

e-flux journal

Jalal Toufic
What Was I Thinking?

SternbergPress ✨

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What is the most appropriate question to ask a thinker? Is it not: "What were you thinking?" What is the common response to a thinker's answer to that question? Is it not: "What were you thinking?"¹— an exclamation echoed at times by his or her own "What was I thinking?"

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- What does “55” bring to your mind?
- The number of times Jalal Toufic defines his use of the term “mortal”—someone who is dead even while physically alive—in his book *What Was I Thinking?*
- How effective do you expect this precautionary measure to be against mistaking the term to mean simply someone who will die physically in the future?
- Judging by the reception of his concepts until now, I do not expect it to be that effective.

Thinking What's Thought-Provoking!²

What is thought-provoking? It would seem that one should be able to easily and straightforwardly answer: what provokes thought (or what provides one of the conditions for a psychotic or schizophrenic to experience *theft of thought*). In which case, if no thought is provoked by it, and ends up being produced, then what most people assume and declare to be thought-provoking even while continuing to be thoughtless (for example, the atomic bomb) would turn out not to be thought-provoking (Gertrude Stein: "They asked me what I thought of the atomic bomb. I said I had not been able to take any interest in it. They think they are interested about the atomic bomb but they really are not not any more than I am. Really not. They may be a little scared, I am not so scared ... and if you are not scared the atomic bomb is not interesting"³)—unless its failure to provoke thought were to strike us as a thought-provoking anomaly and paradox (Heidegger: "*Most thought-provoking is that we are still not thinking*—not even yet, although the state of the world is becoming constantly more thought-provoking"⁴).

A substantial number of the videos, installations, and paintings said to be thought-provoking nonetheless do not provoke thought in the artist who made them—as well as in most if not all others. How to account for this anomaly? Would the persistence of thoughtlessness on the part of the one who made a reportedly thought-provoking work indicate that the latter was not actually thought-provoking? Are some if not most of those reputed to have made thought-provoking artworks, to which they were exposed at least while making them if not following their premiere or publication or launch, refractory

or immune to thought, doomed to thoughtlessness, seeing that they persist in being thoughtless? Or have we not left yet, or resumed living in, an age where what is “*most thought-provoking is that we are still not thinking ... although the state of the world is becoming constantly more thought-provoking*”⁵? One of the main objectives of the book series “Thinking What’s Thought-Provoking!” I am editing for the Sharjah Art Foundation is to contribute to decreasing the number of artists whose *persistent* thoughtlessness may *occasionally* draw from a thinker the impulsive and futile protest, “Think, you thoughtless thought-provoking artist,” through making some of them self-reflexive thoughtful thought-provoking artists, ones who are themselves provoked into thinking by their thought-provoking work.⁶ In order for those who are paradoxically not provoked into thinking even by what is thought-provoking, for example, the results of the double-slit experiment, the Shoah, Resnais/Duras’s *Hiroshima mon amour*, or the “*most thought-provoking ... that we [including the author of the quote, Heidegger] are still not thinking ... although the state of the world is becoming constantly more thought-provoking,*” they would have to be initiated into thought. Given that, with the exception of those who died before physically dying; the rare pubescent girls whose portraits were made;⁷ and those whose movement projected them as subtle dancers into the dance realm, with its altered bodies, movement, space, time, music, and silence,⁸ there is so little initiation in this period that is to a large extent oblivious if not averse to it, initiation into thought is also largely an initiation into initiation. How rare is (the encounter with) thought, and hence how rare, for thoughtless people, is the experience of the rarity of thought! While this rarity is the daily experience of thinkers

(Deleuze: “Having an idea is a rare event, it is a kind of celebration”⁹),¹⁰ it is *fundamentally* encountered in an initiation into thought, since thought occurs then—enfolded—for a fleeting interval between the surprising stark realization, “I’ve never thought before!” and the panicked apprehension, “I am on the verge of being submerged by a vertiginous and seemingly infinite extension of thought as well as by an excessive rapidity and proliferation of evanescent associations between these thoughts, with the consequence that I will not be able to catch up with, let alone accompany any of these thoughts and their associations, thus missing boundless riches.” The initiate may later feel fairly relieved that many if not all of the obscurely sensed thoughts were enfolded in the incredibly dense fleeting interval between “I’ve never thought before!” and “I will imminently be both blown away and stupefied by the just began *thought inflation*,¹¹¹² and can later be unfolded *creatively*; it is in this sense that, during thought-initiation, thought is largely if not solely the promise of thought. While the unfolding of what was enfolded during the thought-initiation can only be done creatively, the enfolded “food for thought” and thoughts, except if repressed, have already radically altered the intuition of the thought initiate, guide him or her obscurely, that is, not through knowing explicitly what was enfolded during the initiation, but through feeling what it is not (“That’s not it!”). Are there thought-initiating and not just thought-provoking books, artworks, films?¹³ For that to be the case, the book, artwork, or film has to have resulted from an initiation into thought, and its maker has to have transmitted, whether intentionally or unconsciously, to the receiver not this or that explicit thought but the enfolded “food for thought” and thoughts. Nicolas Abraham writes

in his "Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to Freud's Metapsychology" (1975), "The phantom is a formation of the unconscious that has never been conscious—for good reason. It passes—in a way yet to be determined—from the parent's unconscious to the child's....¹⁴ What haunts are not the dead, but the gaps left within us by the secrets of others¹⁵"; I would say in relation to initiation into thought, "What haunts are ... the gaps, in the form of enfolded thoughts and 'food for thought,' left within the one who was initiated into thought and then passed from the latter to the reader's or spectator's unconscious." It is in the process of unfolding creatively one of these enfolded thoughts that the reader or spectator, now functioning as a writer, filmmaker, artist, or musician, undergoes the complementary two moments of the initiation process: "I've never thought before!" and "I will imminently be both blown away and stupefied by a *thought inflation*." A thinker is someone who was initiated into thought; unfolded creatively at least one thought among the seemingly countless ones that were received, enfolded, in his or her initiation into thought;¹⁶ transmitted to the receiver of his or her work not only this or that thought that he or she received, enfolded, in his or her initiation into thought and that he or she subsequently unfolded creatively, but also those still-enfolded thoughts and "food for thought," thus implanting in the receiver one of the conditions of initiation into thought; and produced thought-provoking thoughts regarding something thought-provoking. The book series "Thinking What's Thought-Provoking!" has to include not only thought-provoking thought regarding what's thought-provoking, but also at least one book that is (not only thought-provoking but also) thought-initiating—only once this initiation into thought is

gone through does what is thought-provoking usually, if not ineluctably, lead to thought.

Theory; or, "See, I Told You So" in an Innocent Mode

How can we fully know a great film? Is it by watching it attentively many times? No, since future theories may reveal images, sounds, and connections we could not have seen, heard, and/or noticed without them. It was not by looking at the sky yet again, but by mulling over Newton's Laws that Neptune was predicted to exist at a certain spot in space and then seen. "Theory should make us see (the Arabic *an-naẓarī* means both *the theoretical*, and *al-mansūb ilā an-naẓar*, what is attributed to vision): 'At the end of the calculations and observations it was noticed that Jupiter and Saturn went according to the calculations, but that Uranus was doing something funny. Another opportunity for Newton's Laws to be found wanting; but take courage! Two men, [John Couch] Adams and [Urbain] Leverrier, who made these calculations independently and at almost the same time, proposed that the motions of Uranus were due to an unseen planet, and they wrote letters to their respective observatories telling them—"Turn your telescope and look there and you will find a planet." ... and they found Neptune!"¹⁷ In relation to any film or novel that creates a universe that does not fall apart "two days" later, theory has to, in the process of showing us how it is that universe does not fall apart, make us perceive one or more things we otherwise would not have seen and without which (the universe and/or world of) the film would fall apart. Theory "explains" some of the visible, but in order to do that it makes us see something that had remained invisible.

