved for himself to bring into play, when the right moment appeared, to supplant and "overthrow". This "providential circumstance"²⁷¹ (*), the yin predominance in my drive for knowledge, was **not** only a **weapon in the hands** of a dubious friend - it was also, and first and foremost, a kind of "objective foundation" for his identification with me; not, this time, as identification with the **father**, but as identification with an **older brother**, not to say an "older sister".

When I use the term "objective" here, it's to express that this time it's a question of an "identification" rooted, not in one of the fictions of the "boss" wanting (or fearing. . .) to be this or that, but in a profound, tangible, indubitable **reality** - that of a **kinship** between the original nature of one and the other. In any case, surely this kinship could not fail to be perceived by him as by me, and I have no doubt that at some deep level, the **meaning of** this kinship was also perceived. At the very least, I presume, without being totally convinced, that this perception must have served as material for his identification with me. This identification would have taken place on **two** distinct **levels**: on the one hand, the "ideal" level, in which I figure as the embodiment of **values** of which he would like himself to be a

²⁷⁰(**) This "dwarf" himself-mime being no other than a metaphor for the "Meganana" with the features of a "false" giant, with flabby and ramomo forms. ... (Feb. 85)

²⁷¹(*) See note of the same name, n° 151.

exemplary incarnation (even if only in appearance, as the model appears out of reach, and is supposed to actually realize the ideal); on the other hand, the "real" level, where identification is established through of a **de facto kinship** correctly perceived, but a kinship in common traits deemed redhibitoires, pitiful²⁷² (*).

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This is a good time to remind myself that at the time of our meeting, and for more than ten years afterwards, I had the same repression of my "feminine" traits that I've come to see in my friend. Looking back, it seems to me that, at the time of our meeting, this repression already existed to some degree in my friend, but that it remained mostly latent, and in any case, was much less strong than it was in me. As I've pointed out on more than one occasion, my person had long been marked by a superyang imbalance, whereas his gave off an impression of harmonious balance. Since then, he and I have **evolved in opposite directions**: my friend from a state of yin-yang balance to a strong yang imbalance, and I from a strong yang imbalance to a state of (relative) yin-yang balance.

The idea that immediately arises is that my friend, perhaps by virtue of this double identification with me, has followed (some thirty years later!) the evolution, in the sense of a deterioration of an original balance, that I myself had followed since the age of eight. It's possible that a moderate over-valuation of "virile" values to the detriment of "feminine" values was transformed, through contact with me or with the environment I was part of, into an over-valuation with a touch of zinc. But as I've pointed out elsewhere, the "nerve" (or "living force") in the Burial orchestrated by him, and the nerve also in his own metamorphosis (which is also the burial of the child in him by the boss's care. . .) - this nerve can scarcely lie in the mere adoption of this or that other, more or less extreme (or even demented!) value system. And the same applies to the "nerve" in my identification with myself, and the disproportionate role this identification has played in my friend's life. There's no doubt that one and the same "force" is at work, and that its roots reach far back into his childhood²⁷³ (**).

Another strange idea comes to me here. It seems that the heaviest burden that I have carried for forty years of my life, this repression of the "feminine" in me by the "masculine", which was also akin to that of the child in me by "the Big Boss" - that this burden was **"taken up"** by my friend, at precisely the moment when it might have seemed that he himself was free of a similar burden. It was around the time when my value system shifted in a yin direction, a development that foreshadowed the moment of my reunion with the child some fifteen years later, when I suddenly felt relieved of an immense weight²⁷⁴ (*). The immediate association here is with the Hindu idea of **karma**. It's clear to me that over the last eight years, I've lightened a substantial part of the karma I've been carrying around with me since childhood. I would have thought (and still tend to think) that this lightening has not been "at the expense" of anyone, that it is beneficial not only for me, but "for the whole world". I can even say that I **know** very well that this is so, even if it turns out that someone else chose (or even had to choose) to take it over. It's also true that I don't consider this karma I've lightened as an "evil". It was for me the nourishing substance of a **maturation** that was ahead of me.

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²⁷²(*) These two "levels" thus correspond to two distinct "archetypes", and here in opposition to each other, in the identification with my person: that of the father (aka "the giant"), and that of the Brother, or even, that of the Sister (aka "the dwarf"). The latter is also found in the image of the "cake-daddy" - suggested by the father in the flesh "as he is", alas! and not "as he should be". . .

²⁷³(**) For a more precise intuition along these lines, see especially the note "Rancune en sursis - ou le retour des choses (2)", n° 149.

²⁷⁴(*) This "shift" in value system is discussed in the note "Yang plays the yin - or the role of Master" (n° 118), and the "reunion" in the note of the same name (n° 109).

me. I know that it is good for me and for everyone that I have eaten and been nourished by it, that knowledge has been formed in the nourishing womb of ignorance²⁷⁵ (**). It seemed to me that this substance or karma, once transformed into knowledge, left no residue, that it disappeared. To tell the truth, I don't know what the Hindu or Buddhist tradition teaches on this subject - if for them there is a law of "karma conversation" (similar to that of the conservation of matter), which would be unaffected by the vital creative processes of ingestion, digestion and assimilation.

For the sake of propriety, I've just omitted **excretion** from these "vital processes". Yet excretion (along with the death of the entire organism) is a key process in the recycling of what has been absorbed, returning to the infinite cycle of transformation of "dead" organic matter into living organic matter, whereby life is eternally reborn from death²⁷⁶ (***)).

p. 739 **Note** 156₁ □(February 30) This "pattern" eventually broke with the ultimate group 12, which, alas!

n°

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six notes, bringing the total number of notes making up "The key to yin and yang" to 62. I had anticipated that there would be **eight** notes in this "Conflicts and Discovery" group, which would have been in keeping with the criterion of totality, and would have brought the total number of component notes to $64 = 8 \times 8 = 4 \times 4 \times 4$, which is also the number of hexagrams in the I Ching! I was sorry that my expectations were not fulfilled, but I didn't want to "cheat" and include in "The key to yin and yang" the Jeux notes devoted to Pierre Deligne's visit to my home, whose natural place seems to me to be in the continuation of "The Funeral Ceremony", **after** "The key...".

However, I remain dissatisfied with this group n° 12, the only one of the twelve parts. of "La clef. . "which doesn't leave me with an impression of **unity** of inspiration and purpose. This lack of unity seems to me to be due, not to the theme of "Conflict and Discovery" itself, but to the irruption of extraneous (and at times disturbing) events in the course of reflection.

(March 7) Last night, as I reread the thoughts of January 14, which I had grouped together in a note (n° 162) called "conviction et connaissance - ou la passation"²⁷⁷ (*), I felt dissatisfied with this name. On the one hand, the "main" title and the subtitle didn't seem, "at a glance", to fit together - in fact, they correspond, one to a first and the other to a third "movement" in the reflection, which by themselves are apparently unrelated: description of the process of the blossoming of knowledge (in the form of a sudden **convic- tion**), and evocation of the endless chain and "passing on" of karma, from one generation to the next, and from one person to the next. What's more, the most intimately personal content, the "neuralgic" content for my own person, which was the substance of the "second movement" of the reflection (and had in fact been the "passerelle", leading from the first movement to the third) - this crucial content did not appear in the chosen name. (There's no doubt in my mind that this surreptitious concealment is not at all the ef-

fect of pure chance. ...) Since all three themes seemed important in their own right, and I couldn't think of any "appropriate" name or double-name that would evoke all three, I ended up com□prendre

that the best thing would be to split the note into three, with a suggestive name for each one separately: "Conviction and knowledge", "The hottest iron - or turning", "The endless chain - or passing (2)" (n° s 162, 162', 162").

²⁷⁵(**) For thoughts along the same lines, see the end of the note "Le cycle" (n° 116'), and in particular the last paragraph.

²⁷⁶(***) On the cycle of life and death, see also the note "The Act", n° 113.

²⁷⁷(*) This was also the last note in "The key to yin and yang".

.....It was afterwards that I suddenly realized that this operation, dictated (so to speak) by the very substance of the reflection, had at the same time resolved the "aesthetic" dissatisfaction that I had been dragging on for almost two months, while this twelfth and last part of "The key to yin and yang" (which I had called "Conflict and discovery") stubbornly refused to let itself be completed (naturally, that is) in a sequence of eight notes, and only wanted to include the six that were already written. And I received my reward for not giving in to the easy temptation to "cheat" and "stick" two notes at the end of "La clef", "on the spur of the moment" and who se place was elsewhere! This last part of "The Key" (which will eventually be called "The Enigma of Evil - or Conflict and Discovery"), at the same time, takes on a beautiful symmetrical structure, with two packets (of three notes each) on the central theme, clustering around the two "digression-notes" on Fujii Guruji and on my monk friends.

18.2.12. Conflict and discovery - or the enigma of Evil

18.2.12.1. (a) Without hate or mercy

Note 157 (January 4) In yesterday's and the day before's reflections, I tried above all to get in touch with the reality of my friend's identification with me, and in so doing, to discern its scope and implications. It's a job I'm still doing as one groping around in the half-light, not to say, in the dark of night. Or perhaps I should say that my eyes remain closed, and my eyelids opaque to a light that I remain unable to perceive. In any case, I have no recollection of having "felt" or "seen" this identification at any time during my relationship with my friend, any more than I have "felt" or "seen" his antagonistic attitude towards me. Yet I **know**, without any possibility of doubt, from a rich body of concordant facts, that this identification with me, and this antagonism which is like a shadow of it, are **realities**.

- just as someone born blind "knows" the sun, daylight, colors, light and dark, exist, even though he has never seen them. He knows it, without having **knowledge of** these things. Or if he does have a very diffuse knowledge of them, through a more refined tactile sense perhaps (or through a "memory"

which is rooted not in his life alone, but in those of countless generations ☐ of sighted beings that preceded it), this knowledge remains indirect and fallible, like that of a warm, sonorous voice coming to us through a distant, uncertain echo.

