



SuperPosition

L'Innovation Inspirée
de Jeanne d'Arc

Extract - Introduction

Philippe Cartau

Extract
from
Part 1 - Chapter 1
Matter

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Back : Sketch of Clément de Fauquembergue, Clerk of the Parliament, May 10th 1429

Superposition, Innovation inspired by Joan of Arc

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Philippe Cartau

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Matter

Help yourself and your Vision will help you

1- Matter

Dark Matter

In the beginning, chaos reigned. Shapeless dark matter languished in a jumble, hoping that a Vision would finally come to lay a framework. The human flesh was dying from a hundred years of plague and war, the shadow of the freshly shed souls was still slow to withdraw from the dark lands, their black matter impregnating the memories with a burning fog. The clash of the kings reverberated with plundering, their sharp waves scarifying the country delivering all over misery and weariness.

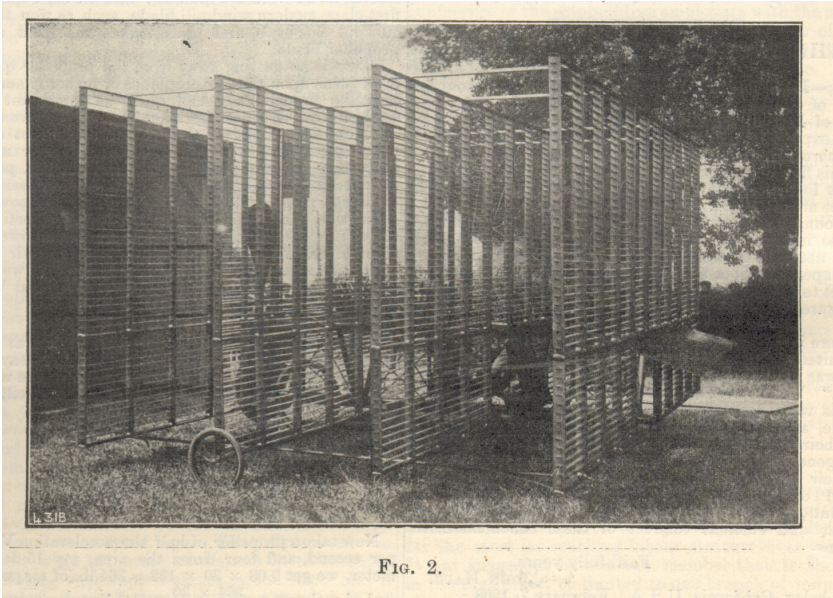
The universe since its beginnings brutalized matter so much that it seemed to disappear forever, like the offspring of Chronos. The earth in its last decile took the time to give birth to the hope of a thousand ambitious organic projects before swallowing them whole, but with a few exceptions. The human body in its first hours proceeds to a most brutal casting, sending back with a disdainful gesture ninety-nine percent⁷⁷ of contenders to the immune system. If we have found the children of Chronos, if the Burgess Shales have preserved traces of the decimation, just as biochemistry reveals to us the clues of violence of a body in search of life, it remains for us to find signs of the entrepreneurial dark matter, absent from the balance sheets and yet so present among us.

Dark matter reigns over innovation with its deafening absence. Yet, from all that is, emerge the possibilities that were. We would not be here without the millions of tested and abandoned directions.

But then, the amount of information to be considered in a new project is astronomical. Some data are essential, others have little impact. In these early days, no one can say how to organize it. Deciding and choosing become our best allies: strategizing on the main thread when only feverish clues, sometimes under cover or against the current, come

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to enlighten us; choosing by learning to create waste, the waste in all its splendor that will allow the non-waste to rise. A mountain of creation rises and imposes itself. Hardly climbed, it is not for us to rest upon it. Without further ado, the clumsy experiments and the finicky incoherences summon us to dig into it and empty it of all that is without value. Matter is suddenly transformed into an invisible thing, a necessary sacrifice to the perennality of the visible.



Phillips Multiplane, 1907 - 28 Feb 1908 issue of British magazine Engineering, on geocities.com. What would aeronautics be today without pioneers like Phillips?

It is easier to see what is than what has tried to be. The coherence, the need and the use quickly eradicate all that cannot provide for itself. In fact, we concentrate on what remains by forgetting this ephemeral state of what is in becoming. We draw most of our conclusions from a fragment of the universe. The survivor bias misleads us by truncating a vital part of what is. Yet, to think about innovation, we must already think

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about dark matter and all the invisible experiments that constitute it. What allows us to return to the fundamentals will allow us to understand the opportunity when it presents itself to us.

With BlablaCar, what we don't see today are the thousands of questions that the decision-makers had to ask themselves at the beginning of the project. Who would pay? What would be the meeting points? How to create trust, how to avoid misunderstandings. What to do with missed appointments, what to do with drivers who are unflexible? What would be an acceptable price? The list is long, of aborted attempts relegated to the influence of the past but which carry the inertia of the present.

The incubation of a startup remains the great mute of this world. Once the project is launched, we forget everything that it almost became. When everything is running smoothly, the direction seems obvious, the dark matter disappears. However, at the beginning there is no thread, no plot, no coherence. Few have observed the innovations in their dark beginnings. One scans, one notices and one comments only when viability is assured, when the obvious is shouted or the door is already broken down.

The social network of the *book of faces*⁷⁸ is an exception to this lack of knowledge of the beginnings, but even having dissected it, how much do we really know about its origins? Who, reading these lines, is able to go back beyond the obvious? Do we really know the cerebral ebullition that preceded the launch of Sixdegrees, a social network before its time, in 1997, a precursor in the field? The name alone, focused on the technical aspect rather than the benefit, reveals its proximity to the genesis of digital networks linking individuals. The further we go, the further we move away from the disorderly boiling of the early days. We can only get a truncated understanding of what the main social network is, how innovative it is and how it was formed without taking into account the myriads that preceded it. To rely on what the survivor has accomplished without considering what others have initiated is to misunderstand the world and where our power to orientate destiny lies.

To innovate consists in channeling the energy which at first struggles without direction or sense in gaseous and disconnected clouds. By cajoling this chaos and subjecting it to the right pressure, we orient it, we try to give it a perennial path. The Roman aqueducts⁷⁹, like the Canal du

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Midi, lend themselves wonderfully to the metaphor. They draw their sources as much in space as in time. Both require a source of energy, both emerged from numerous and growing preliminary iterations. The Etruscans first cleared the challenges of the waterways that would lead to the greatness of Rome. Other smaller and less ambitious canals were built before the Canal du Midi. Would our present world be possible without these vanished elements or outstanding remains?

Nothing prevents us from acting on an intuition, but to draw a conclusion from it proves to be reductive, even complacent. To understand what is being poured out before us, going back to the source of space and time can be interesting. One can even find inspiration there, at the sight of dissonances emerging from flagrant contrasts. What an adventure, what a joy to return to the beginning! What emerges is the result of a myriad of attempts. To understand these *pochades* and these aborted *elancées* is also to understand what remains.

