

The Unavoidable Dream

At the beginning of the year, I was walking in Brussels, on rue Washington, lost in my thoughts, and I wondered what inevitable images — flashes of the colors red, yellow, orange — passed through my mind at that moment. I knew that, in the not-too-distant future, progress in medical imagery would allow us to visualize what takes place in the human brain in real time. So I imagined a team of scientists had perfected a helmet of immaterial electrodes that acted from a distance, like a magnet, without the need to be in physical contact with the cortex of the subject in the experiment. Donning this invisible helmet, I went down rue Washington and headed for Place Leemans, while scientists in white lab coats were observing my brain data on several rows of monitors in order to see what was going on in my mind on this January morning of 2013. And so what staggered them, while following the regular, abstract and colored train of thought in the flow of my mind, was that — no doubt influenced by the position I occupied in space — some interference sprang forth from the past and that a fossilized residual of very old thoughts, which had formed in my mind at that very same place forty-four years earlier, was interfering with my thoughts at that moment. In reality, I was following the same trajectory that morning as I did on June 6, 1968, when I left my house on rue Jules Lejeune and went down rue Washington to get to Primary School No. 9 on rue Américaine. In reality, I was walking the exact same path of my own past, my body following the same passage of immaterial space as I did in that era, and my brain, which let itself be immersed in the surrounding space, recalled little by little the thoughts that I had worked out at the same location forty-four years earlier. Within the flow of my thoughts at that moment were superimposed the residues of thoughts from another time, and I felt them surging in me like the exhalations of a buried memory. The scientists, intrigued, then managed to isolate this memory that was trying to free itself from the noise amid the depths of my brain activity in order to appear in the conscience, but they did not manage to recognize its nature and to identify it with certainty. They could, however, locate it with precision on the monitors, seeing at that moment the surging forth of a wave with a very brief period and a very sharp morphology, like a weak, distant and still unreadable spark. They realized — they or me? since there was no longer any difference now between my conscience becoming translucent and the reading that was being done in real time — that the buried memory showing up thus in my conscience on this morning of January 4 dated, in reality, to June 6, 1968 when I wondered along the way to school if Robert Kennedy, who had been the victim of an attack the day before in Los Angeles, would survive from his injuries or not, a question that my ten-year-old brain — exactly the same brain, from a morphological and physical point of view, as that which I have today at the age of 55 — had asked at the same place forty-four years earlier.