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The work we've done over the last two days has again been like a stopgap, like a substitute for an immediate perception that's lacking. This is more or less the case in all "meditative" work, as I understand it. The work constantly **pushes** against the current of **inertia** - the inertia of leaden eyelids! Certainly, in moments when the eyes are fully open and awake, there's no need for meditation or work: all you have to do is look, and see. As these moments are rare, rather than sit back and wait for them, I prefer to take the lead, without worrying that the work is clumsy and "slow". It may be slow, and sometimes even slower than usual - but that doesn't mean it's ever stagnant or going round in circles. When there is work - real work, I mean, driven by a real desire - then there is progress: something is done, takes shape, is transformed, imperceptibly at one moment, visibly at another... . And sometimes, at the end of a clumsy, stubborn progression through a formless, contourless penumbra, continuing for hours or days, even months or perhaps years, the miracle happens: the blind man **sees**! And what is seen is not a fleeting vision that disappears as if it had never been, leaving only the faint trace of a memory. It's a **knowledge** born of these obscure labors, a new knowledge, as intimately ours as the taste of the things we love.

I wrote in the day before yesterday's reflection that if there was a case in point whose thought had "guided my pen" nine months ago, as I wrote the final lines of the note "The Enemy Father (1)" (which I had just quoted), it was that of my friend Pierre in his relationship to me. Yet other "cases in point" even closer to me must have been present in my mind at the time, in the background of my reflection. When I talk about it

of "a father both admired and feared, loved and hated" and then of "another Self, feared, hated and shunned. . . ", the terms "feared", "hated", "hated", and probably even the term "fled", do **not** apply to friend Pierre's relationship to me. Neither by direct perception, fleeting and slight though it may be, nor by cross-checking with the facts known to me, have I ever had the slightest indication of **fear**.

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that my friend would have had of me, or of a hatred or only of an **animosity** that he would have nourished against me. The opposite ☐ is true, as I've had occasion to point out on more than one occasion. And it's this. It's precisely this circumstance that has made the seemingly gratuitous, unflinching antagonism that has manifested itself in crescendo over the past fifteen years so disconcerting, under the guise of "thumb!", aka "velvet paw"²⁷⁸ (*), finally reaching the pitch of quiet impudence, sure (provided certain forms are respected) of total impunity. . .

This disconcerting, enigmatic progression is immediately associated with the equally "disconcerting" and "enigmatic" (and these are euphemisms, to be sure!) progression in the deterioration that followed, also over a period of some fifteen years, in the couple's relationship with my former wife, and by the same token, in the family we had founded. In the absence of any sign of chronic hatred or animosity towards me on the part of my wife, it took me ten years of inexorable deterioration in the relationship (while most of my energy was taken up by mathematics, playing the role of the famous pile of sand for the ostrich... .), before finally acknowledging the presence, in the one I continued to love, of a tenacious, mysterious and implacable will to destroy, working against me through those who were dear to me. That was in 1967, five years before I left home, and ten years before the resolution of a conflict that I felt was the heaviest burden of my life. With the hindsight afforded by a long-accepted relationship, I can only note what continues to remain a mystery to me: an insatiable will to destroy, and at the same time an **absence of hatred**, or only animosity, towards those, adults or children, who are mercilessly struck down, whenever the occasion arises.

It's the same mystery, all things considered, as the one I'm now confronted with in my friend's relationship with me, with the difference that this "tenacious will to destroy... exerted against me through those who are dear to me" was rigorously confined to the world of mathematicians, and that its instruments and hostages were not my children "in the flesh", but those who symbolically took their place: the students and assimilated who, if anything, "bore my name". In both cases, not only do I detect no hatred or animosity, but there are also feelings of sympathy, and often even affection, towards me that cannot be doubted.

☐ These aren't the only situations in which I've been confronted with a desire to injure, even even a desire to destroy (in the strongest sense of the word²⁷⁹ (*)), without any trace of hatred or animosity. The one that most strongly marked my life was in 1933, in my sixth year, with my mother as the protagonist - the year in which the **family** we formed, my parents, my sister and I, was destroyed forever²⁸⁰ (**).

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The various situations of this kind that I've experienced up close, from a desire to destroy, or a desire to hurt as deeply as one can, without my detecting any trace of animosity, seem to

²⁷⁸(*) See the two notes "Pouce!" and "Patte de velours - ou les sourires" (n° s77, 137), as well as the notes that follow the latter, forming the "La griffe dans le velours" part of "La clef du yin et du yang".

²⁷⁹(*) By "strongest sense", I mean here a will, not to cause suffering for the sake of suffering, or to destroy some limited thing dear to the other, but the will to psychically (if not physically) destroy the other; the will (when possible) to implant an indelible and devastating despair in the face of "that which is beyond comprehension". Behind the brilliant and affable exterior of "Colloque Pervers", I seemed to find this extreme dimension in two of the most brilliant of its actors... ..

²⁸⁰(**) For more on this episode, see "Le Superpère", note no. ° 108.

very different from one another. I doubt I could find a common "explanation" for them, or at least a common trait in the protagonists' distant antecedents, which would suggest a deep causal link²⁸¹ (***). Perhaps more important than an explanation, and in any case more important than an explanation, is the **realization that** such a thing exists: **the will to destroy in the absence of hatred**. This brings me back to the theme of "gratuitous violence", touched on earlier in a different way²⁸² (****). Here, we're talking about gratuitous (and sometimes destructive) violence **against a loved one** or a person considered to be a threat.

"friend". The mere **existence**, in everyday life, of such violence (which rarely says its

□nom), is an important **fact** in everyone's life - one of the important facts of human life. Observing this p. 744

In fact, by going against the inveterate mechanisms that constantly push us to try and hide it, is the first step towards assuming it. No theory, no reasoning, no "approach" can save us from taking this step.

I don't know if I'll ever **understand** this fact, but it seems to me that to understand it is also to "understand conflict". What is clear to me is that such understanding cannot come from "theory", any more than from "experience" (by virtue of experience alone). It is not some "sum total" of an accumulation (of "knowledge", or "experience"), just as it is not of the order of the intellect alone, nor even of the order of the "intelligence" alone²⁸³ (*). I'm not sure I know anyone, even by name, in whom such an understanding lives. But it seems to me that anyone who, after a hundred and a thousand evasions in the face of an irrefutable reality with a thousand faces, has finally come to the simple **realization** of this fact, humbly, without bitterness or revolt, without resignation or indignation - as the realization of a formidable **mystery perhaps**, the meaning of which escapes him, but the extent and depth of which he senses; a mystery which intrigues or challenges him, without frightening or worrying him any more - that person has not lived in vain.

18.2.12.2. (b) Understanding and renewal

Note 158 (January 5) Although it wasn't premeditated, the final accents of yesterday's reflection were very much in the vein, again, of a Funeral Eulogy - but this time delivered (or sung) by the deceased himself. One is never so well served as by oneself!

Yesterday I was confronted once again with one of the most perplexing aspects of the "mystery of conflict": that of the will to destruction without hatred or apparent motive, exercised in the shadows, obstinately and relentlessly, against a loved one, or such loved ones or friends. Sometimes, such a will gets out of control, leading to an all-out destructive frenzy in which anything vulnerable becomes a welcome target. It's like an irrepressible bulimia for "action" in reverse, whose repetitive nature (like that of clown games), and consummate mastery in the art of pulling the strings,

can have a most comical effect, when the observer (or even the one who has just paid the price) is

gifted with a sense of humor' □ and that the "Actor-Marionettist has only modest powers over others. La p. 745
situation is more serious, it is of consequence, when there are children among those who bear the brunt of the

²⁸¹(***) Yet a deep-seated, virulent self-contempt is surely common to all these situations. Perhaps such virulence (when it is not resolved by an act of grace, by a profound inner transformation, i.e. as long as it is not "assumed") must find an outlet and express itself through destructive acts, through a will to destroy, which turns against its own person when it does not seek and find its target in others. In many a person, and even in close relationships, I have witnessed the simultaneous action of a will to destroy, directed both against oneself and against some external target, chosen from among those close to us (mother, father, spouse or child. . .). (February 1985) See also the reflection in "The cause of causeless violence" (n° 159), three days after the present note, which obviously prepared it.

²⁸²(****) See the note "La violence ingénue", n° 139.

²⁸³(*) (March 5) In any case, I know that such an understanding will only come to me through an understanding of this violence. **in myself.**

circus games, even if these are only "bloody" in the figurative sense; and also when those possessed by a thirst for destruction find themselves invested with considerable, even discretionary powers over some of their fellow human beings. History records the names of some despots possessed by such a madness of indiscriminate destruction, turning their fiefdoms into vast mass graves. We think of Ivan the Terrible, or Stalin, or a certain Chinese emperor (whose name and millennium I've forgotten) who was finally slaughtered by his own cornered subjects, armed with sticks and stakes²⁸⁴ (*). There's no doubt that there have been similar cases in our own country, perhaps on a smaller scale, and about which "History" has been more discreet... ..

When I wrote yesterday, without any false modesty, that I didn't understand the "fact" I'd just observed, that of the thirst for destruction in the absence of hatred, this in no way meant that I had no ideas on the subject, quite the contrary. On the contrary, I have more than just "ideas", I have some very strong intuitions. They were born and bred in the soil of my life, rich in the conflicts that sometimes seemed to devastate it, like endless storms raging across a still landscape.

p. 746 of winter' □ ruthlessly ^{ripping out} what needs to be ripped out²⁸⁵ (*). But all is belly for the sleeping earth waiting in silence. When spring returns, in the hollows of the great dead trunks lying there inert, there is intense life, and in the following spring (if not the very same year) we can already see grasses and flowers blooming there.

These "strong intuitions" all concern, I believe, the "**ingredients**" of conflict. I've spoken a little, and spoken again, about some of them, first and foremost "**self-contempt**", and its links with the repression of certain aspects and essential forces of our original being, such as the yin or yang "sides", one of which is often denied. I've also often had occasion to talk about **vanity**, which is like a calling card, the most universal of all signs, and the most apparent, of the presence of conflict within us, and which appears to me as the "**front**" of the same medal, the "back" of which is self-contempt. There is **contempt for others**, an outward projection of self-contempt, for which it is at the same time a cover, or better said, a diversion and an exorcism. Basically, contempt for others is nothing more than deliberate ignorance of their existence as sentient beings who share in this world in the same way as ourselves. Gratuitous violence cannot

²⁸⁴(*) This emperor, fearing a popular uprising, had forbidden the people to use any metal objects (such as knives, forks, etc.) that could be used as weapons, with the exception of one knife per village, attached by a strong chain in a public place.