Many, without remaining, laid the foundation for the Toulouse startup movement. Damien Cipel's Live M2M, was among the first. Callum Torr of Neventy was going to bring his rhythm and his network to Maestro Corp; Boris Mounet of Meetmydesigner contributed his experience to the launch of Momentum; Marc Rougier, after launching Goojet and curating the best of the West Coast, put his experience at the service of the investment fund Elaia; Cécile Morel forged herself with the fundraising of Mobirider, and later offered her seasoned soul to the cause of Cityméo, which became Cénaero; Simon Vacher of Wimha offered the traces of his travels to the affluence of the IoT Valley; François Goldgewicht left behind Newsvibes, transforming this experience into vitamin C for Pictarine; Lisbé Juin left the memories of Loliplop to the immensity and breathed her passion into Radio France, while Jean-Michel Betscher of Skeyelabs must have somehow inspired other projects, such as the one carried by Nataïs⁸⁰ consisting of image recognition of detrimental plants in corn fields, provided by a camera on a drone.

How many times has the architecture of the universe been rethought? How many big bangs did it take before we found the right parameters so that the whole thing would not collapse on itself? Because the universe is a great Oscillation and if the balance between the two extremes loses its

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impartiality, the scales will inevitably fall on one side rather than the other. What we don't see in a success story are the thousands wreckages and sunken boats. Would success stories even be there without the rubble that carries them with its density? When it comes to startups, the ocean of experience has absorbed an immeasurable part of the vessels bold enough to launch. To see what is not, to see these thousands of universes that could have been, that have left and that for lack of a good balance have contracted into the invisibility of a black hole, only to start again, is to feel the dark matter that infuses with gravity what endures and remains.

The human being in fact is nothing else than a convincing startup which, moreover, has succeeded in its *ramp-up* by accelerating its growth. How many organisms provided with a *minimum viability potential* were rejected by nature before it even set its sights on them? Even more, how many presented characteristics or mutations at least equal or superior to those which remained to us, but which by the clumsiness of a lightning or the indelicacy of a hungry predator found themselves carried away in the meanders of the unknown?

The dark matter is also to wonder what the Burgundians, their vassals and their allies the English thought. We have the version of the victors, not that of the vanquished. It is said that a strategy is only good if it is successful. However, by definition, strategy is concerned with the uncertain, its *raison d'être* is doubt. It deals with what cannot be characterized in advance. In other words, we cannot know in advance whether it is good or bad. Before Orleans, neither the English nor the followers of Charles VII knew what would be the outcome. In the fall of 1428, at the beginning of the siege, the English perspective was as valuable as the French approach. Only, from the one was born the other, from the dark matter was born posterity.

Does this mean that you have to start without a strategy? Not at all! No general can launch himself by crossing his fingers. Preparations are necessary and their relevance at the beginning of the battle are superimposed as long as the outcome is uncertain: useful and useless. Without the coronation of Charles VII in Reims, what would it have been? Would Jeanne have been praised in the same way? Yet, she would have fought with the same passion even if the possibilities offered to her endeavor were beyond comprehension: going to see the Pope, praying at every solstice, raising an army, taking herself prisoner? No matter, the reason is in the victory but the victory is not reason.

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As many projects as there may be gestures. And what about the graveyard of lost actions, of efforts without results, of mournful dreams? What importance is there to everything we do not see, like those flying objects that are long gone? As much as history! It is to offer a relativity to everything, to discover the origin of a practice and thus its vulnerability. The effort clears the horizon, it frees from automatisms and offers options. To understand the extent of the origins allows to perceive the amplitude of the task and to underline the imperative of time. It is not that we do not know how to do, it is that among the thousands of choices of action, we do not know where to start, we flirt with the immensity, we discover the indeterminacy. Let's welcome it before it rips the ground from under our feet.

To perceive the dark matter is to impregnate oneself with the extent of the uncertainty. Seizing this blurred absence allows us to apprehend the multitude. By understanding the lost actions we better appreciate those that remain. As soon as we accept the part of uncertainty, we guess the extent of the possible.

The dark matter of knowledge and experience balances what remains with its invisibility. The ecosystem and its thousands of active entrepreneurs, bound together by the invisible, stand on an invisible and intangible past that no explosion could transform. They plough forward and the waste of their efforts is transformed into a suspended potential that is just waiting to be plucked. Only a utopian mechanistic world would produce no loss: the ticking of the clock would find its efficiency by addressing its signal only to the listener *and certainly not to the deaf immensity*. Everything would fit together perfectly, leaving no space for the unpredictable. But then, any hope of Vision or Light would be doomed to nothing! For, from what intransigent mechanism could emerge the glimmer of a salvational reconfiguration?

The Matter which is, can it be without what was? The one that surrounds us and composes us, could it have survived without the perennity of the disappeared? Would nature, so ingenious, have been able to give birth only to the few branches that have survived? And would the teeming companies, the satiated ambitions, have flourished without those whose names no longer resounds? To answer these questions, we are going to move forward boldly, disregarding propriety and posing as Zeus to make the shales spit out the fossil records of history.

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Lucent Matter

While Dark Matter is composed of everything that was and is no more, Lucent Matter is formed of everything that could be, outside of what is. It is the world of possibilities that many call the impossible. It is the world of the invisible that could be born. It is called the third way, stepping outside the box or thinking differently. It's the alternative to entrenched habits and dusty reflexes. These are all the horizons we have left to illuminate.

The roof of the six-story Victor Hugo parking lot in Toulouse is filled with cars, what could be more normal. Some Sundays I have the pleasure to go to the street level market, beneath the parking levels, to taste freshly opened oysters, to share a succulent coppa at Garcia's or to find at Marty's what to prepare a tartar to fall. Inevitably, when I go, I park my car at the top. The view is fantastic, all of Toulouse is to be discovered at 360°. Until then, nothing new, just Matter in all its splendor. But what incredible light flooded that Matter, transforming it into a radiant possibility the day Arnaud Thersiquel announced to me that he was working with his companions of At Home to transform this asphalt and sheet metal courtyard into a place of life, with art, greenery and movement! They wanted to welcome spectators to admire creative works and the heights of Toulouse rather than leave that to the cars. But how obvious! Why hadn't I thought of it? Especially on this iconic place of Toulouse's architectural innovation, born in the 50's from Brutalism, freshly renovated, ready to welcome a new salvo of creativity seventy years later! Everything remains to be done, but the glow is there, with a dynamic team and a refreshing enthusiasm ready to push a crowbar into those poorly packaged privileges and rough hewn priorities.

Lucent Matter offers a new perspective, it places a window in a stifling and sclerotic *huis clos*.

Capitole Angels, a local association of business angels, are not perfect but they have the merit of existing. In recent years, many have criticized them for one reason or another. Some of the criticisms are valid, others are just misdirected bitterness. The

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fundamental error of the critics, however, lies in another dimension. It is that of not having been able to put into perspective the important action carried out by these individuals who invest their own money in the dreams of others. To think about business angels without imagining what could be is to disguise the analysis of an incomplete vision and to deprive oneself of solutions. Of course, one can always ask how to do it better. But the real question is to know why there are not a dozen associations in the region! This observation does not come out of a hat, it does not emerge from a whim. The need for financing is real, even flagrant, and its absence is a real risk for long-term innovation in Occitanie. It is not millions, but tens of millions that should be raised every year from local patrimonies, involved and concerned by the future of their region. When Capitole Angels are criticized for their speed, it is in fact because there is no real choice, there is no competition. When they are criticized for their action, it is because they are also learning, like the entrepreneurs and all the other actors in the ecosystem. In other words, the Lucent Matter of opportunities and learning is still immense, it is the whole ecosystem that must project itself. Let's stop lamenting what has been and build what could be.