Theory is a manner for "See, I told you so" to be innocent, not to have anything to do with the unfortunate vindictiveness of vindication, making it mean only: the theory made it possible for you to see what otherwise you would not have seen—even if it is something that cannot be described by words. While a theorist may have seen the film before creating his or her theory, certain things in the film will become noticeable, including to him or her, indeed including to the filmmaker, only once he or she has created the relevant concept. The additional phenomenon theory makes us see is linked to creation because the theory had to be created for us to see it. An artist who does not care for what a real theorist writes is a reductive viewer of his work for he is bound in that case to miss something in it that is rendered visible by theory. In the process of making me feel the rigor of a film, novel, or play, a theory, notwithstanding its inability to describe and render the visible (Deleuze: "One of Foucault's fundamental theses is the following: there is a difference in nature ... between the visible and the articulable.... Perhaps this is the first area in which Foucault encounters Blanchot: 'Speaking is not seeing'"¹⁸), makes me see one or more things that neither the theorist nor anybody else, including the filmmaker, had seen in the film until then. There is a predictive power to concepts, but only in the case of artworks, films, and novels that, consistent, don't fall apart "two days" later. If a rigorous theory indicates that a certain relationship, image, movement, etc., is bound to be in a film that doesn't fall apart "two days" later, then it will be there; if we don't find it there, then we'll discover that the film was tampered with by the producer, and when the director's cut is released it will be seen in the film, as predicted by the theory. Insofar as real theory makes us see and/or hear

what nobody had seen and/or heard in its absence, indeed what nobody would be able to see and/or hear in its absence, it is as productive of the visible and the auditory as film, painting, and sound art, indeed more productive of the visible and the auditory than *most* films, videos, paintings, and sound works since the latter show us what everyone saw or heard or would be able to see or hear irrespective of these works, whether directly in the world or indirectly through conventional documentaries on TV and raw footage on social media.¹⁹ So one possible criterion for differentiating between two or more theories that seem to explain well the visible is which one makes us see more things and relations that everyone had missed previously. Every theory, in order to explain what was visible until its advent, has to make visible additional, previously unseen phenomena, a surplus visible; for example, Newtonian theory made us see Neptune. In that sense it collaborates in the production of the visible. "To see a world in a grain of sand" (William Blake) requires theory too, more and more theory. To assert that one has reached the final theory is to assert that the world is at that point fully perceptible, that we can exhaustively perceive all there is (at least at the level of physical reality) without any further theory.

To a thinker or philosopher unaware that his creative work is the result of an untimely collaboration with other creators (some of whom will be born after his physical death), and thus who feels a vast solitude while constructing a concept, it is felicitous to come across a "confirmation" of the latter in a book, film, or artwork. One can properly speak of a confirmation of a thinker's concept when something that had not been seen in a rigorous film or book by even its most attentive and perceptive viewers or

readers, including the thinker prior to his creative construction of the concept, but that was predicted by the concept to be in the film or book is then found in it—in the most felicitous cases, this confirmation reciprocally reveals facets of the concept that may have remained obscure to the thinker or philosopher who came up with the concept (in part because it was created in untimely collaboration with other creators). Beyond attenuating, at a distance in space *and time*, the thinker’s solitude, this “confirmation,” when it happens early in his or her work, heightens his or her trust in it, but later, as his or her work becomes more and more rigorous, whether or not across several revised editions, implies how strong and rigorous the works that confirm it are; it is on finding a confirmation of my concept of the over-turn in its Lot episode that I acknowledged that some episodes in the Bible, if not the whole book, considered by many to be one of the main books of humanity, are rigorous and creative.

Fail Better

Samuel Beckett did not just write about failing better (“Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better” [*Worstward Ho*, 1983]), but accomplished it (*Worstward Ho* ...). Is repetition necessary to accomplish failing better, or can one fail better the first time around? While in Beckett’s case it appears that repetition was necessary, one can fail better straightaway rather than after trying again and again. Fail better compared to what? It is not in relation to one’s or others’ previous failures, for failing better is different in nature from failing. How can you not simply fail, nor even simply succeed, but fail better? In the context of Buddhism, to fail would be to remain occluded in samsara;

to succeed would be to become an arhat, that is, achieve nirvana as different from samsara (the stance of Hīnayāna [Sanskrit: “Lesser Vehicle”] schools of Buddhism) even while other sentient beings are still occluded; to fail better is to become a Bodhisattva, someone who has vowed to attain Buddhahood and yet, in compassion for all sentient beings, who “are infinite in number,” remains in samsara (to save them all)²⁰—while experiencing samsara, “birth-and-death, ... [as] itself nirvana” (Zen master Dōgen: “How can you ... separate birth-and-death from nirvana?”²¹; “birth-and-death is itself nirvana. Nirvana is not realized outside of birth-and-death”²²)—until all are enlightened and thus liberated; and to succeed better is accomplished by sitting upright in samādhi (Dōgen: “When even for a moment you express the buddha’s seal in the three actions by sitting upright in samādhi ... all beings in the ten directions, and the six realms, including the three lower realms, at once obtain pure body and mind ... all things realize correct awakening.... Thus in the past, future, and present of the limitless universe this zazen carries on the buddha’s teaching endlessly.... Know that even if all buddhas of the ten directions, as innumerable as the sands of the Ganges, exert their strength and with the buddhas’ wisdom try to measure the merit of one person’s zazen, they will not be able to fully comprehend it”²³) and by having a practice that is not a stage toward attaining realization but is inseparable from the latter (Dōgen: “Practice and realization ... are inseparable.... The practice of beginner’s mind is itself the entire original realization.... Because this is the realization of practice, there is no boundary in the realization. Because this is the practice of realization, there is no beginning in practice”²⁴). One of the main affinities of literature,

thought, and art to messianism is that in all of them the stakes are not mere success or mere failure but succeeding better and/or failing better. The anti-nomianism of many if not all messianic movements (as well as of the Malāmātiyya, Muslims “who draw blame [*malāma*] upon themselves”²⁵) is to be viewed not as a manner of merely failing in relation to the (exoteric) religious law (of the unredeemed world) (the lot of all of us, according to Twelver Shi‘ites, given that infallibility [*‘isma*] is a prerogative of the Prophet Muḥammad, his daughter Fāṭima, and the twelve imams; and according to “Saint” Paul, given that “the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin ... [, and so] do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do” [Romans 7:14–19]), but as a manner of failing better in relation to it—a failing better that was lived in Alamūt from 1164 to 1210 simultaneously as a manner of succeeding better through Nizārī imam Ḥasan’s performative ushering in of the Great Resurrection (one manner of succeeding better is doing the impossible, a miracle), during which the Nizārīs could practice openly and fully the erstwhile esoteric law, that of the redeemed world. I would like to think that during the various periods of Shi‘ism’s greatness, the criterion for whether to engage in open struggle was not the likelihood of success or failure, but the possibility of failing better and/or succeeding better. When the alternative was mere failure or mere success, the imam went into occultation (*ghayba*) and his advocates resorted to dissimulation (*taqiyya*). In one epoch, it was no longer possible, even for the imam, to conform to the (exoteric) religious law, and the response in Shi‘ism took two radical forms: in the case of Twelver Shi‘ites, the imam, so as to remain infallible, withdrew from the world, ushering in the Greater Occultation; in the case of

the Nizārīs, the imam remained part of a world in which it was no longer possible for him to conform fully to the exoteric religious law, yet he failed better through his antinomian “strange actions” and succeeded better as a resurrected man in “conforming” to the erstwhile esoteric but now-manifest law of the redeemed world he initiated. During the Twelfth Imam’s occultation all Twelver Shi‘ites should have been “quietists,” since, as long as it persists, his occultation implies that it is no longer possible to succeed better and/or fail better in matters of religion. Thought, art, literature, and messianism engage only in struggles where one can succeed better and/or fail better. Hence the gratitude of many artists, thinkers, writers, and messianists as artists, thinkers, writers, and messianists to those, including possibly themselves in some of their other capacities, who sacrifice by fighting to change the world from one where most people are impelled to engage in struggles in which they cannot succeed better and/or fail better to one where the alternative is succeeding better and/or failing better—isn’t the latter the best of all possible worlds?