What all three of these characters had in common was that, in addition to their thirst for destruction, they were also possessed by **fear**: fear of being murdered, and beyond that, no doubt, fear of their own inevitable **death** - as they sowed death all around them. This coincidence is surely not fortuitous. I also note that Stalin (the only one of the three about whom I've had any detailed information whatsoever) began his political career as a great master precisely in the art of pulling the wool over people's eyes, of manipulating them by playing on their vanity and greed. His first acquired style was, it seems, that of the "velvet paw", until it became unnecessary for him to bother hiding his claws.

If I haven't included my (ex-) compatriot Hitler among the examples cited, it's not because I have any particular sympathy for him, but because I don't detect in him the mania for "**all-out**" destruction mentioned. The targets of scorn, then destruction, were those designated as "the others", "foreigners": first of all "the Jews" (and the Communists and other "Judeo-Bolshevists" dear to Nazi jargon), then "Asians" and other non-Arian metatics. The good, non-Jewish German was all very well under Hitler, at least until the first major Allied air raids, when the war really started to go badly for them.

²⁸⁵(*) No sooner had this image been jotted down in the rush of the pen than it occurred to me that it was only partially adequate - it would almost have an aftertaste of "cliché"! As I reflect for a moment on this aftertaste, I rediscover the old deliberate intention within me to "see my life as yang": movement, arrows and storms... .

Without even taking the time to pose, but sensing that the image wasn't right (and yet, that's what had come to me, nothing to do!), I "corrected" it in the text by going on to the "sleeping earth waiting in silence" - and voilà, yin! It was the chord that "resolves" a "false chord" (or "dissonance"). In many ways, a more accurate image than that of the storm, "tearing away what must be torn away", and in more yin tones precisely, would be that of the worm gnawing away "what must be gnawed away" - and which finally collapses - but all goes belly-up for the earth that waits in silence, and when spring returns... . (continued without change!).

to germinate and proliferate on the terrain of such contempt. There's the **fear of knowing**, the fear of reality, a fear whose nerve center, this "Black Point", the epicenter of a vortex of anguish ready to be unleashed at the slightest alarm, is the fear of knowing ourselves: the fear of becoming aware of our own poses and subterfuges, however crude; and the fear also of becoming aware of the creative force within us that day after day we reject and bury, through these same poses and subterfuges.

In my life, fear appeared at the age of six, when there was still (it seems to me) nothing to fear. vanity. This must have only appeared later, at the moment (I presume) of the "changeover" that took place around the age of \square huit²⁸⁶ (*). And it was fear, too, that disappeared first and without trace, as soon as appa- p. 747
rition of a curiosity that's both benevolent and irreverent, certainly intrigued but in no way impressed by the abracadabra and macabre spectacles of the "Point Noir" genre. The mechanisms of vanity, on the other hand, have remained in place with no apparent change in the eight years since the fear of knowing disappeared. It's only the hold these mechanisms have on my life that has changed, as they are defused by the presence of an awakening curiosity that doesn't let itself be fooled!

I have in my hands a whole range of conflict ingredients - which I know at first hand, without a shadow of a doubt, are indeed essential ingredients. And for years now, I've also had everything I need to "assemble" these ingredients, carefully explaining, in the light of what I've observed in myself and others, their links of contiguity and dependence. It's a job that will take a few days or a few weeks, not even months, I presume, and will surely be very instructive and useful. If I haven't taken the trouble to do it yet, giving priority to other, more directly personal directions, it's probably because I was well aware that it's not from such an "assembly" of ingredients, in general terms from which my person is absent (if only as one "example" among others), that an "understanding of conflict" could come to me ; nor does the mere fact of placing side by side, "assembling" or even mixing a certain number of simple bodies, "ingredients" in the composition of a compound body, reconstitute the latter. For "reconstitution" to take place, a "chemical reaction" must first take place - something bringing the ingredients into contact and into play in a far more intimate way, and by forces of an altogether different order, than simple "assembling" or mixing could do.

The same is true for an understanding of the things of life. Intelligence alone can, at a pinch, spot the ingredients of something like "conflict", and it can in any case, in the presence of ingredients already known and with the help of facts about them (known first or second hand), put them together in a plausible, even "correct" way. This kind of work can be useful in recognizing a conflict situation from time to time, and in identifying a more or less precise "etiology" - but that's not the whole story.

an "understanding of conflict". I will say, however, that I have moved one step closer to such an understanding,

\square
the day when my **relationship to conflict** will have been transformed, When I say "my relationship to conflict", I mean p. 748

in the first place, of course, the conflict within myself, and (from there) the conflict that occasionally pits me against this or that person; and lastly, the conflict I see acting in people close or less close to me in my everyday life, which often expresses itself in conflicts pitting one of them against another.

Over the past eight years, there has been such a progression towards an understanding of conflict, which also means: a transformation, or rather, successive transformations, in my relationship to conflict. I've already mentioned two or three episodes²⁸⁷ (*). Perhaps a full understanding of conflict is equivalent to a full acceptance of its existence, wherever and however it arises.

²⁸⁶(*) On this "tipping point", see the note "Le Supr p re" (n  108).

²⁸⁷(*) On this subject, see in particular the two notes "Acceptance (the awakening of yin (2))" and "The slave and the puppet - or the floodgates", n s 

manifesto²⁸⁸ (**). I'm obviously a long way from that! And perhaps a full understanding of conflict also means total resolution of the conflict within oneself. I'm even further from that!

But there's one more thing I think I know, and that's the nature of the force that, from a combination of ingredients, suddenly gives rise to an **understanding** that renews the person. It is precisely this force that is not "of the order of intelligence". I doubt that any intellectual work, the reading of books let's say, no matter how learned, profound or sublime, will in any way stimulate its appearance. When it does emerge, it's only in silence and in contact with that which is most intimately personal to us and our lives; something, therefore, that no book and no person, be it Christ or Buddha, can ever reveal to us.

When I say "that which is most intimately personal", I don't mean that these are things we can't talk about, either to ourselves or to others - and sometimes it's good to talk about them. But even when spoken through the voices of angels and prophets, what is **said** is not the thing itself. This thing-already known, but buried perhaps, whose contact can suddenly give rise to a new knowledge-is **known** neither to angels nor prophets, nor even to the closest and most beloved of beings, but to the most intimate of beings. from **you** alone.

p. 749 □ To return to conflict, and "destruction without hatred", which seems to me the hardest "core" of the conflict, the most resistant to understanding, that is, to **acceptance**. I also think I know, in the next step before me to enter further into it, what **is** that "most intimately personal" thing I'll first need to get in touch with again; the thing that would play the role, in this case, of that famous "Black Point" so tenaciously evaded! It's the experience of situations of "gratuitous violence", of contempt for others (and of "destruction without hatred" too, perhaps), in which **I** was the actor - the one who did the violence, the one who found it worthwhile to despise. It's by coming into contact with this reality, or never, that I'll be able to get to the bottom of this famous "self-contempt", and finally **see**, beyond all "no doubt" and all "maybe", if this is indeed the deep root of evil, and not just in "everyone but me"!

18.2.12.3. (c) The cause of causeless violence

Note 159 (January 7) The reflection in the previous two notes revolved around the mystery of the existence of this strange thing: a will to destroy (or a will to hurt, or humiliate, or harm), in the absence of any hatred or animosity. The impetus for this reflection came from my friend Pierre's relationship with me, which immediately led to an association with my ex-wife's relationship with me. More than once during the reflection on Burial, I was led to realize, or to remember, that in these two cases as in others, it was certain traits in myself, the "super-viril" traits that I had cultivated in myself since the age of eight, that served as stimulators and "attractors" for such antagonistic impulses. If I'm not mistaken, this was first mentioned in the October 5 note "Le Superpère (yang enterre yin (2))" (n° 108). This link is taken up again in the following note of October 9 "Les retrouvailles (le réveil du yin (1))" (n° 109).

In this note, I return to the moment when, for the first time in my life, I perceived this link. It was October 18, 1976, the very day of my reunion with the child in me, and in the final lines of the notes that bear witness to this most important day of my adult life. In these lines (reproduced in the

²⁸⁸(**) The meaning of such "full acceptance" can give rise to innumerable misunderstandings. It is quite different from connivance. It does not exclude **refusal**, clearly and unequivocally - it contains it. On this subject, see the reflection in the note "Spouses - or the enigma of "Evil"" (n° 117).

note quoted), I speak of the "secret hatred and resentment" of three women I had loved, including the one who at the time was still my wife (although I had not lived with her for five years). With Looking back, it seems to me that in each of the three cases I had in mind, this impression of □ "secret hatred" p. 750 did not, strictly speaking, correspond to reality - by which I mean any direct perception I might have had at any time²⁸⁹ (*) of such hatred. What I had perceived, and what I had had ample opportunity to experience, was a will to destroy, or a will to cause pain, or to injure, both lasting and apparently inexplicable, gratuitous - something I had **interpreted** as a sign of hatred, "secret", because never expressed. In fact, I think that for two of the women in question, it was in these quoted lines, for the first time since I had □ known them, that I made the observation that appeared to me p. 751 as a "secret hatred". At this point in my life, it was impossible not to make the confusion I've just mentioned. This confusion in no way detracts from the importance of making this observation, involving myself in it just as crucially as these women to whom I was closely linked.

As for the "resentment" referred to in one breath with "secret hatred", I sensed from the outset that if a "certain force" superyang within me had drawn the resentment of each of these three women to my person, it was for grievances for which I was in no way responsible - for wounds and damage suffered "long before they knew of my existence, in the distraught days of a childhood deprived of love". This perception, which had decanted over the years as the fruit of an intense experience, surely had the effect of an invisible guide for my reflection of last December 20, in the note "Rancune en sursis - ou le retour des choses (2)" (n° 149), where the intuition appears that this same process of **displacement** of an initial resentment, or a "rancune en état de vacance", could well have taken place in my friend Pierre, around the time of our meeting or perhaps even earlier. The facts known to me make this intuition at least plausible.