Lucent Matter corresponds to this immensity which remains to be conquered, to the ambition which one can have, be it a Jean-Nicolas projecting the unimaginable, a Bénédicte venturing in what is against nature, Thierry and Nicolas making the oracle lie or a region projecting itself in an ambition.

The Occitanie region has been organizing an annual event dedicated to innovation for many years now. Every year, the 200 exhibitors flatter the egos, reassure the moneymen and give the taxpayers an eyeful. But what's to stop us from believing that we couldn't host ten times that number of exhibitors? The ecosystem is full of actors, there are projects galore, and there are plenty of curious people ready to meet, to share and discover. Why should we stick to this meager pittance? While laboratories are overflowing with technologies and schools are overflowing with young conquerors, why can't we imagine Toulouse as the alternative to Paris? I will be answered with what is, simply because it is easier and few can

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imagine what could be. But as soon as we start to imagine Lucent Matter emerging from potential energy, all hopes are allowed.

Speculation or uncertainty? We won't know until we try. Lucent Matter is uncertain. If an *entrepreneur* lacks the experience and doesn't succeed, is it because the Lucent Matter isn't there, or because she hasn't been able to find it? What is the basis for these statements, how will we remove all these obstacles? So many questions, so many hesitations. Does this mean that it is not possible? A world without uncertainty would bore us to death.

Uncertainty

The primary objective in an uncertain adventure is to find as quickly as possible the adequacy between the two variables that are the Solution and the Need. With our eyes now open, we are able to accept, modestly, that our calculations are biased, by chaos or perception, and that we can only identify areas of possibility and not points full of precision. If these two points - Solution & Need - are too close, it is likely that a solution already exists. If they are too far away, the unachievable is waiting for us. The objective is to stretch a thread between these two zones through which the exchange will pass, not too short, not too long, at least in the beginning.

Having certainty these two points will echo on the first try is to ignore what Dark matter teaches us. To be aware of the immensity of the possible awakens us to the weak signals of the past feeding the rustle of present influences.

At the beginning there is nothing, no price, no product, even less a segment. We set our outdated schemes on perennial wanderings, offering off-the-shelf products to expectations without measure. With a ladle, we estimate, eyes bigger than our stomach, we round off the price to the height of our dreams, the price range oscillates between fortune and glory.

Phonitive emerged in 2009, awakening many hopes. Its founder proposed a form of image HTML. Consumer items presented on a screen could be marked by touch, allowing the consumer to find out about an object of interest and eventually buy it. The startup thus

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offered an innovative Call-to-Action⁸¹. As if caught in a certainty as straight as a railway track in the great prairies, the team was moving forward headlong. Called upon by colleagues from Capitale Angels who had invested in the project, I sat down with the founder in a meeting room at the Sicoval incubator in spring 2012 to analyze the project. The gap between the certainty of the action and the uncertainty of the solution was clear. The presence of a sales rep hired so far upstream on an innovative project summed up the situation. On the one hand, the fixed costs generated by his position implied a high level of confidence in the forecast. But this confidence was at odds with the knowledge of the market. No one was able to define precisely how to position themselves, especially in terms of price, which some saw at 20,000€ and others at 2,000€. This is normal, the value we think we bring is a very broad estimate that most often falls short of the mark. Several iterations will be necessary before declaring with relevance that the right path has been found.

At the same time, Wiseed began its adventure as the first equity crowdfunding platform. If the initial intention, stemming from Thierry Merquiol's experience, was to focus primarily on startups, it was not said that startups would be the flagship product to attract the budding investors that the platform was to serve. The spectrum of potential targets turned out to be wide, more than we imagined. While my hope in investing in this form of financial democracy was to serve the needs of startups, it was not clear that this would be the main segment.

The more we move up the uncertainty scale, the more questions we have. In addition, there is the additional uncertainty of starting from the technology brick to arrive at the need, rather than the other way around.

The year is 2011. Nanolike worked with a laboratory in the Toulouse region to develop a sensor which would operate below the microscopic level. While its characteristics and performance could be defined with a high degree of certainty, its applications remained vague. Security, aeronautics, motion detectors, fabric sensors? The same goes for 3Dis, which was developing a technology at the LAAS⁸² laboratory to make electronic components more reliable.

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What could be the strategy for its semi-conducting vias with unparalleled performance? To manufacture them under license, with all the industrial investments that this implies? In partnership? License? The possibilities were numerous.

When we accept a part of uncertainty, when we abandon this excess of faith in the linear path, we accept the relationship of indetermination between the Solution and the Need. We then recognize the imperative of iteration. We understand that we must act not out of certainty, but to discover. For it is by moving forward that we will know where to branch off.

At this point we could call upon even more poetry to decry the dithering of the universe, but a formula of physics convenient by its simplicity and innovative by its approach allows to cheerfully summarize the challenge of any entrepreneur in a complex environment:

$$D(S)*D(N)=2\pi C/M$$

where D corresponds to the magnitude of uncertainty, which applies to S, the Solution, as well as to N, the Need. C corresponds to the Cycle of Reward and M corresponds to the Mass of Individuals who commit.

In this dynamic, S & N are dependent on each other. Increasing the precision of S implies losing resolution on N and vice versa. The resolution can only be increased by iteration and the feedback engagement loop. This is done by increasing M. Decreasing the Cycle greatly helps to reduce indetermination. I have nicknamed it the Barbarian Equation.

Take Tesla. The electric car manufacturer is entering a market with a significant advantage over the existing companies. The latter, entangled in their deep rooted processes, could hardly change S (Solution) while N (Need) was changing profoundly. These traditional manufacturers could only with difficulty change the Architecture of their production and distribution framework, not to mention integrating the provision of energy as an integral part of the product. As the structure of the link between S & N has its constraints, the timid movements of S could only link with watered-down or wobbly versions of N. Elon, on the other hand, characterized the parameters of N with precision - changing the

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whole car without changing the habits - only to completely redefine the shape of S. For Tesla, the range of possibilities of S could be expanded to continue to accommodate a weak delta on the N side.

The deltas of S and N are irremediably linked. If I move one, the other varies. The link that holds them has its own properties. To reduce the deltas - the space of uncertainty around each point - only iteration coupled with hypothesis allows to move forward.

There are those who will be reluctant to deviate our humanity into cold and soulless equations. I would argue that innovation is so vast that there will always be plenty to delegate to the genius of the art. Sketching and then supporting the contours of our constellation takes enough time already. Any calculated help should be welcome, especially if the hangman's deadline is looming, i.e. when you burn out of cash.

Certainty is for politics and sales people. With innovation, we are in the realm of the uncertain, of philosophy itself. Therefore, any attempt to master everything is doomed to failure. More precision on the right leads to more imprecision on the left. More prostration on S gives more dissatisfaction on N.

However, this reasoning leads us to the great paradox, that of confidence in the project. No entrepreneur will be able to carry out his project without convincing. No project owner will be able to raise funds without confidence. No prospect will jeopardize his time and credibility for a reluctant and worried person, who will make his speech full of contingencies, warnings and precautions regarding the uncertainty that awaits them.

Worse, the S&N dynamic taken literally leads to the Cat Bites the Tail syndrome, or the fool who kicks the ball every time he leans in to catch it.