Fear

Freud: “‘Fright,’ ‘fear’ and ‘anxiety’ are improperly used as synonymous expressions; they are in fact capable of clear distinction in their relation to danger. ‘Anxiety’ describes a particular state of expecting the danger or preparing for it, even though it may be an unknown one. ‘Fear’ requires a definite object of which to be afraid. ‘Fright,’ however, is the name we give to the state a person gets into when he has run into danger without being prepared for it; it emphasizes the factor of surprise.... There is something about anxiety that protects its subject

against fright and so against fright-neuroses”²⁶ (*Beyond the Pleasure Principle*). One of the sections of my book (*Vampires*): *An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film* is titled “Fear”; should I have titled it instead “Anxiety” if not in the first edition (1993) then in the revised and expanded edition (2003)? No; I used “fear” instead of “anxiety” because *the mortal knows the danger*, given that as dead even while still physically alive he is undergoing it. Lacan said, “For analysis, anxiety is a crucial term of reference, because in effect anxiety is that which does not deceive”²⁷; I would say, *for psychoanalysis*, anxiety is a crucial term of reference, because in effect anxiety is that which does not deceive psychoanalysts: it is a defense mechanism against acknowledging one’s radical fear of what, as a mortal, that is, as dead even while still physically alive, one is undergoing as dead, in other words, a manner for the living mortal to imply to himself or herself and to others that he or she does not know about silence-over, immobilization, the impression that many if not all other people are extras (as during a film shoot),²⁸ labyrinthine space and time, the association of thoughts on their own, as well as other anomalies he or she as dead is undergoing or witnessing. Anxiety is a defense against the fear of death-as-undead, since the latter implies that I intuit the incredible dangers of that condition thus must be, at some level, already dead even while still physically alive, since these dangers are encountered in death, in other words, in anomalous conditions in which I sooner or later ask myself, “Am I dead?” or suddenly deduce, from the anomalies in space, time, and the functioning of my (?) mind, or have the thought-insertion, “I must be dead.”²⁹ When it is not a manner for the living mortal to imply to himself or herself and to others that he or she does not know what he or she is undergoing as

dead, anxiety is triggered by the keen intuition that *jouissance* can “never to naught be brought ... never by naught [one of the figures of death] be nulled” (Beckett), and that in death the last line of defense against the unbearable intensity of what one undergoes in that condition, being completely without any affect, is not a possibility—paradoxically, I can be a “zombie” in life but not in the undead realm. Given that fear “requires a definite object of which to be afraid,” is there a privileged object of fear? Yes, the privileged extrinsic object of the living mortal’s fear (whether unconscious, if he or she has not died before dying physically, or conscious, if he or she has done so) is what he or she is undergoing as dead, in the undead realm (the more the mortal heeds what he or she is undergoing “simultaneously” in the undead realm the more fearful he or she is—one should not deduce from one’s fear as a living mortal concerning the undead realm that one is for that matter necessarily afraid in that realm), and the privileged intrinsic object of fear as a feeling is the absence of feeling—at its most basic the fear of the living in relation to life concerns and is induced by no longer having affects, thus is essentially a reflexive affect. The Septimus of Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway* “had gone through the whole show, ... European War, death, had won promotion, was still under thirty and was bound to survive. He was right there. The last shells missed him. He watched them explode with indifference. When peace came he was in Milan, billeted in the house of an innkeeper with a courtyard, flowers in tubs, little tables in the open, daughters making hats, and to Lucrezia, the younger daughter, he became engaged one evening when the panic was on him—that he could not feel. For now that it was all over, truce signed, and the dead buried, he had, especially in

the evening, these sudden thunder-claps of fear. He could not feel.”³⁰ What Virginia Woolf wrote about Septimus’s fear as the affect he had in response to no longer feeling, the affect induced by the disappearance of all the others, is confirmed in Deleuze’s text on the close-up’s undoing of the three functions of the face: “In [Bergman’s] *Persona* ... the close-up has ... pushed the face to those regions where the principle of individuation ceases to hold sway. They [the two people] are not identical because they resemble each other, but because they have lost individuation no less than socialisation and communication.... Then the single and ravaged face unites a part of one to a part of the other. *At this point it no longer reflects nor feels anything, but merely experiences a mute fear*.... It is itself the photogramme which burns, with *Fear as its only affect*.”³¹ “In the *Introductory Lectures*, Freud ... tells us to look at children: they run along the brink of the water, climb on the window sill, play with sharp objects and fire. They have no notion of danger.... The child has no natural sense of fear; fear is something which is learned, and not from experience alone. We can be taught to be afraid”³²; if the child can be taught to be afraid of certain objects and situations it is that he or she had undergone already an absence of feeling.

Poles Apart

Are we facing faces in the opening scene of Akira Kurosawa’s *Kagemusha (The Shadow Warrior)*, 1980? For this to be the case, two of the three figures, or rather all three figures should not be doubles, since with the double the face is undone.³³ One of the figures says, “He looks like me.” Another answers, “Precisely like you.” Already we are being distanced from the possibility that the third man is the double

of one of the two speakers, since others would not, at least initially, notice the similarity between a man and his double, or would make believe that they did not notice it, in a vast conspiracy.³⁴ “What did the prosecutors say about his resemblance to me?” “Nothing. Only I, your brother, could see it from the first.” Now that the relation of two of the figures has been naturalized, since they are revealed to be brothers rather than unnatural doubles, we can see that they have faces and that they look alike. But the moment the two brothers pause in their conversation and our attention is no longer concentrated on them but encompasses again the third figure, they look faceless again and we can no longer determine whether they look alike. The next moments bring a naturalization of the third figure and explicitly integrate the three figures in the world. “Where is he from?” “As you see, he is very much like you. Our father might have had a son somewhere else.” Now the three figures have faces and presently we can see that they all look alike. The three are: the sixteenth-century Japanese warlord Shingen Takeda (acted by Tatsuya Nakadai), his brother Nobukado (acted by Tsutomu Yamazaki), and a thief who was due to be executed (also played by Tatsuya Nakadai) and whom the lord’s brother believes he can train to act as a decoy to fool the lord’s two rivals (Kurosawa: “I set up the situation that this double would be a thief who is about to be executed and who received reprieve only if he would take on the personality of someone else.”³⁵ How twisted is the choice: either you die and thus undergo your likely replacement by the double and your assumption of every name in history or else you are ostensibly spared but in exchange you become the “double” of someone else and assume his name to the exclusion of yours). Now, from the initial absence of the possibility of

the portrait, we have the condition of possibility of the portrait as a triptych, since while the three faces are physically indistinguishable they become differentiated in terms of the prevalence of one pole or the other of the face or their balanced co-presence, presenting a simultaneous analysis (in the case of the lord and the thief) and synthesis (in the case of the lord's brother) of the (two poles of the) face. Gilles Deleuze: "When a part of the body has had to sacrifice most of its motoricity in order to become the support for organs of reception, the principle feature of these will now only be tendencies to movement or micro-movements which are capable of entering into intensive series.... The face is this organ-carrying plate of nerves which has sacrificed most of its global mobility and which gathers or expresses in a free way all kinds of tiny local movements which the rest of the body usually keeps hidden. Each time we discover these two poles in something—reflecting surface and intensive micro-movements—we can say that this thing has been treated as a face.... Sometimes painting grasps the face as an outline, by an encircling line ... : it is a surface of faceification [*visagéification*]. Sometimes, however, it works through dispersed features ... fragmentary and broken lines which indicate here the quivering of the lips, there the brilliance of a look, and which involve a content which to a greater or lesser extent rebels against the outline: these are the traits of faceicity [*visagéité*].... Rather than an exclusive origin, it is a matter of two poles, sometimes one prevailing over the other and appearing almost pure, sometimes the two being mixed in one direction or the other.... There are two sorts of questions which we can put to a face, depending on the circumstances: what are you thinking about? Or, what is bothering you, what is the matter, what do