There is, however, an important difference with the case of my ex-wife, and with the other two cases discussed in the post-reunion meditation. I don't have the impression that

²⁸⁹(*) (March 6) After writing these lines, I remembered that in the course of my married life, there were two episodes, the first lasting a few days, the second a few minutes, when I felt assailed as if by two beams of hatred, shooting from the eyes of my then wife.

The first time, in the fifth year of our marriage (1962), my wife suffered what is euphemistically called a "nervous breakdown". This episode had a profound effect on the couple's life and the family atmosphere. It is also the moment in my life, of all those I have conscious memories of, that was experienced as the most atrocious, and that marked me most deeply (as it was supposed to).

Unless we have an exceptionally stable inner foundation (which, due to lack of maturity, I was far from having at the time), the hatred we are the target of, and even more so when it comes from loved ones close to us, has a devastating effect on our psyche, when it arouses in us a similar and destructive hatred of ourselves. It would seem that something in us must, at all costs, find a "meaning" for "what passes understanding", even if this "meaning" is an outright condemnation and rejection of ourselves by ourselves: since we are hated (and even though the "reason" for this hatred escapes us completely...), it's because we are hateable... .

If I was so affected by this episode, which remained like a sword of Damocles hanging over my life for the next six or seven years, it was surely because it resonated violently with a traumatic childhood experience. This had disappeared from my conscious memory, but it was all the more active whenever I was suddenly confronted with inexplicable malice or hatred - all as sudden and inexplicable as the will to destroy that had assailed me at the age of five, coming then from the person of all people who, as far back as I could remember, had been the peaceful and secure center of the Universe.

It's one of the most important things I've learned in my life about the malevolence or hatred I'm sometimes the target of, that I'm in no way the real and immediate **cause** of it (even if certain aspects of myself, which I neither disavow nor reject, contribute to attracting it to me). For years, however, this knowledge remained too epidermal to defuse this deep-rooted mechanism, which comes into play when I'm confronted with apparently "causeless" malice or violence. To defuse it, I first had to go back to its roots and retrace the steps of those forgotten days and nights, heavy with anguish, when my mother suddenly, mysteriously and inexplicably, became a hostile and fearsome stranger... ..

my friend's childhood was in any way "distraught" or "deprived of love". This difference seems to me to manifest itself in the tone of my friend's antagonism towards me, which at no time reached that pitch of **vehemence** with which I was so familiar in the other three relationships. Equally, in my friend's relationship with me, the appearance of signs of antagonism was at first extremely discreet and sporadic, and even after my departure in 1970, it took another eight years before this antagonism expressed itself directly and unmistakably against my person²⁹⁰. This seems to correspond to the existence of an initial "resentment" which remained diffuse, imponderable, without the presence of a hard "core" corresponding to the feeling (even if hidden from the conscious gaze) of an outrage or a wrong suffered, felt as irreparable perhaps. ...

p. 752 □ In evoking, in the penultimate note, the will to destroy, or that to injure or harm, in the **absence of hatred and animosity**, the thought came to me (with some insistence) of an apparent contradiction, which I thought I'd come back to straight away. This is it. In the two cases that were the focus of my attention, involving my pupil (and mathematical "heir apparent") and my wife, there had indeed been an unconscious "grudge" that they had transferred onto me. The very idea of a "grudge" or "resentment" seems linked to that of an "animosity" or "enmity": one would be tempted to say that a grudge (or resentment) is one of the possible ways (and one of the most common) of feeding an animosity. And this assertion is certainly justified, in the case of what we might call a "direct" grudge, a "real" grudge, motivated by a **grievance** (real or imaginary) towards the person concerned, for a **wrong** or **damage** that that person has allegedly inflicted on us. But in the cases I'm dealing with, it's not such a grudge we're talking about, but an indirect grudge, "**by proxy**" so to speak, transferred from an initial potential target, inadequate for one reason or another²⁹¹ (*), to an "**adoption target**" or replacement, which appears to "fit" the needs of the cause. The remarkable thing, is that such "misplaced resentment" (it's a case of saying it!), which acts as **the** stubborn force at work behind attitudes, behaviors and acts of such a nature that they □ **would be said to be** driven by hatred or "causeless" animosity - that such a "grudge" is **nonetheless devoid of any feeling of hatred or animosity!** Indeed, it's the combination of these **two** aspects of "gratuitous violence" in the strongest sense of the term (the one I'm examining here) that makes it so disconcerting, as something truly "beyond comprehension"²⁹² (*): the complete absence of any rational, tangible "cause" for this violence, both in the person who bears the brunt of it (without having provoked it by attitudes, behaviors or acts that are hurtful or prejudicial to the other), and in the person who carries it out (without being driven by any "cause").

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²⁹⁰See "Two turning points", n° 66.

²⁹¹(*) There are many such "reasons", which often mean that the person who (voluntarily or not) has caused damage or inflicted The most common, perhaps, especially when it comes to the mother or father, or someone considered beyond the reach of rank or social position, is the barrier of fear of violating a taboo. Perhaps the most common, especially when it's the mother or father, or someone considered out of bounds by rank or social position, is the fear of violating a long-standing, internalized taboo of authority. These are very strong barriers (in my case, they have tended to disappear over the last fifteen years or so, and increasingly so. . .). In the opposite direction, it can happen that the person in question is "not up to the task" of assuaging a grudge commensurate with the wrongs suffered - that he or she appears too insignificant, too evasive or pusillanimous perhaps, to be up to the role that would otherwise be rightfully his or her.

However, I can also imagine that in certain cases, the wrong suffered is too imponderable, too subtle (and even "non-existent", to say the least, according to the prevailing consensus, long internalized by the person concerned), to give rise to anything other than a diffuse resentment, unable to "condense" and take shape and strength in a relationship itself in soft tones, with no apparent angles. In fact, this is no doubt a simple variant of the previous case, which has emerged in the course of reflection.

with the note "Rancune en sursis - ou le retour des choses (2)" (n° 149).

²⁹²(*) On the subject of this violence "beyond comprehension" ("unfassbar" in German), see the note "The slave and the puppet - or the floodgates" (n° 140). When I speak here of gratuitous violence "in the strongest sense of the term", without immediately qualifying it as anything other than "beyond comprehension", the precise meaning I have in mind is identified in the following explanation, by clarifying the "two aspects" that combine in it.

feelings of hatred or animosity that he might harbor, "rightly or wrongly", against his target).

Perhaps the question of the presence or absence of hatred or animosity, in the cases I'm dealing with (where we find ourselves confronted with violence that appears "gratuitous", as if unprovoked), is relatively incidental here, surely, as was the case for me, in the experience of the person who suffers this violence, and from the moment the violence suffered becomes conscious, there must appear an impression of "secret hatred" or "animosity" on the part of the person inflicting it. However, this impression is in no way the result of a perception (which would have suddenly appeared, as if by a wave of a magic wand), but rather that of a cookie-cutter **assimilation**: violence = hatred (or animosity)²⁹³ (**).

One thing that seems much more important to me, however, is to note not only **the existence** of something as seemingly aberrant, as demented, as contrary to the most inveterate "common sense" reflexes, as "grudge by proxy", displaced from its "original ^{target}□ (or targets) to p. 754 a "replacement target" (a target of pure convenience, almost!); but to note, **moreover**, that this is one **of the most common mechanisms**, encountered at every street corner, whether in one's own person (the last one you'd think of going after. . .), or in that of one's family and friends. I even have the impression that this mechanism is **universal in nature**, that it's part of the basic mechanisms of the human psyche, that it's one of those few all-purpose mechanisms that make up the **syndrome of flight** from reality: the refusal to take cognizance of it, and the fear of assuming it.

More to the point, today I feel as if I've put my finger on the **mainspring common to all situations of "gratuitous violence"**, without exception. This impression emerged, with the force of a sudden conviction, when I began to examine (three paragraphs above) an "apparent contradiction". I then had the feeling that a whole host of fragmentary and heterogeneous impressions stored up over the course of my life, revolving around the "sensitive point" among them all of this violence "that surpasses understanding", were suddenly coming into order, suddenly acquiring a perspective that they still lacked - a perspective that appeared there unexpectedly, at the end of a thought, just as I was about to place a very last dot on a very last i. ...

18.2.12.4. (d) Nichidatsu Fujii Guruji - or the sun and its planets

Note 160 (January 8) For the past week, there's been an unusual cold snap - temperatures of -15 and below, and when the wind blows from "Mont Ventoux" (the name says it all!), it must be even colder. It seems that this wave is sweeping the world (according to someone who listens to the news), and that in the south of France it hasn't happened since the famous winter and spring of 1956. When I was growing up in Germany, I experienced cold like that, but there was snow to protect the earth, and put a gentle tone in the air and on things. With this snow-free cold, the earth's surface is frozen like a block of ice. In just a few days, the garden has been raked - I don't know if there will be anything left in the spring from what we sowed and planted. The remaining leaves of leeks, celery, chard, lamb's lettuce, beet and chard are like sheets of ice, frozen vegetables. We hurry to harvest as much as we can

day by day, to eat it as we went along, before it thawed and everything went on the compost. And ^{yesterday}□the water supply had frozen in the kitchen, luckily there was still running water downstairs in the old p. 755

²⁹³(**) (March 6) In some cases, however, there may well be a perception of a hatred that is actually present, even though it has in no way been provoked (see today's footnote on this subject). It's a hatred which, except in exceptional circumstances, remains confined to deep layers of the unconscious, and which moreover remains there in a state of "vacancy", without a designated target, even though it is the secret force driving acts of violence (most often in insidious form) which, in turn, do indeed and with unfailing constancy aim at the same chosen target. ...

garage, less exposed to the cold. Today a friend came over with a portable gas flashlight, and managed to get the water going again. I'll have to leave a trickle of water running so it doesn't refreeze so dry. Luckily I've got a good wood-burning stove in the dining room, where I've moved my work. I warm myself with vine stumps, which I break with an axe every day, a good grape crate full overboard in the cold weather. When the wind's been blowing all afternoon, it's enough to give you a cold sore, just standing there for a quarter of an hour, twenty minutes, breaking wood in the wind. Not to mention the fact that the car outside won't start - I've heard that cars don't stand the extreme cold very well, antifreeze or no antifreeze. The same complaisant friend got it running again earlier today, but will it still work tomorrow to proofread the typing of the secretary I gave the job to? In short, all it takes is a cold snap in winter, or a heat wave in summer, or a good little illness at any time, to remind us of some of the realities of life that we tend to forget when everything's humming along just fine...