How then to get out of this sterile and directionless Oscillation? By giving it a direction, by using the triangle as an image of a fertile Trinity, posing the framework of a most elementary dynamic, where the Vision positions itself at the shared top of the two pillars S & N, where the angle of the Vision finds a balance between the flat angle of the irreconcilable extremes and a narrow opening where the congenial nearness of departure gives only an ersatz of novelty. The stated goal is to move S & N toward V in a grand convergence where the perfect balance is established. The strength and the anchorage of the Vision substitutes itself to S and N, thus leaving them room to doubt, to question and to progress, without going in circles.

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Bridging a giant gap in the funding chain by creating a new link between a savvy middle class and a new generation of entrepreneurs, all by capturing the wisdom of the crowd. This is how I would summarize Wiseed's Vision at the dawn of its launch. The solution would evolve, it would take a new form just as the target would change, but the Vision would remain.

Which product, in which packaging? And for which audience? For innovation enthusiasts, prudent investors or business angels in need of attractive projects? All this is decided under the benevolent eye of the Vision.

Brick or Vision?

If Thierry Merquiol, inspired by so many projects drained of funds and hopes, knew how to find in the rubble some Lucent matter - the light in the form of Vision - it is not always the same for all.

In these feverish beginnings, the Solution more often starts from a Brick, more rarely from a Vision fallen like an immaculate creation. These two forms of inspiration are but a different expression of Matter.

The Need emerges as a dissonance. This discrepancy between perception and habit awakens intuition. The Vision differs from the palliative or the stopgap in that it does not propose to redo the asphalt of the existing path or put in lighting, but to changes the path entirely. But before arriving at the distance necessary to see the whole, the journey often takes time.

Liberty Rider is more of an exception than a rule. The concept emerged from a kernel of light, a dazzling Vision, only accessible during intense experiences where the whole mind is absorbed by a primordial task. One sunny day on his motorcycle, Emmanuel Petit was optimizing the winding roads of the Comminges in the Pyrénées mountains while the carefree and steep hillsides were doing nothing but preserving the darkness and silence of their dense vegetation. The sensations are there, the speed of the curves exhilarating. Sheer pleasure. Yet, thinking of his loved ones, he knew this bliss was fragile and moreover this nature insensitive. It would be enough of a twitch that he would disappear in the cover of the vegetation,

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caught forever by the half-light. A sudden deceleration, then nothing more on the road except the sound of the wind and distant brooks. Beyond the romanticism, the Vision: the furtive image of the frightened faces of the relatives, the acceleration sensors of the smartphones so useful for games, the algorithms able to align three conditionals: if (on winding road) and, if (sudden deceleration) and, if (not playing video game), then (alert). The guardian angel of bikers was born at that moment in a flash of adrenaline.

The question of the inspiration haunts us, the blank page inflicts vertigo. Six hundred years ago, what about Jeanne? Did the image of Reims fall to her from the Fairy Tree, that legendary enclosure to which we generally attribute the incubation or even the receptacle of a divine Vision? Did Jeanne follow the torments of her reasoning as well as the doubts which followed? Did she rock a dream that woke her up in a rush, sprinkled with an image so clear that it could only come from elsewhere? From the top of this beech tree, six centuries separate us, just as six years today are enough to separate a success from the imperceptible and timid beginnings of a seed that will blossom so beautifully.

As for Master Jehan, did he imagine the culverin when he jumped out of bed? Throwing away his doubts and impatience with the rude and arrogant bombards, did he walk for a long time before stepping on this long and snarling snake, with teeth sharp enough to pierce his boot? The fever didn't take Jeanne, the poison didn't sneak under Jehan's skin, they both survived but without knowing where the idea came from, from a germ or from bliss.

As far as we are concerned we have fresher testimonies. The year 2008 seems to be a good time for inspiration.

Thierry Merquiol had been playing around with the idea for a year now, looking at it from all angles. The idea of addressing the crowd in order to obtain financing was progressing. Taking the crowd as witness had already been done in other fields such as music with MyMajorCompany. But for equity investment in startups, it was a daring move. At the head of the Midi-Pyrénées Incubator, he experienced first-hand and on a day-to-day basis the problems of financing startups. Nicolas Sérès, a colleague and soon to be co-founder of the participatory financing platform Wiseed was his witness. For years, they had been witnessing first-hand the

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difficulties startups had in finding financing for their development. The idea made sense, it would help to overcome a flagrant lack of solutions. There was resistance of course. His lawyers had dissuaded him for a while, declaring ex officio the impossibility of such a work. But after a year, he got up one morning with the firm intention to silence the defeatists and to try the adventure.

Thus, at a time when the term crowdfunding did not yet exist⁸³, Wiseed was born from a combination of ideas, resulting from years of feeling the problem without being able to remedy it, and a year of intense reflection, all leading up to that fateful morning when Bercy⁸⁴ saw its worst nightmare being born.

Not far from there in time and space, another project was taking shape, that of iTrust.

This sunny Saturday morning, a major retailer was the target of a cyber-attack. With millions lost in a few hours, Jean-Nicolas Piotrowski's team arrived a bit like the SWAT before its time. They secured the perimeter, repelled the attackers and plugged the leaks. A summary of the operation: substantial but contained losses, and more importantly maybe, the frustration of his team for not having been able to act earlier. It was on the plane back from Paris, high in the clouds, that the team of adventurers convinced themselves that they could do better. They had to change the framework, move the field of operations to better respond to cyberattacks. With what was known in a closed circle as behavioral and multidimensional analysis, better known later as AI (Artificial Intelligence), his team would be able to anticipate intrusions and attacks.

Brick ? Vision? In any case, both would still need a long maturation, like a good wine. More frivolous, Jypense was born from a blunt comment. If the Need itself presented no challenge, only a patient journey would lead to a fleshed-out solution.

- Flowers again?

At the crossroads of Lé vignac, around 2009, this is the question that Nathalie asked me when she saw me with my bouquet. The will was there and the gesture started from a noble intention, if not inspired. Was it the knowledge that I lacked, the practice, or simply the art of

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offering? In any case, back in front of the web, a keyword search highlighted the imbalance between men and women. "Gift for men" came up much more often than "Gift for women". Vexed and depressed at first, I pulled myself together with the firmest determination I imagined Jypense, a site to give gift ideas to men in need of inspiration. This first brick would obviously not be enough.

Even more ethereal, Winesketching by Damien.

"During the tastings, I couldn't understand how the other participants managed to name the scents and flavors. They all amazed me by perceiving notes of red berries, wood or flowers. I could detect all these nuances, but my difficulty in naming them was exacerbated by the ease with which the others were able to display these lexical qualifiers. Rather, what came easily to me were the colors and shapes. I shaded the red color according to the more or less full-bodied notes, I inserted clove strokes, more or less long according to the depth in mouth. The granularity of the drawing varied with the acidity. In short, everything came to me in images. That's when I had the idea to give them shape. The idea seemed obvious when it came to me, but in fact, it took many tastings before it matured. »

Sometimes inspiration comes from a simple experience.

We are in May 2011, QRation has just won the second edition of the Startup Weekend. Their idea is to open a communication channel between the users of an object on one side and the operator of the object on the other. The user of a rental bike, for example, could quickly notify the operator of a malfunction thanks to a combination of technologies, including QR code and geolocation⁸⁵. This first version imagined by Aurore Beugniez and her team would take wings with the thundering arrival of Stéphane Contrepois. He brought his experience he had acquired while building Ventes du Diable, ex PCKado. The assembly of Bricks would evolve, the Vision would become more precise. All of this put together would eventually give birth to Myfeelback.

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But often it comes from a layer: we paste an existing concept on a different need.