you sense or feel? In so far as it thinks about something, the face has value above all through its surrounding outline, its reflecting unity which raises all the parts to itself. Sometimes, on the contrary, it has value through the intensive series that its parts successively traverse as far as paroxysm, each part taking on a kind of momentary independence."³⁶ During much of the first scene, the question which we can ask the lord, rather than his face, is, "What are you thinking about?" and the question we can ask the thief is, "What is bothering you? What is the matter?" Since at this stage the lord and the thief have faces and each face must have the two poles to some degree, the two temporarily alternate, in a complementary manner, as to which pole is prevalent, so that when the lord, in whose face the pole of reflecting surface usually predominates, gets annoyed then angry at the tantrum thrown by the thief, micro-movements proliferate in his face and the traits of faceicity predominate, while the face of the thief, now that the latter is in wonder, unusually manifests mainly its unity as an outline. Yet the presence of the brother's face as (balanced) synthesis does not only set the stage for the predominance of one pole over the other in the faces of the other two, but also implies another, more radical possibility: the exclusive presence of one of the two poles in what were the faces of the other two men.³⁷ In that case, we would be in the presence of only one face, that of the lord's brother, and its separated poles, a faceless reflecting surface as outline in the case of one of the other two figures (the erstwhile lord) and faceless micro-movements as tendencies to react of liberated traits of faceicity in the case of the other figure (the erstwhile thief). This possibility remains virtual in the film's opening scene but finds its partial implementation in the scene in which the

thief comes across the embalmed corpse of the lord (the memorable impression that the figures were doubles in the first few seconds of the opening scene of the film, and notwithstanding that the actual state of things is clarified soon after, continues to have diegetic repercussions: since the double's appearance is usually an omen of imminent death, the lord dies shortly after).³⁸ Is the thief's fright caused solely by his discovery that the lord, whose primary impersonator he is, died? No, his fright is partly related to encountering a faceless human body, one that has one of the poles of the face only, a pure reflecting surface of registration with no micro-movements, that is, no tendencies to movement, *even virtual ones*, in response to what happens around it, not just in the physical mask, but also, upon removing the physical mask, in the head (the dead *loses face* as a corpse, since what used to be his or her face completely loses one of the two poles that constitute a face, the tendencies to movement as micro-movements; and as an undead, since he or she is subject to 180-degree over-turns). The flickering light of the candle the thief holds imbues the physical mask with the appearance of micro-movements, providing Kurosawa with an unfortunate excuse not to have the physical mask and, more so, the embalmed head beneath it, which present exclusively one of the two poles of the face, trigger in the thief, complementarily, a temporary outright exclusivity of the other pole through a proliferation of micro-movements that reach a kind of hysteria as well as a liberation of the traits of faceicity. Could Kurosawa have pulled off such fully liberated traits of faceicity? If we consider the voice of the medium in *Rashomon* (1950) or of any of the three witches in *Throne of Blood* (1957) as a trait of faceicity, then yes; otherwise this scene of

Kagemusha (The Shadow Warrior) would have required Kurosawa's collaboration with a shadow filmmaker or artist, for example, Francis Bacon, the painter of *Study after Velázquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X* (1953) and *Study for the Head of a Screaming Pope* (1952).

To Efface or Not to Efface the Face?

Deleuze writes that the close-up leads, through the undoing of the three functions of the face (individuation, socialization, communication), to the face's effacement. This Deleuzian concept of the close-up is a good example of Deleuze and Guattari's assertion that "philosophy ... is not contemplation, reflection [including on cinema] or communication"³⁹ but "the creation of concepts," for however much one might watch 99 percent of films if not all films but one, Bergman's *Persona*, one would not see the close-up lead to the effacement of the face. I would qualify Deleuze's sweeping assertion; the *non-diegetic* close-up, having, according to Béla Balázs and, later, Deleuze, abstracted the face "*from all spatio-temporal coordinates*"⁴⁰ and raised it "to the state of Entity"⁴¹ ("This is what Epstein was suggesting when he said: this face of a fleeing coward, as soon as we see it in close-up, we see cowardice in person, ... the entity"⁴²), has then a *tendency* to efface the face that is *actualized when the close-up assumes a diegetic status*. Here are different scenarios concerning filmmakers' relation to the non-diegetic close-up's basic tendency to efface the face: not being a real filmmaker, the director does not go along with the close-up's basic tendency to efface the face because he doesn't even feel this tendency; being a real filmmaker, the director feels the tendency of the close-up to efface the face, but

wishing to work on something else related to his or her desire or joy or *jouissance* and his or her creativity, when he or she has to resort to a close-up he or she does not set up the conditions for the actualization of this tendency; being a real filmmaker, and feeling, among other things, an affinity for the tendency of the close-up to efface the face, he or she constructs the condition of possibility for its actualization at the level of the diegesis, making the close-up assume a diegetic status. Deleuze failed to think and mention this condition of possibility in his text on *Persona*. Unlike in other Bergman films that foreground the close-up, for example, *Cries and Whispers* and *Scenes from a Marriage*, in *Persona* the diegetic world functions in a cinematic manner (at one point the film frame burns, at another the sound seems to rewind, as if during film editing, etc.), making it possible for the two protagonists, one of whom is a theatre actress no less, and not just the two actresses playing them, to be in close-up. What is one of the states in which one may wonder whether one is in a film? Death is one such state; in death time may function in a filmic manner (the dead can become frozen still, move in slow motion, go backward in [labyrinthine] time, etc.). Could *Persona*'s Alma be viewed as dead? "Near the beginning of *Persona*, a corpse's closed eyes are suddenly, in a jump cut, open [at the repeated ringing one associates with phones—although no phone is visible in the room; the ringing stops when the call is answered with the dead woman's opening of her eyes].⁴³ Later in the film, supine Alma's closed eyes are, also in a jump cut, abruptly open. These shots of the corpse and of Alma are taken from an identical position and angle of view. A correspondence is thus established between the two women: Alma is dead."⁴⁴

The Profile of the Minimally Resentful Forgiving Human

Gilles Deleuze: "When a part of the body has had to sacrifice most of its motoricity in order to become the support for organs of reception, the principle feature of these will now only be tendencies to movement or micro-movements.... The face is this organ-carrying plate of nerves which has sacrificed most of its global mobility and which gathers or expresses in a free way all kinds of tiny local movements which the rest of the body usually keeps hidden."⁴⁵ God the Father has no face, since He is all action, not passive at all—the One who is pure action expresses Himself other than through a face. What about the incarnated God the Son? Even before Jesus turned the other cheek on being slapped ("They [the teachers of the law and the elders] spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him" [Matthew 26:67]; "if someone strikes you on one cheek, turn to him the other also" [Luke 6:29]), his absence of *ressentiment* was clear from the absence of any tendencies to react in the form of micro-movements (reddening of the cheeks, twitching of the lips, fluttering of the eyelids, etc.). Thus, he too did not have a face.⁴⁶ If one considers that Jesus was ever so faintly resentful—albeit forgiving ("Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven" [Matthew 12:32])—and thus that he had a face, then we should see the one who turned the other cheek in profile prior to his resurrection, but frontally once resurrected: indeed, exemplarily in the icons, the Christ, the resurrection and the life, not subject or no longer subject to over-turns, and consequently not needing a name, virtually incarnates frontality as such, and is therefore nameless.

The Visionary Is Faceless

“In *Umberto D*, De Sica constructs the famous sequence quoted as an example by Bazin: the young maid going into the kitchen in the morning, making a series of mechanical, weary gestures, cleaning a bit, driving the ants away from a water fountain, picking up the coffee grinder, stretching out her foot to close the door with her toe. And her eyes meet her pregnant woman’s belly... This is how, in an ordinary or everyday situation, in the course of a series of gestures, which are insignificant but all the more obedient to simple sensory-motor schemata, what has suddenly been brought about is a *pure optical situation* to which the little maid has no response or reaction.”⁴⁷ In the pregnant maid’s encounter with her belly, the latter is more stunning to her than an alien appearing in the kitchen, for she may still be able to respond, however inefficiently and awkwardly, to the alien, but she is unable to respond to her pregnant belly, perceives the latter as overwhelming (“It is as though all the misery in the world were going to be born”⁴⁸), not so much part of her but a vision. “What defines neo-realism is this build-up of purely optical situations (and sound ones ...), which are fundamentally distinct from the sensory-motor situations of the action-image in the old realism ... for [in the latter] the characters themselves reacted to situations ... even when one of them found himself reduced to helplessness, bound and gagged,”⁴⁹ be it through micro-movements in his or her face (these tendencies to react prevented his or her seeing a pure optical image). Since the one who undergoes a break of the sensory-motor link perceives purely optical situations, in other words, visions, and not only “fails” to respond but also does not manifest any *tendencies* to respond in the form

of facial micro-movements, which are one of the two essential poles of the face, the visionary is faceless—if there is an expression of the visionary, it is not a facial one.