Over the last three months, my work rhythm has gradually shifted towards the night hours. I work until around two or three in the morning, and sleep until around eleven or twelve. With the weather the way it is, if I listened to myself once in bed, I'd stay up for my easy twelve hours - and conversely, once at work, I'd never go to bed again! Right now, I'm trying to keep a reasonable balance. I don't worry too much about time shifts, as long as I get a good night's sleep, and don't lie in bed for hours on end with my thinking machine still running. Even now, when there's hardly any work to be done in the garden, there's still enough to keep me busy every day, including the firewood, and a little gymnastics here and there. I have the impression of a satisfying balance in my life, where: the work of discovery doesn't seem to devour everything else, but without being on the small side. Since I went back to work on September 22, I must be spending an average of five to six hours a day on it. It's modest, but the "output" seems hardly less than before. The "slaughter" (around a hundred pages a month) is about the same, give or take, as writing the first two parts of *Récoltes et Semailles*. But from a qualitative point of view, there's no doubt in my mind that this third part is the most profound, the one that has taught me the most about myself and others.

* *

*

□Na mu myo ho ren ge kyo!

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Just as I was finishing this short retrospective on the rigors of winter and the evolution of my life balance, I received a phone call from one of my Buddhist monk friends from the Nihonzan Myohoji group, announcing the death of their revered "preceptor"²⁹⁴ (*), Nichidatsu Fujii, better known as Fujii Guruji, or "Osshosama" to those close to him. My friend in Paris has just received the news in a phone call from Tokyo, and I assume that Fujii Guruji has died today²⁹⁵ (**). He had just turned one hundred on August 6, physically weakened but in excellent mental condition.

By a strange coincidence, August 6 is the anniversary of two other important events, one of historical significance, the other of a personal nature for me. It's the anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima (August 6, 1945) - which the Japanese commemorate as "Hiroshima day". (That's why

²⁹⁴(*) "Preceptor" is more or less equivalent to "teacher", meaning "master" or "teacher". Nihonzan Myohoji is the phonetic transcription of the group's Japanese name, which translates as "Japanese Mission". This is a "missionary" Buddhist group, with a primarily pacifist vocation. See below for further details.

²⁹⁵(**) As it turned out, he had only been dead for a few hours. The news spread fast!

Fujii Guruji's birthday festivities were held towards the end of July, to keep the days around August 6 available for pacifist and anti-atomic demonstrations). On the other hand, my father was born on August 6, 1890, six years to the day after Fujii Guruji's birth.

After the death of Claude Chevalley, Nichidatsu Fujii's is the second death of a person who played a significant role in my life, and it occurred during the writing of *Récoltes et Semailles*. In view of this passing (which doesn't really come as a surprise), I'm particularly pleased that just last year, there was a warm exchange of letters with him. I had been invited to attend the ceremony for the old Master's hundredth birthday, which was to be held with exceptional pomp in Tokyo (a small book of testimonials about him had even been hastily edited, to be presented to him for the occasion). This had been an opportunity for me to write (as I do almost every year), a few words of early congratulations, apologizing for not being able to attend the ceremony on July 30, as I myself was still more or less bedridden at the time of writing. (It's also true that I'm not

public ceremonies, but I didn't think it was worth mentioning it in this article.

my letter. In any case, I'd have disappointed and pained more than one of my monk friends, by abs- p . 757 stubbornly refused to attend any of the "grand occasions"²⁹⁶ (*), to which they never tired of inviting me). I had to add a few words about the beneficial side of illness, which forces us, in spite of ourselves, to "unplug" from our occupations and give the body what it craves. Fujii Guruji himself had been bedridden a lot during the past year, which must have weighed heavily on him, given his action-oriented temperament and uncommon energy. Although it had been over seven years since I had received any personal communication from Fujii Guruji, I was surprised to receive a letter from him, dictated by him while he was still bedridden. The letter (which I've just reread) is dated July 13, 1984. It's a letter full of delicacy, in which he worries about my health, and laments not being able to send someone to take care of me. He also talks about his health, and the mood in which he endures his forced inaction. He ends with these words, in very "Japanese" style, which should be taken with a (large!) grain of salt, and which showed me, perhaps even more than the rest of the letter, that my tone was as good as ever²⁹⁷ (**):

"Indeed I am a very old decrepit man of no use even if I may get back to normal life. Yet still, I would like to live and see how the world turns."

There he was able to watch the world go round again for almost six months. ...

My links with the Nihonzan Myohoji group go back to 1974. There's no way I can even begin to sketch out these many and varied relationships here - I'd need a whole book to do that.

volume. They are among the richest "spin-offs" from the "Survive and Live" episode²⁹⁸ (***) which followed my p . 758

²⁹⁶(*) Chief among such "grand occasions" was the inauguration of "Shanti stoupas", or "Pagodas of Peace". The construction of these Pagodas, or places of meditation for world peace, goes back to a very ancient tradition in the Buddhist world (initiated by King Ashoka in India), and was one of Fujii Guruji's main preoccupations. It has inspired the construction of a large number of Shanti Stoupas around the world, including three in Europe and one in the USA.

²⁹⁷(**) The letter was dictated in Japanese (the only language Guruji spoke) and translated directly into English. French translation of the lines quoted: "Certainly I am a very old and decrepit man and of no use even if I can regain normal health. And yet, I'd like to live and see how the world turns out."

²⁹⁸(***) This episode is alluded to several times in "Fatuité et Renouveau" (the first part of *Récoltes et Semailles*). *Survivre et Vivre* (first called "Survivre", then "Survival") is the name of a group, initially pacifi c, then also ecological, which originated in July 1970 (on the bangs of a "Summer School" at the Université de Montréal), in a milieu of scientists (and above all, mathematicians). It rapidly evolved towards a "cultural revolution" direction, while broadening its audience outside scientific circles. Its main means of action was the bulletin (more or less periodical) of the same name, whose successive directors have been Claude Chevalley, myself, Pierre Samuel, Denis Guedj (all four mathematicians) - not to mention an English-language edition, maintained at arm's length by Gordon Edwards (a young Canadian mathematician whom I had met in Montreal and who was among the few initiators of the group and the bulletin).

departure (between 1970 and the end of 1972). There had been mention of this group, and of the (not very periodical!) bulletin of the same name, and also of my "departure from maths" and my "trajectory", in a Japanese newspaper (or newspapers?), in 1972 or 73. The "criticism of science" and denunciation of the military apparatus, and also, perhaps, the "criticism of a civilization" aspect, must have "passed" in some article, attracting the attention of one of the monks at Nihonzan Myohoji. He told others about it, and in particular a younger monk from the same town (Kagoshima), who had become a monk under his influence and was something of a "pupil". This

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was the first missionary monk of the group to land in the "West", in Paris to be precise, in the spring of 1974²⁹⁹ (*). He came to find me a few weeks later and unannounced, in the remote village where I was living about fifty kilometers from Montpellier. Since that memorable day in May, when I saw, under the midday sun, a strangely dressed man, singing on the road to the accompaniment of a drum and heading (there was no mistake. . .) towards the garden where I was working alone - since that day I've had the privilege and pleasure of seeing many Guruji devotees and³⁰⁰ (*) sympathizers pass through my house. Their contact has been of great benefit to me. At the beginning of November 1976, I even had the honour and joy of welcoming Fujii Guruji himself, then aged 92, to my rustic home, accompanied by a group of seven or eight monks, nuns and disciples. I had already met him the previous year, at the solemn inauguration of the group's temple in the eighteenth arrondissement of Paris. Over and above the de rigueur words of courtesy, there was then a strong contact, an immediate sympathy. The more intimate and personal context of a several-day visit to my home gave me, of course, a much richer apprehension both of Fujii Guruji as a person, and of his relationship to the group of which he was the head, and the soul.

Interestingly, this visit from Fujii Guruji followed very closely, by just two weeks, the crucial turning point in my life that took place between October 15 and 18 of the same year, mentioned elsewhere³⁰¹ (**). The weeks that followed those days of crisis and renewal were among the most intense of my life, with each day bringing its own unexpected harvest of inner events and discoveries. To tell the truth, this visit, planned and prepared for weeks, of a whole group of monks and nuns around their revered master, seemed to come there as a kind of strange interlude, like a diversion in the adventure that was then absorbing the totality of my being. It was respect for my hosts, and in particular for Fujii Guruji who had come to honour my home, that enabled me to remain there for these few days,

The first bulletin, written entirely by me (naive and full of conviction!) and printed in a thousand copies, was distributed at the International Congress in Nice (1970), which brought together (as it does every four years) several thousand mathematicians. I was expecting a massive turnout - there were (if I remember correctly) two or three. Most of all, I sensed great embarrassment among my colleagues! When I talked about the collaboration of scientists with the military, which had infiltrated scientific life from all sides, I was really putting my foot in it... It was in the "big scientific world" that I felt the greatest discomfort - the echoes of sympathy coming from there were reduced to those of Chevalley and Samuel. It was in what I have elsewhere called the "swamp" of the scientific world that our action found a certain resonance. The bulletin ended up with a print run of some 15,000 copies - an insane amount of housekeeping, by the way, when distribution was done by hand. Didier Savard's juicy drawings undoubtedly contributed greatly to our canard's relative success.

After my departure and that of Samuel, things turned into a leftist groupuscule, with sharp jargon and unanswerable analyses, and the bulletin died a natural death. What had been to be understood and said, at a certain point close to the effervescence of 1968, had been understood and said. After that, there was little point in spinning a record over and over again. ...

²⁹⁹(*) He did assure me that he was the first Buddhist missionary monk in the West, in the history of Buddhism - but I can't guarantee that this information is reliable! It's not clear that becoming a missionary was really a great "step forward" for Buddhism. Right from the start, this aspect of the Nihonzan Myohoji group aroused reservations in me, which have only grown stronger over the years.

³⁰⁰(*) It was precisely one of these who had the honor, as an "illegal alien", of being the occasion for the first literal application, in French jurisprudence, of a certain rather incredible article of a certain "Ordinance of 1949". I had the honor of finding myself in the Correctionnelle, for having "lodged and housed" such an outlaw free of charge. See about this episode in the section "My farewells - or strangers" (n° 24).