Like Wiseed, which applies MyMajorCompany to the financing of startups, TraceGPS takes the concept of peer-to-peer file sharing and applies it to a field completely different from music. Frédéric Darin's idea came to light somewhere in 2004. Frédéric, a great mountain hiker, was observing the frenetic exchange of ringtone files that was going on at the time. Couldn't the Peer to Peer or P2P exchange, as practiced by Napster, be applied to the GPS files exchanged by hiking passionates? This gadget and electronics enthusiast saw himself downloading his excursion files on his GPS module like one would download books. A glow took root.

Not to scare anyone, but great Visions often start off like onions, they often build in layers⁸⁶. Inspirations form the core of the ambition. The form evolves, but at heart of it, the substance remains. It is the market or the need that serves as a substrate for these flashes of inspiration emerging from their environment like outgrowths. There is no shortage of examples. Conversely, other projects come into the world in the form of a Brick.

Devatics and Ovni9 were born as recommendation algorithms, a code to be inserted in the sinuosities of a web page with the aim of giving a form of initiative to rather sterile pages. Hyperspex emerged from a study project in the context of a thesis, the exercise consisting in measuring the speed of execution of a code. Unitag planted a QR Code seed in the marketing landscape in hopes of optimizing the process. Intraspec penetrated the depths of integrated circuits with a deep analysis technology from the CNRS. Nanolike toyed with the idea of adventure with its mini nano-sensor bricks, while 3Dis paved the way for its unfettered connectivity with its fluid circuit technology.

Only, taking the adventure through the Brick's entry point presents as many difficulties as promises. Just as the best apostle of a good wine is the one who drinks it, it may seem easy to point out that to get adopted it is better to start from a thirst rather than a vine plant. Force-feeding has its advantages, but these do not apply to *technology push*. Often the Brick

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is not enough, but well done it can serve as a cornerstone, especially when thrown into the pond where, in the form of rebellious waves the Collateral will emerge offering with it the outline of opportunities.

The adventure of Adveez illustrates this capacity to capture the undulation of a first object thrown in the fluidity of the matter. Karim Ben Dhia took full advantage of the Collateral of a first action. In 2011, he left Motorola with the intention to facilitate access control. In short, his technological Brick made it possible to open a door via an innovative wireless communication solution. However, after 18 months, he was not satisfied with the results. He and his team were faced with a small high end market and prospects were limited. Some would have been discouraged, others would have been stubborn. But this was not Karim's first attempt. Ten years earlier, he had already worked in the field of innovation with the company Humirel. His experience invited him to open his horizons in this new adventure. Consciously or not, he let his antennas hang out during these first 18 months, attentive to the echo of his value propositions and the weak signals coming back. At the end of this conscious journey, two growth markets emerged. Moreover, like Delair Tech or Telegrafik, Karim found himself bringing on an addition to his adventure: he found himself building a digital world around the physical anchorage of his brick.

The importance of innovation is growing as is the awareness of its presence, as technology gives the beat with its incessant injunctions. Untangling the egg from the chicken or the Vision from the Brick can be difficult, even if we think we are evolved. To get a clearer picture, or to make our own, let's step back and remove the technological imperative. What was it like in distant times when technology grew timidly at a slower pace, spreading across Europe on foot or on horseback in search of breeding grounds that would give it a home?

Six centuries ago, somewhere near Angers, close to the Loire River, an apprentice blacksmith, out of curiosity, illness or clumsiness, was trying to melt lead balls. He had been doing so for a long time, striving to make them as round as possible. The interest, none saw what it could be, except to silence him of his elucubrations on the geometry of the world, too busy that he was varying the curves of his spheres, with heat or with cold. The mayor, hoping to increase the village's revenue, encouraged him

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to trade his round pellets, without really knowing their real purpose. Thus, the apprentice proposed to whoever would listen a projectile to throw to pigeons, a game for children or an insert around the hub of the weaving wheels.

In this same village, Jehan, a young nobleman full of wit and grit, saw something else in the young apprentices experiments. As a good connoisseur of the art of combat, he had heard complaints about the heaviness of the bombards, which, according to Salisbury, were quite eye-catching⁸⁷. Certainly, these pieces, often used as marks of power, shook the enemy, throwing him under cover. The height of war-wagging it was said, would be imposed with these monsters, masoning the reigns with all their weight. Who, in front of so much presence and efficiency, did not feel obliged to prostrate himself? If the cannonball could cross the Loire, soon it would be the English Channel! But in Jehan's mind something was wrong.

Whether Jehan was dissatisfied or curious, we will never know. Still, we can imagine him around 1424, at the moment when Jeanne glimpsed the first lights of her Vision, preoccupied with a problem that only he persisted in seeing. For there, in front of him, in the middle of the night and the Dark Matter, a crack was insinuating itself as delicately as the Milky Way. Beyond what everyone thought they saw, there remained what only he could see: the fragile immobility of these iron buffaloes requiring fifteen men to move them, three to load them and who knows how many others to carry the powder; and all of this for limited results. This displeased him. Unsatisfied with so much immobility, Jehan doubted.

What arrogance! What audacity! What did he have better to offer? Who was this pretentious person? A man thirsty for movement perhaps, who, drunk with hope, hungover from excess, came to doubt himself and the sharpness of his Vision, blunted by so much resistance.

"What are you going to bother trying to do what the CEA never succeeded in doing?!" »

The welcome given to Jean-Nicolas announcing that AI would be the future of cyber security was timid, to say the least. As for Wiseed, all of Thierry's lawyers told him that such an adventure was impossible. SES, a satellite operator, did not believe Alexandre Séménadisse and Xavier Palis, when they proposed to reduce the digital divide thanks to the operator's bandwidth. Thierry returned to his business in the

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den of the Incubator on Jeanne Marvig street, with a lump in his throat as big as the one overhanging the CNRS premises. Jean-Nicolas with his faithful lieutenants, had to regroup in a melee, arms on shoulders, to protect their assaulted Vision with their circle. Alexandre and Xavier returned home with the firm intention of providing internet to all, even those in the most remote countryside hamlet.

Jehan, stung to the core, returned to the forge to contemplate the flames, to listen to the rant of the apprentice and the voices of his instinct. Jeanne, on her side, took care to confide only to the beech tree her secrets and the care to protect them. The long branches of this patient observer, who could have seen Lancelot as he had seen Montaigne, fell to the ground like bulwarks, filtering with its leaves the echo of war, protecting Jeanne and her hopes of peace and celebration.

But before reaching this point, what pain, what hope inspired them both? Deprived of technology, deprived of modernity, what was the genesis of Jehan's adventures? Deprived of title, only a maiden, how did Jeanne envision defeating so many obstacles. Deprived of their words and their memory, before they made a sensation, we can only imagine.

Hidden under the branches of her protector, Jeanne must have seen very early in her short life the exactions of the soldiers ravaging the lands of these regions deprived of any credible authorities. Praying for a savior, seeing none, the tension grew. Why, for so many years, had no Messiah appeared? The dissonance between the preaching of peace and the misdeeds of the plunderers must have become unbearable. After years of tension, that little Voice deep in her must have grown impatient. Only waiting, nothing would happen. She had to act to nudge the vision into motion! Thus it had to occur, one sunny afternoon that she slumbered in the shade of her tree, a permutation of intent or some similar miracle, suddenly offering Jeanne a glow endowed with its own immanence.