Made without Hands

Gilbert Hage’s book *242 cm²* (2012) presents twenty-two landscape photographs that were taken in 2006, in the aftermath of the latest Israeli war on Lebanon; each of these photographs is 242 cm² in area and is titled “242 cm².” Why did he title each thus? What made him consider that each of these photographs had to be in a one-to-one reproduction ratio in relation to its referent? Did he try to zoom in on them but failed to successfully do so notwithstanding that according to the technical specs of his camera he should have been able to do it? Whether he tried to or not, one cannot zoom in on such objects—thus they are auratic natural objects!⁵⁰ While moving away after taking one of these photographs, did Hage have a similar impulse to the one a spectator is likely to feel when he or she moves away from Hans Holbein the Younger’s *The Ambassadors* (1533) in the National Gallery in London: to turn and look again at the object (the anamorphic skull in the case of *The Ambassadors*)? Did he yield to the impulse? What would he have seen then if “242 cm²” is a rigorous title of the photograph that is 242 cm² in area? If he could still at that distance discern the specific “small” piece of land he photographed, and distinguish it from the surrounding ostensibly largely similar landscape, he would have seen that that piece of land would have overlapped part of what was the adjoining area! One cannot move toward any of these 242 cm² zones that Gilbert Hage photographed without undergoing a lapse of consciousness only to find

oneself at the right distance from it, the one from which it would occupy 242 cm² of one's field of vision. As with an anamorphosis, where there is one point of view from which it becomes clear what the anamorphic stain or smudge is, there is a specific distance from which the part-object that is the referent of one of these Hage photographs *appears* to be fully part of the landscape, and thus no longer a part-object, fitting seamlessly in it: the distance from which it covers exactly 242 cm² of the field of vision (it is when standing at this distance to that spot that one may naively assume that one has taken a normal photograph in terms of its relation to its referent); at all other distances, it does not fit seamlessly in the landscape to which one has presumed it belongs, but is too small or too big for the relative size one expects it to have, either leaving a blank between it and the surrounding landscape (this blank acts as a frame) or else overlapping part of the latter. Is Lebanon bigger than one of these 242 cm² zones that Hage photographed? It is bigger than one of them from the reference frame of someone close enough to these zones; as one moves away (in a trance) from them, while they continue to occupy 242 cm² of one's field of vision, the rest of Lebanon appears smaller and smaller, until, past a certain distance, it appears to be as small as and then, as one's distance to them becomes even larger, smaller than the sum of these 242 cm² zones that are ostensibly part of it, and then, as one's distance to it becomes still larger, smaller than a single one of these 242 cm² zones. I would term the referents of these Hage photos icons. Hage's "242 cm²" photographs are indexical representations of icons,⁵¹ but they are not themselves icons (for the photographs of these 242 cm² zones to prove to be icons themselves, they have to continue to occupy 242 cm² of the field of vision

irrespective of one's movement toward or away from them; this is not the case with Hage's photographs). Hage's photographs of these 242 cm² zones are far more deserving of becoming iconic, this time in the sense of "very famous and well known, and believed to represent a particular idea" (*Macmillan Dictionary*), than such frequently photographed and filmed touristic attractions as Raouche's Pigeons' Rock in Beirut, and the cedars in Lebanon and on the Lebanese flag.

How to Film One's Homeland as a Land without People

Dedicated to Tom Nicholson

Am I a Lebanese and Iraqi thinker, if not an Arab thinker *tout court*? Yes, in relation to the surpassing disasters⁵² that Iraq, Lebanon, and the Arab "world" have undergone, since I sensed the consequent withdrawal of their traditions and what's more have tried both to make manifest this withdrawal and to resurrect these traditions (I have been affected by the withdrawal of some other traditions following surpassing disasters, and so belong to their communities too); no, if I have managed to show Lebanon, Iraq, and the Arab "world" in general as a land without people, let alone a people. None of us is indigenous, given that certain already occupied lands became our respective homelands as a result of being conquered and settled by some of our respective ancestors, and therefore, however much time may have "passed" since its previous occupants were forced to leave it, all of us have to live in a land in such a way that a perceptive observer would have the impression, at least transiently, that he or she is witnessing a land without people; and

those of us who are filmmakers, video makers, writers, or thinkers have to manifest the land as empty of those who fail to live in the aforementioned manner. The critique and correction of the false claim of the early Zionists that Palestine was “a land without a people [for a people without a land]” (at that date the Palestinians, even the Bedouins among them, had not managed to bring off the impression of not being there even while being there) by historians, including some Israeli ones (there were Palestinians there, indeed the majority of the population was Arab Palestinian), and critical theorists (for the most part the Arabs who inhabited Palestine thought of themselves as a people, the Palestinian people, by the time of the modern large-scale Jewish immigration to the land) is not enough. However critical of the Zionist ideology of the founders of the state of Israel⁵³ and the present policies of that state toward Palestinians (and Lebanon), a filmmaker who is a citizen of Israel remains an *Israeli* filmmaker rather than a filmmaker *tout court*—thus someone to be possibly boycotted by filmmakers who hail from the Arab “world” and elsewhere—as long as he or she has not, however fleetingly and subtly, shown Israel, with its millions of inhabitants, as a land without people.⁵⁴ But how can he or she do this? Is it through shots of empty highways and streets on Yom Kippur (aka the Day of Atonement) or at dawn? Possibly, but then the indubitable impression of the absence of people has to, complicatedly, persist even when the land appears again to be inhabited. Such an impression would confirm what many Arabs who have never been to Israel and who have never watched films shot in Israel believe in their unconscious: with the ethnic “cleansing” of Palestinians, there is nobody there. When, following the shots that give the impression that Israel

is a land without people, these Arabs would see shots of civilian Israelis going about their daily lives, they would become aware of their disavowal, the way they, unawares, had the dual attitude: “I know very well that Israelis, millions of them, live in what used to be part of Palestine, indeed that their democratically elected governments have waged wars on Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and the Gaza Strip in which the aerial bombardments were not carried out by unmanned combat aerial vehicles, nonetheless I unconsciously believe that since the unjust and traumatic expulsion of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from more than half of Palestine in 1948, and from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank in 1967, the land, with the possible exception of military bases and command and control centers, has been an unoccupied still life”—and be freed from this disavowal.⁵⁵ Obviously, the task of showing his or her country as a land without people is not limited to Israeli filmmakers; it is also incumbent upon Turkish filmmakers concerning the areas from which the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire were deported in the hundreds of thousands: they have to give the film spectator, at least transiently, the impression that, at some level, even today there are no Turks in these areas, that the latter are devoid of people (like many Palestinians, many Armenians unconsciously believe that the land from which they were deported is in suspended time, a “still life”); and upon Australian filmmakers regarding the lands Aboriginals were stripped of: they have to give the film spectator, at least transiently, the impression that, at some level, even today these lands are unpopulated; etc. I wager that there is at least one film made by an American citizen, now almost two centuries after the Indian Removal Act,⁵⁶ where the land in question, including the cities that were built

on it, appears to be devoid of people. The establishment of the state of Israel is too close in time for sequences of such shots not to appear, yet not as a fantasy or outrageous program of the most extremist of Israel's enemies—indeed, were the balance of power in the region, which appears to still be in Israel's favor, to alter drastically in the not too distant future, the impression that Israel is *already* a land without people would undermine to some extent the outrageous program of the most extremist of its enemies to empty it of Jewish Israelis. Were Palestinian refugees (who should by now have been granted citizenship in the countries in which they have lived for a substantial duration) to succeed to return to the areas in historical Palestine they were forced to leave, then hopefully they would know how to live there while giving the impression that they are not there—for they too, like all of us, have among their ancestors ones who conquered others and displaced them, then settled the land before becoming its “natives” for a long time. Were this to happen, then, around a century after many European Zionists mendaciously asserted that Palestine was “a land without a people for a people without a land,” a post-Zionist filmmaker who is a citizen of Israel; and who had shown Israel to be, notwithstanding the millions of Jews who have immigrated to it and/or who were born in it, a land without people; and who had courageously fought for the right of return of Palestinian refugees could assert, affirmatively, without any disavowal: I know very well that a large number of Palestinian refugees have returned to historical Palestine, nonetheless it continues to be a land without people.