³⁰¹(**) See the section "Desire and meditation" (n° 36) and the note "Les retrouvailles (le réveil du yin (1))" (n° 109).

the availability that the occasion demanded. As has often happened to me, it was only once I got to the heart of the event that I realized that it was in no way an "interlude" or a "diversion", but rather an opportunity for me to take part.

□ that it was part of the adventure I was living. Underneath its very "tales from the Orient" exterior, a perfect delicacy and unusual charm, this so-called "interlude" brought me into the presence of men and women like myself and the men and women I'd always known, in less exotic, less extraordinary contexts. It was because I sensed this kinship that I also felt that my hosts were friends and brothers, and not characters straight out of a tale of a thousand and one nights, as must have been the case for many of the astonished villagers. And Fujii Guruji himself, who spoke so familiarly to me while his "relatives" remained at the proper distance demanded by the respect due to the revered master, I felt very, very distant (from me as well as from his relatives), and yet close at the same time, as if he had been my father, or a benevolent elder brother.

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And as is not uncommon with even the most benevolent of fathers or older brothers, he had an expectation of me, one he made no secret of, an expectation shared by those accompanying him, all of whom were my guests. And I also knew I couldn't meet it. My adventure was linked to Fujii Guruji's, by links I could only dimly discern, perhaps deeper than I could see, and to those of his disciples who followed him with their eyes closed. But it was no more that of my prestigious and benevolent host, than it was that of my father, also prestigious to me and benevolent, very close and yet different: another person, another destiny.

It wasn't easy to "get over" the fact that I wouldn't be one of them in an undertaking that was theirs, and that I didn't feel was mine. According to the picture of me that Fujii Guruji and his followers had been given, this was the last thing they would have expected - and all the more so as the relationship on a personal level, between the group or the various members of the group and myself, was a veritable honeymoon. It was during this visit, too, that some long-standing resistance, due to my upbringing, vanished, and I joined my hosts in chanting their mantra with them, accompanied by drumming:

"Na mu myo ho ren ge kyo!"

This mantra is the foundation, the alpha and omega, of their religious practice. They sing it most often accompanied by the prayer drum, one hour in the morning and one hour in the evening. Following the teachings of the Japanese prophet Nichiren, this drum chanting is in itself the sovereign good, the dispenser of peace in the world.

the one who sings it and around him. This song is therefore for my □ Japanese friends what is commonly called a "prayer". The meaning they give it, in agreement with Nichiren, and with their direct "preceptor" Fujii Guruji, is that of an **act of respect** for the person addressed, and through him, for every living being in the universe - as a being promised (according to the Lotus Flower Sutra) to become Buddha, incarnation of perfect wisdom. These seven syllables also serve as a greeting for any other person, or even for any other being we wish to greet, with this connotation of respect for what is of divine essence in the other. They also serve as a thanksgiving before the meal. To tell the truth, it seems to me that there is hardly an occasion, whether in moments of surprise, emotion or contemplation, that is not conducive for a Nichiren follower to say the sacred words. As for me, without sharing the religious beliefs of my monk friends³⁰² (*), it's with joy that I join them, when the occasion arises, to do Odaimoku - to sing on the drum what they call "the Prayer". It's in their memory, and as an act of affectionate respect

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³⁰²(*) I don't feel I belong to any particular religious denomination. Through my parents' upbringing, I was an atheist (with an anti-religious undertone) until the age of fourteen. A remarkable lecture by my natural science teacher, on the history of the evolution of life on earth, made me understand, without the slightest possibility of doubt, the presence of a creative intelligence at work in the Universe. This understanding, which at the time remained at the level of the intellect alone, broadened and became clearer in the course of my subsequent maturation, continuing after my departure from the mathematical

scene in 1970.

to their master, Nichidatsu Fujii Guruji, that I have also included "the Prayer" in my daily life, chanting it before each of the two main meals of the day, at least when I'm at home, or with friends, or with people I know won't mind³⁰³ (**). This is one of the most valuable things I owe to Fujii Guruji and to those of his disciples whom I have known and who have given me their affection, without tiring of my reluctance to associate myself in any way with their missionary activities.

There are several million Nichirenite Buddhists in Japan, divided into a number of different sects. very different physiognomies. The Nihonzan Myohoji group is one of the smallest in terms of numbers, comprising just a few hundred active monks, nuns and sympathizers. Yet it is well known in Japan and elsewhere,

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distinguishing itself from all traditional religious groups by an unequivocal political commitment, including the main emphasis is on the struggle for peace, anti-militarism and, in particular, anti-nuclear action. At the time of the Vietnam War, it was the only Buddhist group (unless I'm mistaken) to take a clear stand against the Americans, and to fight against the presence of American bases in Japan (which served as logistical support for the continuation of the war in Vietnam). In recent years, Fujii Guruji has also been in close contact with the leaders of the American Indian Movement (AIM). Monks from Nihonzan Myohoji have taken part in marches organized by American Indians, not to mention other Peace Marches in various parts of the world. Indian leaders were visibly attracted and impressed by Fujii Guruji's unusual personality. The fact that this man of indomitable energy, approaching a hundred years of age, was a great missionary of a religious faith different from their own, didn't seem to bother them at all. On the contrary, the religious dimension of the venerable Master's zinc-spiked "anti-American" options was surely, in addition to his age, one of the reasons why they welcomed Guruji as they would have welcomed one of their own, like a highly respected father or grandfather in whom they recognized themselves³⁰⁴ (*).

I'm sure that this religious dimension played a similar role for me - it brought Fujii Guruji closer to me, even though I don't claim to belong to any particular religious faith. If I ask myself what attracted and struck me most about him, I see several things. The most obvious is an inner **joy**. This joy seems to flow spontaneously from a **unity** within him, or rather, perhaps, from a **fidelity** to himself. One senses that this man is happy, because all his life he has done without hesitation what he felt he had to do. He never appears to me not free of contradictions, but devoid of ambiguity. The meaning of some of his acts or omissions escapes me, but at no time has it occurred to me to doubt the man's total integrity. If he This is not the result of an analysis of what I know about him through other people. You only need to have met him once to know that he is a man who knows no ambiguity, a man in deep accord with himself. This is what the Indian chiefs of the AIM must have sensed, to give him the place they have made for him among them. This is surely where his extraordinary ascendancy lies over those who claim to be him, men and women whose ideological and philosophical options cover a spectrum ranging from hard-line Marxism-Leninism to the good-natured conformism of a chain's CEO.

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³⁰³(**) I refrained in particular from singing the prayer at the weekly meal I had at the Faculty, in the company of a few students or colleagues, not being sure that one or other of them would not feel some kind of constraint, which I would impose on him thanks to my position as elder or "boss".

³⁰⁴(*) To give an idea of the bond of trust and respect linking the Indian chiefs to the person of Guruji, I'd like to point out here that during the great annual initiation festival, held around the "sun dance", Guruji's monk disciples took part, beating the great prayer drum from sunrise to sunset, to the throbbing rhythm of *Na mu myo ho ren ge kyo!* These large drums, hollowed out of a single trunk and stretched with ox skins, are unusually powerful, and (I presume) hard to bear for twelve hours on end. (I experimented with this for two hours, during the inauguration of the temple in Paris, an experiment that was conclusive. ...).) In any case, Robert Jaulin (who, along with the monks, was among the few non-Indians invited to take part in the festival) told me that the Indians stoically endured Grandfather Guruji's sacred drum from the beginning to the end of the initiation, of which the Guruji tam-tam was one of the many trials. ...

department stores. What unites them is not the veneration of a certain Sutra, which perhaps none of them has had the effrontery to read³⁰⁵ (*), nor a certain prayer of Pali origin, restored to Japanese via Chinese translation, and which professes veneration of this Sutra. What brings them together (or should we say, what had brought them together?) is one **man**, exerting over them an ascendancy he no more sought to exert, than the sun sought its planets.

I also saw that this man was **alone**, and that solitude didn't weigh heavily on him. It was his natural condition, perhaps always had been. This solitude, and this integrity, or accord with himself, appear to me as so many different aspects of one and the same thing. Yet another aspect of the same thing is that of **strength** - strength without violence, and which doesn't care about being or appearing "strong". It's the sun's force, again, which suffices to be itself in order to create this field of forces around it, and the orbits that the planets travel in.

Surely, this is also the force I spoke of more than once in Harvest and Sowing, as "**the** force" in us - with the difference that in one man it is fully apparent and sensitive to all who approach him, and in another it is buried more or less deeply, to the point where sometimes we could even "see" it. believe it to be non-existent. But if some of my monk friends seem to deny it in themselves, this Sutra nevertheless they profess to venerate, and the very prayer they chant day after day, clearly proclaim that a p. 764 such a force lives in every living thing in Creation, promised like them, and like their revered master Osshosama himself, to the Buddha's destiny.

18.2.12.5. (e) Prayer and conflict

Note 161 (January 13)³⁰⁶ (*) It's been another four days since I've had the peace and quiet to work.

- to continue the notes, I mean. The main reason lies in the rather incredible difficulties I'm having in getting this third part of Récoltes et Semailles typed out on the net. In the thirty-plus years I've been in the habit of getting typing work done, I've never experienced anything like it. Clearly, having this highly personal, not to say intimate, text in my hands triggered (surely unconscious) reactions of considerable force in the people in charge of typesetting, each time going in the direction of a veritable sabotage of the work entrusted to them. In the space of a few months, the same scenario was repeated three times in a row, with some variations, with three secretaries in a row, all of whom had not given each other the word³⁰⁷ ! This third time, moreover, a sordid note was added, as the secretary, Mme J., pretended to use the rather unusual manuscript that had been entrusted to her care,

³⁰⁵(*) More than one of Guruji's disciples has made it clear to me that he would consider it an overstretch to pretend to read the Lotus Flower Sutra, even though a Japanese translation exists. Only a man of great depth of spirit, such as his master Fujii Guruji himself, would be able and worthy to read this sacred text, which is infinitely beyond the intelligence of the layman. Clearly, the faith of these men and women is not in some more or less deified historical figure, such as Buddha, or the perfect Bodhisattva and prophet Nichiren, but in Fujii Guruji himself.