His little heart beats, pitches, hesitates, contracts and expands. It seeks and warms up. It balances between a peaceful life and a tragic destiny, between sewing her sorrow and fighting the enemy. The choice is made, her heartbeat is transformed. It swells, it tightens into a detail, it suffocates from the seraglio. The breathing becomes wave and its hold a particle. The extremes move away while their identities converge. The two merge, her heart is at the same time vague and precise. It would be

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enough of a breeze for her state to collapse and that she become Jeanne de Domrémy again.

At this stage, upstream of the innovation, the setting is essential as well as the patience that accompanies it. Innovation takes time, even if the titans tweet and shout the opposite. The force of a current carries away all the pretenders, including the flops. For us, the others, who are not even demigods, the force of the current drinks in the first place from a gutter, chocking from laughter to see us so thirsty for light and belief. Hence, before we hoist it like a valiant banner, the imperious necessity to brood for a while over this blurred form whose arguments we lack to defend it; hence the extreme importance of not listening too much to the instructions on the art of taking one's next step, or of measuring its scope in order to make it again a little longer. Birds of ill omen, unable to simply admit that they don't know, find it more convenient to decree the impossible and put a stop to it. The receptacle will open, but it is to the field that one will listen, to the purse that one will grant patience, to the repetition that one will swear allegiance, and not to the good intentions and their trodden path of good intentions.

For those who are born of a Brick, the expeditious Architecture leads to the nearest field, this so beautiful frame devolved by spite and especially by default. The Vision over the Brick, it is undeniable, presents an interest, a latitude of movement and thus of possibles. Too close, less realm for the imaginable, little value, the extent of the Oscillation and of the field of possibilities is reduced to a furrow. For the supporters of the Brick, the way to the battlefield is shorter, which does not mean less long, and often the commitment does not last. By over-shining the inspiration, one forgets to show it; then, this too perfect Brick does not find any more a base to build upon.

It is in the mess of the battle that the entrepreneur will find the Vision if, wounded by an objection, worn out by waiting or frustrated by so little commitment, they make the effort to listen. Then they will surely return to that chapter, where the direction for a time takes over the path. The passage from brick to Vision will give rise to a *Mutation*, just as a first blurred sketch will give rise to a Vision with salient outlines. These premises are used to provoke reality by telling it nonsense, to preach the false to allure the truth, to provoke the onlooker so that she takes position. But to play Hot or Cold, it is still necessary that the playing field covers the zone where the object is, and not to be limited to the radius of

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our step. We want amplitude to oscillate. From the Brick is born the experience, from the experience the Vision.

For others whose Vision is already advanced and offers promise, let's plant the stake, give it strength and foundation in a soil of hope and expectation. Then we can begin to pull the cable between that distant Vision and the path that leads to it, and even if we don't always know how to overcome the obstacles, other careless Bricks will be dismissed from their drawers and thrown into the battle.

The aqueduct of the Gier follows the hillsides of the Lyonnais over 82km. From the heights of Fourvières where it arrives with the water, one can see in the distance the Pilat Mountains where it takes its source. Around 16 B.C. Augustus, in search of appeasement and commitment for the freshly conquered and still agitated Gauls, imagined offering them the comfort of Rome, with its crystal clear water at every corner, its unparalleled thermal baths and the conduits to drain the city's miasma. Standing on the heights of Lugdunum, Augustus saw in the distance the cloudy hillsides, augurs of abundance and freshness. The way to bring water would be long, it would take many bricks, a technological one in particular, but after all, this path could not be more hostile than the one traveled since the assassination of his father, Julius Caesar. His advisers dissuaded him, it was impossible, the ground was not suitable. His architect Vitruvius, raised his arms saying, why not. Alea Jacta Est, Lugdunum would welcome the 60 tribes of Gaul⁸⁸.

The paths of water and value have the same challenge across the centuries. They both grope in search of a path that will lead to the market.

Jean-Nicolas Piotrowski and his team could see in the distance where they wanted to go. They knew that the road would be long. His good advisors, not seeing the contours with their own eyes, decreed the impossible, because what cannot be seen cannot exist, and thus dispensed their good oracles. However, the source abounded, the cyber attacks exploded. What remained was to define the approach and to find the bricks necessary to build the value path.

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Enough allegories, the idea is clear, the contrast valiant. The spring smiles on the lucky ones, the Brick a little less. Aqueducts are not built because clay to make those bricks is available but because one is thirsty, or to create baths.

Jean-Nicolas and his team, facing the need, fed by their Vision, went to hire the masons of the modern world, the data scientists. These precious digital craftsmen did not know to whom to sell their souls, so much their know-how was desired.

Other lighter and less urgent projects required expert knowledge in artificial intelligence.

Over time, Jypher forged a Vision, but the company was born from a Brick. At its ultimate stage, Jypher sees a world where people help each other to dress better, to take care of their look, to be aware of that of others. The art of fashion and style is developing, and Jypher is needed as its champion. However at the beginning, it is while working on the PigData algorithm developed by Nicolas Bahout that the idea was born. It is by starting from this Brick that the next step took form. Because initially, PigData's approach was only aimed at one clothing website at a time. The algorithm had to give an impression of abundance on a specific website. But then an illumination fell: why push an illusory profusion when we could offer a world of choices? Make recommendations based on all websites. Yet PigData was selling, the solution was delivering value by optimizing sales. Why bother? But just like Devatics and many others in the new field of recommendation engines, the obvious was clear. With so many people in the market, quickly the differentiation would be on more than just an algorithm. So, even though we were deep into the Acceptance phase, we decided to follow our steps back to the Architecture, build with this Brick, add others, and thus pave the road to a single solution offering a complete experience - our Vision - all thanks to algorithms learning the art of looking good.

A project is born from an insignificant moment, sometimes from a repetition. An intuitive iteration announces itself to us without solicitation. This spontaneous coming reassures us of its innocence, we do not see the bad intention, like the one that we could lend to our

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unconscious in search of some psychic crutch. It is beautiful because it even seems external to us. This exteriority appears to us more solid, more durable, maybe even more worthy of being followed than the one which would emanate from a being made of flesh and destined to grow old.

Thus, Jeanne, nourished of pain and impatience, brooded of years and innocence her distant destination. Thierry, over a year and enough to take his dash, heard the delicate rustle of a seed. The iTrust team, busy producing and resisting the assaults of the distant coders, was starting its new day at snack time, producing before what to feed the body, creating in the evening enough to nourish the soul. Jehan, not content with his life of privilege, parties and good food, feeling from the bottom of his guts a world of movement let, curious, the snake make its nest. The glow in the distance protected by its valiant lantern offered the amplitude to vary paths and possibilities.

The Step is waiting for us at our feet, our Vision is waiting for us in the distance, it implores us to be bold. We will now bind them both and unite them with a quiet undulation and an invisible frequency building the link that will bring these two distant beings together, eager to become one.

Oscillate

From a dissonance or a dream, the intuition was born. Brooding in its bubble it took shape and flew away. Carried by the wind and the vagaries of the days or months, it moved away, until with open eyes, stripped of details and fears, it bursts with clarity, landing on this summit that it consecrates with its temerity. Then begins the fine work of weaving. How to link the two, this proximity and its distance, by which way to go, which strategy to take?

