The demands of the university teaching, addressed to students (including those said to be "advanced") with a modest (and frequently less than modest) mathematical baggage, led me to a Draconian renewal of the themes of reflection I proposed to my students, and bit by bit to myself as well. It seemed important to me to start from an intuitive baggage common to everyone, independent of any technical language used to express it, and anterior to any such language – it turned out that geometric and topological intuition of shapes, particularly two-dimensional shapes, formed such a common ground.

This consists of themes which can be grouped under the general name "topology of surfaces" or "geometry of surfaces" . . . .

Once this last step was taken, however, algebraic geometry (my former love!) suddenly bursts forth once again. . .

Whereas in my research before 1970, my attention was systematically directed towards objects of maximal generality,. . .

here I was brought back, via objects so simple that a child learns them while playing, to the beginnings and origins of algebraic geometry, familiar to Riemann and his followers!