³⁰⁶(*) (January 23) The whole first part of this note was written against strong resistance to mentioning the disturbances interfering with my work. These took on a vaguely ridiculous figure, and to even mention them was a bit like graciously providing the rods to get beaten! On the other hand, these disturbances, "which can literally saw you off", had become so grating and invasive in my work, especially during a week or two, that it would have been a kind of cheating, an inauthenticity in the testimony, to pass them over in silence as if nothing had happened. I come back to my setbacks ten days later, in the note "Jung - or the cycle of 'evil' and 'good'".

(March 7) This last note, the first of a whole series of "reading notes" on C.G. Jung's autobiography, was finally discarded in a final section of Harvest and Sowing, made up of the part of the reflection prompted by this autobiography.

³⁰⁷(**) Those who wish me well will have no trouble accusing me of delusions of persecution - after the brotherhood of movers, here comes the brotherhood of typists-secretaries who are mobilizing to do me harm! See, for precedents, the note "Le massacre" (the name of the note already says enough about me...) p. 538, about my friend Ionel Bucur's move... .

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as a means of blackmail to extort some sort of ransom. She is a former executive secretary, with a great ☐ habitude of the trade. The first eleven pages of typing were impeccable and without a single mistake and in the next fifteen pages alone, there were eleven lines skipped - I've rarely seen a text crippled so badly! I didn't ask what the ransom was (over and above the price agreed for the text already typed) to get my manuscript and the typing back, as I have no desire to encourage this kind of procedure. This means I'll probably have to resort to legal action.

Fortunately, I still have a draft of the manuscript, which I can use if need be. Don't forget that this kind of circus, especially when it becomes repetitive, can literally "saw you off". When I imagined the difficulties and antagonisms that my modest meditative and autobiographical paving stone would undoubtedly raise, I certainly didn't imagine that it would be from this side, from the brotherhood of secretary-typists (instead of that of my honored mathematician colleagues) that the first trouble would come, and in the nature of a sort of war of attrition! Now I'm not so keen on entrusting this same text (once recovered) to the hands of a fourth secretary, when there's nothing to suggest that she'll have any more commiseration for it than those she'll be taking over from. And doing the secretary's job myself would require a time investment of well over a month, which I'm absolutely not willing to provide.

Perhaps I'll have to forego a typesetting of this third part of *Récoltes et Semailles*, which I'll entrust directly to the publisher in the form of a rough manuscript. (I don't anticipate the same kind of trouble with the protes responsible for typesetting the text for printing!) This would mean, above all, that I would forgo including this third part in the limited pre-edition of *Récoltes et Semailles* to be produced by my university, USTL, for personal distribution among colleagues and friends. Or maybe I'll have it printed later, if I end up finding a secretary who does a decent job. I'll only send out this part (surely the most "difficult" of the three) at the express request of those really interested in receiving it, among those who will have received the first two parts. I'm really looking forward to getting these printed and sent off (although I'm in less of a hurry for the third part). The typing of these two parts was completed months ago, and had been handled (without any problems) by the USTL secretaries. They could have been printed a long time ago, if I hadn't wanted to include

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a table of contents of all three parts of *Récoltes et Semailles*, when for more than three months I think ☐ I've been on the verge of finishing this interminable third part. Now I'm going to give myself until the end of this month to finish, or if not, to take care of the printing of the first two parts (Fatuity and Renewal, and Burial I, or the robe of the Emperor of China), without including a complete and definitive table of contents of the third part (Burial II, or the key to yin and yang).

And now, after all these unpleasant incidents, I have to find my way back to a train of thought that was cut short.

The death of Fujii Guruji in his one hundred-and-first year, on January 9th, was an opportunity to evoke, with him, an aspect of my life that I hadn't touched on before. Unable to see Guruji again on his deathbed, and to take part in a wake with his loved ones, I spent the night after his death in a solitary vigil, jotting down until morning some of the reminiscences and thoughts prompted by the event. In retrospect, I thought it would be a good idea for me to try, on this occasion too, to say what the encounter with Fujii Guruji, and with those of his disciples with whom I had a close acquaintance, had brought me.

In the notes from five days ago, I already mentioned the Na mu myo ho ren ge kyo chant, which for many years has entered my life, and which is a blessing. There's also the affection received by Fujii Guruji himself, and

by many of his disciples, young and old. It is this affection, surely, that gives its price and beauty to the song I received from them, which is itself an act of respect and affection for all living things in creation, including them and myself.

Also, my contacts with the monks and nuns of Nihonzan Myohoji were my first and only close contacts with men and women whose main, if not total, investment is in religiously-motivated tasks (just as for a long time my own investment was in mathematical discovery work). This was an opportunity for me to realize that, as elsewhere, beyond a certain affinity with a common (so-called religious) vocation and allegiance to the same strong and engaging personality, differences in temperament, conditioning and even profound **choices** remain just as marked, and just as active in person-to-person relationships. To put it another way,

the efforts of some people to **model** themselves after some religious ideal (in this case, that of the "Boddhisatva", the infati-

gable propagator of the Buddha's teachings) débouchent sur des **attitudes** plus ou moins à fleur de p. 767
skin, not on a process of inner **transformation** or maturation. On the other hand, the adoption of a "creed" (however sublime it may be) and investment in a so-called "religious" activity, seems to have no essential impact on the play of habitual egotic mechanisms. Conflict is no less present in monasteries, convents, temples and other religious communities of all denominations than anywhere else in the world. And often the religious vocation is taken as one means, among others, of evacuating conflict, by convincing oneself that it has disappeared by virtue of the creed.

It's also true that, on different occasions, in one of my monk guests there was an inner peace and joy that radiated from him, sensitive to me as to all who approached them, and beneficial to themselves as to all. Clearly, such a state of harmony and wholeness, of profound accord, is alien to any effort to be this or that - it is an "effortless" state, a state of perfect naturalness.

For four of the monks in whom I sensed such radiance, I have the impression that this has been their customary state for many years, even decades. This is particularly true of Fujii Guruji himself. For two other friends of mine, I've seen them on other occasions as knotted and as torn as anyone else. It was as if that state of harmony in which I had known them, and a certain spontaneous understanding of things that was one of the signs of it, had become null and void - as if they had left no trace of themselves. I'm convinced, however, that there is an indestructible "trace", deeper than a simple mark recorded in memory - a trace in the nature of **knowledge**. Like everyone else, these friends are free at any time to take account of the knowledge deposited in them at the creative moments of their existence, to let it act and bear fruit; just as they are also free to ignore it, to bury it, to "play dumb" in short. This is, after all, the most common thing in the world... .

The thought occurred to me that this state of perfect naturalness, of profound agreement with oneself, and the radiance that accompanies it, are **not** very common things, on the other hand. It's quite remarkable that in the rather small group of monks I've been able to welcome into my home, be it for a few days or a few weeks, there have been so many in whom I've found this state of inner harmony, of strength at the core of their being.

She's the one who unites humility and fortitude, the gentle and the incisive. Wouldn't that be

end of committee, well and truly the action of a creed, or of the Prayer that expresses it? This one' □ if obviously not

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can on its own create a state of grace, perhaps it tends to **encourage** the emergence of such a state, and its renewal day after day? After all, the very act of singing a beautiful song and putting our whole selves into it is already to some extent a "state of grace" - and the very beauty of a song (or a prayer) already encourages us to "put our whole selves into it".

It's also true that the most beautiful of songs, when we repeat it with our minds elsewhere, remains inactive, for want of

it's up to us to open up to it. Or to put it another way, what we play back **is not** the song we think it is, and our soul doesn't feed on it, any more than a paper or plastic rose is a rose, and a bee would come and pick it.

18.2.12.6. (f) Belief and knowledge

Note 162 (January 14) As I concluded the reflection of a week ago, I had the feeling that I had "put the doigt" on something important. That very night, I wanted to lapidarily express this "something" in the name given to this note, "The cause of causeless violence" (note n° 159). I also knew that this sudden flash of understanding was in no way the culmination, or even the final point, of a reflection that for more than a month³⁰⁸ (*) had been revolving around the mystery of "causeless violence", or "gratuitous violence". On the contrary, the new "perspective" that suddenly appeared was rather like a new point of departure. The mechanism of the "displacement" of resentment or resentment for wrongs and damages suffered in earlier days, to an **acceptable** "target" in place of the real culprit(s), felt to be out of reach or "taboo" - this mechanism, which I had first recognized sporadically, in this and that isolated case in the course of my life, and tacitly taken for some kind of strange, erratic aberration of the unconscious, is at last recognized as one of the "basic mechanisms of the human psyche". At the same time, it appears to be responsible for the innumerable and disturbing manifestations of "causeless violence", whether between wife and husband, lover and lover, parent and child, or the "anonymous" violence that reaches its climax in times of war or large-scale violence.

social convulsions.

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□ I don't know whether these links have long since become part of the B.A.BA of psychological science or psy-chiatric science (assuming such a "science" exists), or whether what I say here will come across as the phantasmogoria of a "psychoanalytic dilettante". As my aim is not to present a doctoral thesis in psychology, nor even to break new ground for some old or new theory, but to understand my life through the situations in which I am involved, I don't care about the "status" of what I happen to put my finger on, or the "perspectives" I suddenly see opening up here and there. I'm well aware that, in any case, if I want to understand anything at all, I can't do without personal reflection, be it in mathematics, or in my life and in those to which my life is linked in one way or another. All the more so, when what we're trying to understand seems to defy reason from the outset, and when I see everyone around me and elsewhere evading it like the plague, with reassuring clichés. (And it seems to me that psychology professionals are no more an exception than anyone else, at least when it comes to themselves).

I was well aware that the "sudden conviction" that came with "the last dot on the last i", namely that "I'd put my finger on the spring common to all situations of 'gratuitous violence'", in no way absolved me from the task of examining on the spot, and from every angle, this new intuition that had arrived in the field of conscious gaze, not yet free of the diffuse halo of what had just emerged from the mists. On the contrary, this was precisely the first job to be done, and I could already see a host of new questions arising, both specific to particular cases and general. If there was any certainty in this cookie-cutter "conviction", or to put it more accurately, a kernel of certain knowledge, it in no way told me that the formulation I'd just given to this conviction was "true", "correct", without any major reservations or alterations perhaps; but rather, that I had indeed put my finger on a **new** (for me) and **essential fact, that a new perspective** on violence had indeed just emerged.