Augustus may have declared his Vision, but his flair could let him down, bring on his descent, and the prohibitive could get involved. Some streams receive water only intermittently, others insufficiently. It was a question of ensuring the quantities for a vast population, not a trickle to feed animosity against the privileged. One would have to go far to find adequate water. Promising the moon and offering a few crumbs from the sky was out of the question. Priests

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specialized in the qualification of water ensured not only that the source would be rich, but also that it would have the required gustatory and sanitary qualities. The Vision's connection had to be sound and the link between them able to stand the test of reality, in this case of gravity and the valleys that came in the way. The expedition would prove to be long, littered with some impossible challenges. Only, if Augustus kept to the ordinary, he would be in the common, impossible conception and untenable position of a divine being. It was now a question of treading, triturating and traversing all the possible paths connecting the source to its destination, of sifting the fears and inciting to go beyond oneself, of joining the Vision to the abrupt hillsides of Lugdunum.

The art of Oscillation cannot be decreed, it must be learned. The stratum of the incredible boasts a silhouette as fine as it is difficult to approach. Like gravity, if the Vision moves too far away, it escapes us as well as those so eager for prophecies. Too close and the thirsty mass attracts it and crushes it with its disenchantment, disappointed and suspicious of having been duped. The secret lies in the Flip-flop.

Luc Marta de Andrade's enthusiasm breathes freshness. At the head of a 150-person company, instigator of the NXU association that touches the epicenter of modernity - technological knowledge and its power - he continues to display curiosity for everything around him. Yet, he is not from generation X, Y or even the millennials. On the contrary, he is descended from the generation that worshipped each saved byte as a spoonful of caviar, the one that used to ventilate itself on hot days with its bulky floppy disks. To optimize the space of these ancestors of the USB key, we obviously had to turn the other's disk, like a vinyl. It was at the same time that Luc went from Flip to Flop and discovered what he would call the dark side of the force, commerce. Yet Luc resisted the call of his peers to remain pure, of technology and code, as well as the call of the dark side, of feelings, envy and passions. So much so that he found a balance between these forces through a Flip-Flop of rare effectiveness, an invisible and rapid oscillation between action and reflection.

To oscillate between two masses, a link is necessary, at least a versatile leader, possibly a smooth operating duo that allows to combine

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without merging, to interweave without unifying, as Luc would say. Part of the innovation lies in the art of bringing the other closer to our Vision without the other inciting us to bring the Vision closer to the point where it loses its character, source of dream and hope. To attract the other more than it diminishes us, to attract free radicals, free thinkers, that is the challenge. To make sure that the Vision is not too far away for the link to exist or at least to prevent it from breaking, that it is not too strong for fear that one of the masses will absorb the other.

Oscillation implies a rhythm and regularity, in the surveying and exchange between the point far away and the place where one stands.

Tired of six years on the road without any loot, my co-inspirator, under personal pressure, gives up the business and leaves me to my work. His skills acquired at the N7 engineering school would have been more than enough to build the architecture necessary to make Jypher progress. But it was not to be. I would have to find another way. In my quest for a technical counterpart, I pushed the door of several open work places, among which At Home freshly installed Rue des Marchands. Arnaud Thersiquel, whom I met for the first time, explained me pragmatically that coders were reserved for startups that were setting up in his premises. I would have liked that, but oscillating between the suburb of Blagnac and downtown Toulouse is not easy during rush hour, as any Toulousain knows. A little persuasion from him, a little curiosity from me, who knows, maybe I would have joined the ranks of At Home and found a full-stack developer? Instead, I opted for Emile in Carcassonne, an iOS developer out of the wild, and slow and expensive iterations and fixes. The all-important Oscillation between the pragmatism of the developer and the Vision of the founder would not happen anytime soon.

In addition to the distance between Vision and Step, Oscillation touches on depth, between the entrepreneur who looks into the distance and the one who sees in detail, between the haranguing tribune and the impassive scribe.

Augustus saw the destination, Vitruvius had to find the way. To the discouragement of the latter, the former offered listening and

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inspiration. To the too easy promises of the former, the latter reminded him of the frail reality.

The exchange is often tense, to the point of letting go. On the other hand, if it is too loose, it hides badly digested concessions. In the totality of the cases on the other hand, where this thread remains mute, where no exchange reigns, the outcome is certain, collapse by sufficiency. Without exchange, without synchronization, no coherence can emerge, so even by dint of fundraising, sooner or later the counters are lifted.

The co-founder and CTO of a promising startup from Toulouse recently argued that the mediocrity of his relationship with his super-salesman co-founder didn't matter in the face of tenacity, and that sooner or later they would come to break-even. I wasn't convinced. My mission in this company had made me a privileged witness of his relationship with his co-manager. I had experienced firsthand the total lack of communication that reigned within this two-headed startup, where one was pulling in one direction without the other being entirely in sync. I was witnessing the frustration of one person for not being listened to, and the harmful indifference of the other. Faced with the smooth talker, the engineer, clumsy with his words, could not defend his position. As a result, the company wasted two years trying to sell a poorly designed product. Moreover, without substantial progress, they had to proceed to a new fund raising. Apart from burning cartridges and time, the progress was meager. So much so that his faith in tenacity now seems more like a refuge than a guiding force. There comes a time when impatience takes over and the confidence of the moneymen fades. Let's bet this day in January 2020 that their fate by the end of the year is sealed, the primary reason being the paucity of the exchange between sales and engineering⁸⁹.

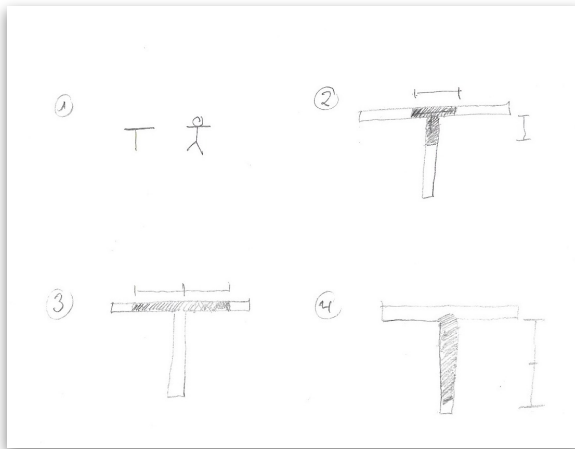
Jehan had an advantage over modernity. It was difficult for him to get lost in the depths of calculations, as the sciences and techniques were so incomplete. There was no risk of drowning in endless development, directionless *scrums*⁹⁰ or qualification tests for every single bolt. Safety requirements were a joke. Lead was known to be inconvenient, powder was known to be dangerous, liquid metal drops pulled screams and tears of pain. There was no risk of getting lost in the depths. Like Leonardo two

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generations later, sciences, arts and literature intermingled: roles were exchanged, synergies in abundance and in charcoal were spread on much more elegant canvases, where art and technique were not sleeping yet in separate rooms.

The wells of knowledge are now so deep that no one can dive into them without coming out troubled, contaminated by the worry of what we have seen and what each layer could possibly - it is possible, it is less and less probable - inflict on the very foundations of our great work, which could be undermined by a thousand worries, torments and misfortunes. Hence the wish of investors and other *stakeholders* to see two-headed projects, with two bodies if possible, but moving in the same direction. The adventure thus gives itself two anchors, one to avoid getting lost in the distance, the other to avoid getting lost in the depths.