³⁰⁸(*) Specifically, since the December 7 memo "Velvet paw - or smiles" (n° 137).

³⁰⁹ (*). As for the precise and nuanced meaning of this new fact and this new perspective, its exact scope and also, perhaps, its unforeseen extensions and repercussions, they cannot fail to emerge, as soon as I invest the necessary work in them. The "knowledge" that had just appeared told me, in particular, that the time was ripe for such work, for entering further into an understanding of violence, and in any case, into that of "gratuitous violence"; that every hour and every day that I would devote to this task, to follow through on what had just appeared, would take me further into this understanding. I don't recall that such a feeling of the appearance of something new and essential (even though it would still remain diffuse and approximate), and the intimate conviction of being able to penetrate further into the understanding of this thing, ever deceived me. If there has been a sure guide in my research to "place" my investments in this direction or that, it is the feeling of the appearance of the **new**, and this intimate conviction that tells me when the time is ripe to enter further into this "new" glimpsed and to know it³¹⁰ (*).

□ This doesn't mean that, whenever the time is ripe to launch myself in such and such a direction, and to to know such things, I'm going for it! It was impossible even when I was investing all my energy in mathematics, when I gradually found myself with ten irons, then a hundred at a time in the fire!³¹¹ (*) And it's been the same in meditation, that is, in self-discovery. At the level of conscious work, we can, alas, only do one thing at a time (which isn't bad, however, when you take the trouble to do it right. . .). This work on **one** of the "hundred irons in the fire" can, it's true, in the mysterious ways of the unconscious, also benefit all the others, or at least several of them - it can "warm them up", make them more receptive to hammer blows on the anvil of conscious attention, from the moment we turn our attention to them. But we need to know how to choose "the right" iron from among the hundred - the one whose shaping will also advance the work on others, which are in the process of heating up like it.

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³⁰⁹ (*) As I was writing these lines, the comparison with the "standard conjectures" on algebraic cycles, which I presented at the Bombay symposium in 1968, came to mind. They seemed to me then (and still do today) to be, along with the resolution of singularities, one of the most burning issues in algebraic geometry. As I worked out these conjectures, I sensed that a "new perspective. . . had just been established", this time on algebraic cycles, their relation to Hodge's theory and Weil's conjectures. What struck me most was that I could see the beginnings of an approach to Weil's conjectures that would be "purely geometric", by which I mean, without having (at least in appearance) to go through the medium of a cohomological theory.

As I have already pointed out elsewhere (in sub-note n° 106₁ of the note "Muscle and tripe"), the reality of this "new perspective" and its scope, is entirely independent of the question (which remains in the limbo of the future) whether this conjecture will be

true or false. A conjecture, for me, is not a **bet** (that you win or lose), but a **guess**.

- and whatever the answer, we can only come out "winners", by which I mean: with renewed knowledge. (Compare with the reflection in the section "Error and discovery", n° 2.) Assuming that the conjecture turns out to be wrong, I can already see two or three "less optimistic" variants, which from then on affirm it, the weakest of which is practically equivalent to the existence of a "reasonable" theory of semisimple patterns over a body.

Identifying these variants, for someone with a bit of experience, is an exercise lasting an afternoon or two (and perhaps the starting point for a long journey into the unknown. . .). Unpacking the first statement (inspired, as usual, by an idea of Serre's, set out in his article "Analogues kählériens des conjectures de Weil"), was not an exercise, but indeed a **discovery**; or again (to use the expression from Zoghman Mebkhout's letter, quoted in the note "Echec

d'un enseignement - ou création et fatuité", n° 44') a **creation**. And it was an understatement when Zoghman shyly ventured to say that "my students don't know very well what a creation is" - or rather, I'd say: they did, but have long since forgotten this, busy as they have been pushing the wheels of a funeral wagon... ..

³¹⁰ (*) Compare with the note "The child and the sea - or faith and doubt", n° 103.

³¹¹ (*) See note "A hundred irons in the fire, or: nothing's worth drying out!", n° 32.

18.2.12.7. (g) The hottest iron - or the turning one

Note 162 In the course of reflecting on the Burial, I came across many "irons" that asked me to work on them, more or less hot depending on the case. It seems to me that they all warmed up in the course of the work, some more, some less. The very first of these "irons" was the question of **self-contempt** in the case of my own person, first posed as a matter of conscience, on the bangs of the first embryo of Récoltes et Semailles³¹² (**). It remained rather tepid, until the reflection of December 13 (a month and a day ago), in the note "La violence du juste - ou le défolement" (n° 141). It was the first time in my life, I believe, that I had devoted a reflection, however brief, to the few cases in my life where I myself have exercised and caused to be exercised "violence without cause", violence "beyond comprehension". I've thought about it from time to time in recent years, but always in passing, without dwelling on it, and above all: without devoting any written thought to it.

p. 772 Yet violence-which-doesn't-say-its-name had profoundly shaped my life - it was one of the crucial things, if not **the** crucial thing ^{between} ^{all} of them, that I needed to understand as deeply as I could. could, to understand my life, and "life" in general, human life. But the fact that this is the case, which is obvious as soon as I take the trouble to think about it, had remained hidden. It finally emerged, as if by chance, on the bangs of the reflexion in the days leading up to that of December 13, continued in the set of four notes brought together under the name "La griffe dans le velours" (n° s 133-136). It is in these notes that, for the first time in Récoltes et Semailles, "**violence**" is named, and becomes the object of attention. It has remained the focus of attention until now, or at least until the note of January 7 (a week ago), "The cause of causeless violence".

This promising title may give the impression that this latest note is a sort of culmination of the re-flection on violence that has been ongoing throughout the past month. And it's true that it is one of the main fruits of that reflection. However, I am well aware that if this new perspective suddenly appeared, and this feeling of intimate conviction concerning a certain link suddenly glimpsed, it was because **my own person** was also directly involved in what had just appeared, among this "crowd of fragmentary and heterogeneous impressions stored up over the course of my life". The last and freshest of these impressions, felt at the time to be very "fragmentary" and indeed insufficient, was precisely that reflection of December 13th on **violence within myself**. This reflection, which to the superficial reader may seem like a digression among many others in the investigation of the Burial, appears to me now, with hindsight, as a pivotal moment and a crucial turning point (in potential at least) in my self-reflection. The very same day, moreover, I felt that I had at last taken the first step in a direction I'd been avoiding until then, and which would lead me straight to the heart of the conflict within myself. This "lukewarm iron", which had been lying there as if for memory for ten months already, was suddenly red-hot - all I had to do was stop and blow and strike, for it to turn red-white and reveal a shape and a message to me. And so it remains today.

p. 773 Clearly, however, this is not the place to discuss this iron. Of all those appearing in Harvesting and the Semailles is certainly the one that burns the brightest for me, and after it, the one that closely followed "La cause de la violence sans cause", if the child didn't have a terribly adult, stubborn boss on his back. rivé à des tâches de longue haleine et aux "priorités" qu'elles imposent, c'est dans cette direction assurément, leading me to the heart of the conflict within myself and others, that I would now launch into, without having to probe myself! But as the name suggests, it's usually the boss, not the child, who orders and decides on investments. The "enigma of evil" will therefore wait for the more propitious moment when the boss would be able to make the investment.

³¹²(**) See note (n° 2) referring to the June 1983 section "Infallibility (of others) and contempt (of self)" (n° 4).

when he's on vacation (a rare occurrence), or when he's not too busy with other pressing "priorities", such as finally completing the writing of *Récoltes et Semailles*!

18.2.12.8. (h) The endless chain - or handover (3)

Note 162” But before returning to the Burial, I'd like to note at least one of the associations of ideas aroused by the reflection of a week ago - one, perhaps, less obvious than others, and which for that reason risks vanishing without trace if I don't note it now. It's linked to the Hindu idea of karma, and goes in the same direction as the association that appeared in the note "Le Frère ennemi - ou la passation" (n° 156): in the sense of the tenuous intuition of a kind of **"law of conservation of karma"**.

This original, diffuse resentment in a person, which later translates into seemingly "gratuitous" impulses of aggression and violence, does not arise from nothing. It is the response to deep-rooted aggressions that were indeed experienced, especially those suffered in early childhood. It's true that many of these repressive assaults are not "acts of violence" in the strict sense of the term, i.e., they stem from an intention to injure or harm, particularly on the part of parents towards their child. It's also true that such intent (almost always unconscious) is present in many more cases than is generally accepted. But perhaps, from the point of view of the creation or transmission of karma, the question of **intentions** or **motivations** (overt or covert) is secondary, when "violence" is indeed taking place, inflicting "harm", causing "damage". I couldn't say.

Still, in most cases, a superficial look can give the illusion that the "harm" suffered is null and void, that it has been cashed in, and that once cashed in, it has "disappeared" without a trace. And this is a fact that it's not very often that those who have sown their children with anguish and powerlessness to be themselves, end up reaping ^{directly}□ment, at the hands of these same children, what they once sown; or at least, one has the impression that they're only reaping a tiny fraction of it! Or to put it another way, of the diffuse resentment they have aroused in their children, only a tiny portion condenses into a "hard" resentment, directed at them - and which they complain about loud and clear, as if it were the blackest of ingratitude, it's a given! But the rest of this resentment or accumulated "karma" is not lost for all that. It finds effective use, in a way that may seem inexplicable, through the mechanism of "displacement" of resentment towards makeshift targets; sometimes erratic targets, sometimes specially matched targets, pampered so to speak, nurtured over a long lifetime!

In ordinary times, this intense work of karma, like an abscess deeply implanted in human life, takes place in the shadows, and everyone makes a point of ignoring it, of agreeing to see it only as an occasional "burr" here and another there, in relation to what is considered normal and proper.

It's in times of exception, when war or misery are raging (or in places of exception, like penitentiaries and asylums), that this underground work erupts and spreads out freely in the full light of day, in a frenzied blaze of contempt and murderous madness, exalted by grandiloquent flags over heroic mass graves and cold, naked cities... .

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