Yet, the disciples of superheroes⁹¹ continue their quest for the



(1) Covering both the surface and the depth is illusory. (2) allows for the interface between (3) breadth and complexity and (4) experts

Vitruvian man gathering the horizons arms outstretched, treading the depths with firm footing. The image is too beautiful, the allegory is

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attractive, it is difficult to oppose the injunctions of the absolute and especially the T-Man of Frisco. Yet as the horizons stretch and the depths deepen, indeterminacy pushes back the borders faster than our capacity to follow them.

Beyond breaking the Oscillation between the two poles of a constructive tension, the adventure carried alone imposes to play a schizophrenic Joker game, at best tiresome, at worst saturated with illusions at the borders of delirium.

We can know everything, but we can't know everything at the same time. That's why we have to take the lead and decide what is, even if we are wrong. Prediction brings reality out of its lair like a brick in the pond brings out a blue ocean⁹². In this field of the indeterminate, one always advances more being half right than never wrong⁹³. The most difficult thing is to choose, but we would like to have everything and cover everything. The T becomes a cross too heavy to carry for the T-Man. The profusion stuns us, in front of its legions we are many to throw down our arms and welcome the first lord with certainties. Better still, we give him back all our weapons in exchange for a blind faith full of bliss.

In front of so much uncertainty, the task is arduous, the rout can be understood. To measure oneself against daily yardsticks lacks class when esteem doesn't take to the skies; or worse when our belief follows the social network marabout rambling with their dry narrative without tremolo nor weightlessness. We must decide to be human, to choose, to be first and to decide without markers nor order.

For time is pressing, not for the deadline but for its essence. The act, the Step, without the urgency is only timorous repetition and lost gestures: the Oscillation without pressure cannot advance. It must stay on the move, from Step to Vision, between present and to come.

Thinking about complexity implies disrupting it and each reasoning will keep *reconfiguring* the maps. A new one is drawn in front of us every morning and instead of opening the door and taking the first step, some people go back to their sketch, trying to secure the path with their compass and square. It is then that the alter ego intervenes: with its impatient gesture it wipes the drawing board clean. If both agree, sketching reality with elaborate drawings and feeding the mind with scrutinized gestures, the tension is formed and the exchange can live. Then remains the direction to pose, of a shared Vision which will give the rhythm as well as the ethereal Architecture.

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Back at Nubbo after the Wiseed adventure, Thierry has resumed his role as a preacher, sharing the good word of the scholars and his experience with new entrepreneurs. Helping the entrepreneur build a Vision is one of Nubbo's top priorities. « 100% of companies that don't have a 5-year vision have no future, he explains. You don't prepare in the same way depending on whether you want to climb the Vignemale, the Mont Blanc or K2, » he continues, before adding: « You must have a Vision after 6 to 9 months! Your head in the stars, your feet on the ground!

Poetry too often hides itself in the dream whereas the absurd reality suits it so well. From the void or from a Brick is born the Vision, an idea-muse as light as a nymph, which in front of the reality eclipses itself, disturbed. The troubled observation and the variable knowledge, a double state finds us dazed. The Oscillation towards the great Convergence begins, between Vision and Step, connecting and all that is concealed in this stubborn gap.

What is gone crushes us with its weight, what is no longer surrounds us with its absence. It is only after thousands of attempts that we move forward with determination but without certainty. This state of infinite floating, touches with its grace whoever presents himself in front of the immensity of the adventure and the singular absence of traced paths. The roads proliferate and multiply, knowledge digs abundance; in addition to the horizons, it is in depth that our glance can choose to get lost. It doesn't matter, because despite this excessive abundance, no path can claim to give direction.

Jeanne finds herself before the light, in the shadow of the Tree. The kingdom of Charles VII holds to few things, no direction stands out, not one imposes itself. By dint of racking their brains, thin and fearful, the barons no longer see the horizon, their eyes busy scraping the bottom of the trenches. However, the prolific knowledge emerging on both sides of Domremy or Orleans like buds in springtime, offers to whoever looks at it some clues on the way to go back and for others the voice to hear.

The archers made a sensation, the engagement changed⁹⁴. The knights weighed down by their treacherous armors have perished under the blows of well-placed rants. Meaning, so light, essence of every gesture, guarantor of ephemeral immortalities, fickle companion of

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immorality, took a shortcut through the forbidden forest, decimating both the scares and the dreams, leaving to the crows the pittance of the old. The glow of victory signals the flame to aim for. A few months, just a few years, according to the relative clock of the predisposition to progress, will be enough to change the situation and finally put an end to a hundred years born of damned blood.

While knowledge is being put in place, while forces are being recomposed, a convincing destination is still missing, a Vision to be shared. Of those evoked, none has survived the timorous convictions. The impossible, chastened, chased away from the too serious alcoves and the calculated blows, went away like a wanderer on the illuminated roads in search of a charitable soul who would give cover and charity. It is on the outskirts of Domremy, alerted by a crystalline echo, that Mr. Impossible insinuated himself, without a blow or a split lock, into the lair of a heart deaf to the injunctions of outdated ambitions. The tree took the relay, covered it and of patience watered it, offering the firefly the penumbra necessary to grow.

For years Jehan searched until the snake inspired him. No fund raising was pressing him, no market was waiting impatiently; the options were offered to him like girls of joy, jousts of circumstances or intoxicated evenings. A bon vivant sensing the urgency of living in these uncertain times did not linger too long on prude ideas giving up no pledge or promise of locks to be jumped.

However, she whispers this bedeviled snake; she calls him from uncertain furrows suffering from silence, undermining his sinuous certainties. She haunts him and calls him from her forked tongue and sketches form him the rustling direction. It is up to him to moult, to give body to his idea, to solidify it with gestures and tests and to put aside any unreasonable hindrance.

Jehan watches the snake in its nest, attentive to any sign of life. All he has to do is lift the board, move the stone, and his doubts will fall away, as will the possibilities. Jeanne under the beech tree, lying down, smolders a light without knowing yet what amplitude will be born from it. A sheep comes forward, pulls her out of her numb dreams, looks at her curiously, is this our Messiah? She caresses it, talks to it, but in the evening she is already wondering in her bed. Did she really see her, is she alive?

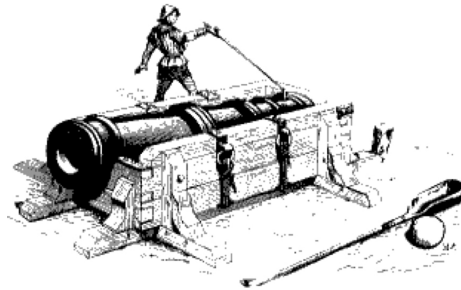
Matter

One and the other for years will crystallize the flame, will feed it with urgency and meaning. Then, a day dawns, the stars align or the patience becomes indignant, the time has come to liberate the kingdom and its noble insignia.

It remained for Jeanne to find the way and the energy to connect herself to her Vision, to cross these first steps before leading the king to Reims. She put down her sheep in the shelter of the beech tree, took up her courage in both hands and went to ask her cousin's husband to lead her to the local lord. With his connections, he could offer her a royal way to Charles VII, whom she would undoubtedly convince, once in his presence, of the way to go.

"...she requests an audience with Robert de Baudricourt in order to obtain from him the letter of credit that would open the doors to the Court. The local lord takes her for a fabulist or a lunatic and advises Laxart to bring his cousin back to her parents after having given her a good slap."⁹⁵

But it is not the slap of reality that will hold the adventurer back. This first disappointment digested, she would seek other ways to find her way.



Museum of Engineering, Angers

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