Yet Again, the Stupid Man Protested, “I Am Not an Idiot”!

On January 15, 2013, two explosions struck “an area between the University of Aleppo's halls of residence and the faculty of architecture, on the first day of exams,”⁵⁷ reportedly killing “at least 82 people.”⁵⁸ While everyone else ran to take shelter, one man, known to be stupid, lost his bearings, became disoriented and ceased moving. Then another man also stopped running. Of the former, an acquaintance exclaimed, “What a stupid man! It seems not even natural instincts can override stupidity”; of the latter a friend wondered aloud, “What is it with him? He never struck me as stupid!” Deleuze would have exclaimed regarding the latter, “What an idiot!” What is the difference between a stupid person and an idiot? While a stupid person is unable to respond adequately to an emergency, an idiot can do so but is distracted from that by a question that's more fundamental and worthy of attention than the emergency (can a stupid person exceptionally act as an idiot in specific circumstances or is stupidity at the most fundamental level the inability to ever act as an idiot whatever the circumstances?). Deleuze: “Kurosawa's characters are in impossible situations, but hold on! there is a more urgent problem. And they have to know what that problem is. *Ikiru* may be the film that goes the farthest in this sense. But all of his films go in this direction.... In *Seven Samurai*, the characters are caught up in an urgent situation—they have accepted to defend the village—and from the beginning of the film to the end, a more profound question gnaws away at them. The question is formulated at the end of the film by the leader of the samurai as they leave: ‘What is a samurai? What is a samurai, not in general, but at

this time?’ Someone who no longer serves a purpose. The rulers do not need them and the peasants will soon learn to defend themselves. Throughout the film, despite the urgency of the situation, the samurai are haunted by this question, one worthy of the Idiot: we samurai, what are we?”⁵⁹ The samurai in Kurosawa’s *Seven Samurai* are placed in the position of idiots, but the question that radically concerns them is not the one that self-reflexively pertains to the idiot: “What is an idiot?” I would like to think that Deleuze was caught up in some emergency and while in that state was mostly concerned with a more profound question, “What is an idiot?” and that it is while thus acting as an idiot that he ended up providing a conceptual answer to this deeper question. If it is not thus that Deleuze came up with his concept of the idiot, then the question, “What is an idiot?” which is the reflexive deeper question for an idiot, may not yet have been asked by an idiot.

**Jesus May Talk like an Idiot and Look
like an Idiot but Don't Let That Fool You —
He Really Is an Idiot⁶⁰**

Nietzsche: “Monsieur Renan, that buffoon *in psychologicis*, has appropriated for his explication of the type Jesus the two *most inapplicable* concepts in this case: the concept of the *genius* and the concept of the *hero*. But if anything is unevangelic it is the concept hero. Precisely the opposite of all contending, of all feeling oneself in struggle has here become instinct: the incapacity for resistance here becomes morality (‘resist not evil!’ ...).... To make a *hero* of Jesus! — And what a worse misunderstanding is the word ‘genius’! Our whole concept, our cultural concept ‘spirit’ had no meaning whatever

in the world Jesus lived in. To speak with the precision of the physiologist a quite different word would rather be in place here: the word idiot.... One has to regret that no Dostoyevsky lived in the neighbourhood of this most interesting *decadent* ...”⁶¹ Deleuze: “Dostoyevsky’s characters ... are in general very troubled. A character ... says, ‘Tanya, the woman I love, has called for my help. I must hurry; she will die if I do not go to her.’ He goes downstairs and meets a friend or sees a dying dog in the street and ... he completely forgets Tanya is waiting for him.... He starts talking, meets another acquaintance, goes to have tea at his home and suddenly says again, ‘Tanya is waiting for me. I must go.’ What does that mean? Dostoyevsky’s characters are constantly caught up in emergencies, and while they are caught up in these life-and-death emergencies, they know that there is a more urgent question—but they do not know what it is. That is what stops them. Everything happens as if in the worst emergencies—‘Can’t wait, I’ve got to go’—they said to themselves: ‘No, there is something more urgent. I am not budging until I know what it is.’ It’s the Idiot. It’s the Idiot’s formula: ‘You know, there is a deeper problem. I am not sure what it is. But leave me alone. Let everything rot ... this more urgent problem must be found.’”⁶² “Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.... So the sisters sent word to Jesus, ‘Lord, the one you love is sick.’ When he heard this, Jesus said, ‘This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.’ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that Lazarus was sick ...” (John 11:1–5) he rushed to save him, but then quickly began to wonder why it is this sickness that is not to end in death “is for God’s glory so that

God's Son may be glorified through it" rather than the two other sicknesses that did not end in death since he resurrected the two who died from them (the young man from the town of Nain [Luke 7:11–16] and the only daughter of Jairus, a synagogue leader, a girl of about twelve [Luke 8:41–56]). And "so he stayed where he was two more days" pondering this matter, and then, once he had fathomed in what sense Lazarus's death and resurrection would be, unlike the other two resurrections he had already performed, "for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it," "he said to his disciples, 'Let us go back to Judea.... Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up.' His disciples replied, 'Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better.' Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep" (John 11:7–13). I imagine that one of them (Judas?) muttered (as the devil must have done on Jesus Christ's not getting—rather than resisting—his *jouissance*-related temptations in the desert),⁶³ "What an idiot!" But he would have been mistaken to characterize Jesus thus based on his words "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going ... to wake him up" rather than on his preoccupation with a question deeper and more deserving of being addressed than the emergency of Lazarus's grave sickness. "So then he told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead'" (John 11:1–14). It is then that another one of those who heard him felt, "What an idiot!" for he considered, wrongly, that it is idiotic to have delayed going to moribund Lazarus for two days, until the latter died. Lazarus had left his fate in the hands of someone who was both God and an idiot, Jesus Christ. Jesus arrived late for the sickness, but in a timely manner for the resurrection, in other words, too late for resurrection⁶⁴ (by arriving late, Jesus Christ did not make

Lazarus undergo something he was not undergoing anyway, simultaneously with his life, for Lazarus, as a mortal, was already dead while alive—Jesus never arrived late for a sick man whose sickness was not unto death, for example, blindness, for such a sickness is not our condition anyway even while healthy).

The Resurrected Brother of Mary and Martha: A Human Who Resurrected God!

"Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus⁶⁵ lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, 'Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.' ... 'Leave her alone,' Jesus replied. 'It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial!'" (John 12:1–7). Hearing this, the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha, who knew that when "some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to Jesus, 'Teacher, we want to see a sign from you,'" Jesus answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:39–40), must have thought that Jesus would be buried alive⁶⁶ (and then lifted up to heaven three

days and nights later: hadn't Jesus said, "... when I am lifted up from the earth" [John 12:32?], muttering, "Our Lord Jesus Christ will fall asleep dreamlessly, and then I'll go to his tomb to wake him up." Soon after, an acquaintance of his sent word to him, "The one you love has been sentenced to be crucified." When he heard this, he promptly headed to Golgotha. In front of the cross on which Jesus Christ was crucified, the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha, the disciple whom Jesus loved,⁶⁷ soothed Jesus's mother thus: "This crucifixion will not end in death." But no sooner had he finished saying these words than he was confounded, for "when Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, 'Woman, here is your son,' and to the disciple, 'Here is your mother'" (John 19:26–27).⁶⁸ What is impossible for Jesus Christ as the life? Is it to "heal the sick" and "raise the dead" (Matthew 10:8)? No, such actions are possible for a God who is the life, therefore, they are not miracles for him. What is impossible for Jesus Christ, the life, is to die, so either, as the Qur'ān asserts ("They [the People of the Book with whom God made a solemn covenant] slew him [the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, Allāh's messenger] not nor crucified him, but it appeared so unto them" [4:157]), he did not die on the cross, and the one who died on the cross was a substitute who appeared to be him,⁶⁹ or he could and did die on the cross only miraculously, by a miracle he performed and not as a result of the action of his ostensible executioners. In the same way that, according to Rilke, "however much the farmer toils and sows, / never will he reach the transformation / of the seed into summer. Earth bestows,"⁷⁰ however much the executioners of the life may torture him and however long they may crucify him, never will they reach the transformation of

the life into death;⁷¹ it is the Christ who miraculously accomplishes and offers his death. Only a madman would have cried, "Whither is God? I will tell you. *We have killed him*—you and I,"⁷² in relation to the crucifixion of a God who was "the life." What most fits life is to resurrect the dead: Jesus Christ's resurrection of Lazarus (and two [or three?] others); and what is impossible for it, therefore what it can accomplish only miraculously, is to die: Jesus Christ's death on the cross. In relation to *life and death*, Jesus Christ, as the life, did what is possible for him in resurrecting Lazarus, and did, miraculously, what is impossible for him in dying (on the cross)—the latter was, strictly speaking, his one miracle as the life. "About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, '*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*' (which means 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?').... And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit" (Matthew 27:46–50; cf. Mark 15:34–37).⁷³ Deeply moved in spirit and troubled, the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha exclaimed: "The Christ died, truly he died!" The brother of Mary and Martha underwent both nights of the world, the Hegelian one and the Nietzschean one. He underwent the Hegelian one insofar as he was a mortal before his resurrection by Jesus Christ, the life, that is, insofar as he was dead even while still physically alive, and, more unreservedly, when he died physically the first time, as an undead: "The human being is this Night, this empty nothing which contains everything in its simplicity—a wealth of infinitely many representations, images, none of which occur to it directly, and none of which are not present. This [is] the Night, the interior of [human] nature, existing here—*pure Self*—[and] in phantasmagoric representations it is night everywhere: here a bloody head suddenly shoots up and there another white shape,

only to disappear as suddenly. We see this Night when we look a human being in the eye, looking into a Night which turns terrifying. [For from his eyes] the night of the world hangs out towards us^{74,75}; and he, like all those living then, underwent, whether aware of this or unawares, the Nietzschean one, which was foreshadowed by the unnatural night *in* the world that occurred while Jesus Christ was still alive on the cross (“From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land” [Matthew 27:45]) and that made some of those present then wonder, “Do we not need to light lanterns in the morning?” and which held sway between (the Son of) God’s (miraculous) death on the cross and his resurrection. Jesus Christ’s two cries in quick succession mark, respectively, the points when he first intuited and then when it became quite clear to him, who was then on the verge of dying miraculously, that if he were to be resurrected, it would not be through the direct action of God the Father. It is on hearing the words of Jesus’s first cry on the cross, “*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*” that the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha first had an uneasy inkling of his incredible task. Between (the Son of) God’s (miraculous) death on the cross and his resurrection, his fate depended in an essential manner on a human, the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha. That was the incredible stake that was being played: the death of God in the figure of Jesus Christ could have proved to be irreparable, freeing humans from (one of the hypostases of) God,⁷⁶ or ushering in *the night of the world* (in a Nietzschean, if not a Hegelian sense: “Is not night continually closing in on us? Do we not need to light lanterns in the morning? ... God is dead. God remains dead⁷⁷) in case they failed to become themselves gods (Nietzsche: “What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet

owned has bled to death under our knives.... Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it?”⁷⁸). God, who had incarnated to teach man (about) the miraculous, made the life of his Son depend on whether man would accomplish the miraculous, more specifically the resurrection of He who made miracles possible and through whom miracles are possible: God. The resurrected brother of Mary and Martha did not at all consider burying the dead Jesus Christ—instead, he returned with Mary to his home in Bethany. Given that Jesus had instructed his followers to “let the dead bury their own dead” (Matthew 8:22), Jesus’s burial had to be left to one who, as a mortal, was dead (while physically still alive). And so it was: Joseph of Arimathea (according to the Synoptic Gospels), assisted by Nicodemus (according to the Gospel of John), laid Jesus’s body in a tomb.⁷⁹ Thomas said to the ten other remaining, ostensible disciples, “Let us ... die with him.” I assume that by this he meant: let us, recognizing that with the death of the life we too have willy-nilly already died (symbolically), formalize this death instead of persisting in an ersatz life that is no more than a delay in the registration of our implied (symbolic) death. But the other, ostensible disciples, who had denied and/or abandoned Jesus when the latter was apprehended and crucified, dismissed his recommendation and dissuaded him from his undertaking. Thomas (also known as Didymus), who has an affinity to repetition and duplication since “*Thomas (Aramaic) and Didymus (Greek) both mean twin,*”⁸⁰ had already said the same words on a previous occasion, as Jesus was on the point of heading to Lazarus’s tomb (John 11:16). Moreover, these repeated words had on that previous occasion a double meaning depending on who

was referred to by “him.” If Thomas considered that Jesus Christ could be killed by humans, then, given that Jesus maintained his intention to return to Judea to resurrect his beloved disciple Lazarus “for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it” (John 11:4) notwithstanding his ostensible disciples’ perplexed warning, “But Rabbi, a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?” (John 11:8), Thomas’s words would have had the aforementioned meaning: let us, recognizing that were the life to die we too would willy-nilly be dead (symbolically), not persist in an ersatz life that is no more than a delay in the registration of our imminent implied (symbolic) death. If Thomas thought that the life could not be killed by humans, then his words would have rather meant: let us die, then perhaps Jesus Christ, the life and the resurrection, who appears intent on resurrecting Lazarus, would resurrect us too and thus we would no longer be mortals, dead while alive, but become solely alive (given that Jesus’s other ostensible disciples did not follow his recommendation, indeed dissuaded him from doing so, could it be that Thomas was the only one of the Twelve who already understood that Jesus intended to resurrect the dead Lazarus? Or was it the case that the others did understand that Jesus intended to resurrect the dead Lazarus but did not care, notwithstanding that they were mortals, dead even while physically alive, to be raised “with him” from death by the Christ?). Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews who knew that Jesus had not only “loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus” (John 11:5) but also resurrected the latter came to comfort not only Jesus’s mother but also the aforementioned three siblings in their loss. Three days and three nights after Jesus’s burial, the resurrected brother

of Mary and Martha told his two sisters and Mary that he was going to visit Jesus’s tomb. Once in Jerusalem, he asked Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, “Where have you laid him?” “Come and see,” they replied, supposing he was going to the tomb to mourn there. The resurrected brother of Mary and Martha came to the tomb, which was in a garden. A stone was laid across the entrance to the tomb. There was a bad odor, for Jesus had been in the tomb for three days and three nights. The resurrected brother of Mary and Martha wept. Then he was reminded of the words that his sister Martha told him Jesus had said to her at Lazarus’s own tomb, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?” Now, to the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha, “if you believe ...” no longer meant, “if you believe in God ...” for God—in the hypostasis of the Son—was dead, but, “if you, who as a resurrected man exemplify a miracle, believe in the miraculous.” The stone was too heavy for one man to displace. Given that Jesus had asserted, “Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you” (Matthew 17:20), could the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha, who had faith, have moved it? Yes, he could have. But he intuited that he should not even try to do so, for the miracle he had to do was a different one, a far greater one (one no angel could accomplish). He wondered, “Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?” Then he saw two angels in white. “Take away the stone,” he said. So they rolled away the stone. The resurrected brother of Mary and Martha remembered Jesus Christ’s words “Truly I tell you, if you have faith ... nothing will be impossible for you” (Matthew 17:20) and “Very truly I tell you, whoever

believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these.... And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it" (John 14:12–14). Then, for the first time, the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha, who had until then, like his two sisters, always addressed Jesus as "Lord" ("Take away the stone," he [Jesus] said. "But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days" [John 11:39] ...⁸¹), called him (in a loud voice) by his name: "Jesus, come out!" The one who was dead came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.⁸² The resurrected brother of Mary and Martha had called upon his name and given glory to the Lord.⁸³ The two angels were astonished. The first Christian miracle by someone other than Jesus Christ was the resurrection of the dead Jesus Christ by the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha (Peter's walk on water was not a miracle, but a momentary walk in the redeemed world).⁸⁴ Notwithstanding their repeated descriptions of themselves as witnesses of Jesus Christ's resurrection ("Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: ... 'God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it'" [Acts 2:14–32]; Peter, "You killed the author of life, but God raised him from the dead. We are witnesses of this" [Acts 3:15]),⁸⁵ neither Peter nor any of the other ten ostensible disciples witnessed the resurrection itself, the act of the resurrection of Jesus Christ; only the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha did, since he performed it. Lazarus's death was for "God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it" (John 11:4) not only because it would provide Jesus with the occasion to

perform a resurrection (in the process confirming his assertion that Lazarus's "sickness will not end in death"), otherwise Jesus would have said the same thing about his resurrections of the young man from the town of Nain (Luke 7:11–16) and the only daughter of Jairus (Luke 8:41–56); but also because the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha would resurrect the dead Jesus, who would thus have been "raised in glory" (1 Corinthians 15:43). How curious and anomalous it is for "Saint" Paul, who placed resurrection at the very core of Christianity ("And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith" [1 Corinthians 15:14]), never to have mentioned Lazarus. And yet, when he wrote, "For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either" (1 Corinthians 15:16), "Saint" Paul might have let slip something he intuited or knew but preferred not to declare, since it is one of those raised dead, the brother of Mary and Martha, who raised the Christ from death. The resurrected brother of Mary and Martha could feel that power had gone out from him and was exhausted as no human had ever been, incredibly exhausted (Jesus Christ, someone infinitely greater than him, felt that "power had gone out from him" when a woman was healed on touching his cloak ["A woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years.... She came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak.... Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him" (Mark 5:24–30; cf. Matthew 9:20–21)], an infinitely lesser miracle than the one that the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha had just accomplished). Did he fall unconscious from his incredible exhaustion? At this point, *after* resurrecting (the Son of) God, he again very much needed the

assistance of the two angels. They could and did intervene then and provide him with the requisite energy. Then the resurrected Jesus Christ ordered him “not to tell anyone what had happened” (the same injunction he gave the parents of the girl of about twelve just after resurrecting her [Luke 8:56]). And so he told neither the eleven ostensible disciples, nor Mary, Jesus’s (and now his) mother, nor his own two sisters. Like “many other signs,” the resurrection of Jesus Christ by the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha is “not recorded in this book” (John 20:30). “Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, ‘They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!’ So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb” (John 20:1–3). While it seems obvious why Peter would start for the tomb, why did the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha, also do so? Once he was surrounded by those who were *human, all too human*, that *event*, about which the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha did not tell others anything, seemed incredible to him; indeed he could no longer believe that he could have accomplished such a miracle, in a way the greatest miracle, so he, who had come to doubt that he could have resurrected someone, let alone (the Son of) God, ran to the tomb to check that what he remembered as an actual event was not some sort of hallucination. “Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in”—for he was then sure, again, that he had actually resurrected Jesus Christ ...

recently. “Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus’s head” (John 20:4–7). When shortly after his resurrection, Jesus Christ appeared to his ostensible disciples, Thomas did not happen to be among them. When they reported this appearance to him, Thomas doubted their report. Why did Thomas (also known as Didymus [which means “twin” in Greek]) doubt that the one they witnessed is the resurrected Jesus Christ? Is it because while the one who performed the resurrection, the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha, was solely alive he was nonetheless not *the life* (in whose case alone one can be sure that the resurrected one is the one who died), with the consequence that one could not be sure that the one he resurrected was (the Son of) God, the Christ, and not some double of him, if not the Antichrist? Did he also reason that were the one that the other ten ostensible disciples beheld the Christ who, past his resurrection by the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha, was *glorified* by God the Father, they would have as a result been destroyed, since to the resurrected Christ *in his glory* applied what applied to God (the Father) (“Then Moses said, ‘Now show me your glory.’ And the LORD said, ‘... you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.’ Then the LORD said, ‘... When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by’” [Exodus 33:18–22])?

Which Is the Most Difficult: To Resurrect Every Dead Human or to Resurrect a Singular Dead Human?

Since a proper name is required for resurrection, as exemplified by Jesus Christ’s “Lazarus, come

out!” (John 11:43), it is not accidental that in the New Testament Lazarus, the one to be resurrected, is introduced and specified explicitly by his name, “Now a man named Lazarus was sick” (John 11:11). Though a name is required for the resurrection of a mortal, if the mortal was resurrected by the life, which in the New Testament has the figure of Jesus Christ, then when he or she returns not as a mortal but as solely alive, he or she fundamentally no longer has a name and is no longer called—if his or her beloved lover continues to utter his or her name it would not be to call him or her but because the resurrected man or woman enjoys hearing his or her name pronounced by his or her beloved. But if one is being resurrected by a mortal, then the call is required not only in the process of the resurrection but also after one returns to life *as a mortal* (that is, as dead while alive), therefore, still with a name.

Jesus called the buried, dead Lazarus, “Lazarus, come out!” (John 11:43). He who had despaired of actually turning to answer a call, his previous turns having repeatedly been overturned by 180-degree over-turns, nonetheless turned, and this time his turn was miraculously successful! Those who were present there were taken aback by Lazarus coming out of the grave. Millennia later, a man who had proclaimed himself the Messiah wondered aloud, partially to sow doubt among Christians that Jesus of Nazareth was actually the Christ, “How come neither of the two men Jesus resurrected was called Adam, the name of the man through whom death and, consequently, proper names were introduced?” then asserted, “Jesus’s consecutive resurrections of the young man from the town of Nain, the daughter of Jairus, and Lazarus were rehearsals for the resurrection I am about to perform, felicitously and destinally of

an Adam,”⁸⁶ then, in a scene seemingly reminiscent of Jesus’s resurrection of Lazarus, yelled, “Adam, come out of the grave.” While the living mortals who heard the call felt it to be imperious, to the dead it was seductive, like a siren’s call! The living mortals there were taken aback and dumbfounded when a man actually walked out of the grave. Some of those present greeted him with, “Peace and safety.” Oddly, the one who came out of the grave appeared not to recognize anyone—not even his own ostensible relatives. Then, to the relief of everyone—a relief that was mixed with unease in the case of his ostensible relatives—he turned his head in the direction of the dead man’s relatives and began to walk toward them. Given the gruesome traces on his body from its stay for four days in the grave, those who were there looked away from him, awful, to the one they believed to be the Messiah. The latter looked now even more awe-inspiring, having resurrected a dead man ... with a few words. They looked away from the awful to the awe-inspiring then from the awe-inspiring to the awful, again and again. Suddenly, one of them yelled, “Look!” and pointed toward the tombs. A man was trudging toward them from the zone of the graves. Initially his surprising appearance provided relief from the awful and the awe-inspiring, but the relief very quickly faded as they became aware that that man was not some living person who had momentarily gone to check something in the tomb from which the dead man came back, but another man who returned from death. Some of those present recognized him as another recently dead man. But how come he, too, returned to life, when he was not named Adam? Was he at least physically indistinguishable from the first revenant? Setting aside the traces of decomposition and putrefaction on the two revenants’ bodies,

they were not physically similar. The doubling seemed no longer just an impression insidiously affecting the single revenant, but an actual, physical one. While they were still bewildered, a woman walked out of the grave. None of them recognized her as a dead relative. She was not from that locality and was not buried in that specific graveyard. How come, then, she came back to life from this cemetery? Then a third man came out of the grave, and then another woman, and then two more men simultaneously. One of those present reminded them how they greeted the first revenant, and then quoted 1 Thessalonians 5:3: “While people are saying, ‘Peace and safety,’ destruction will come on them suddenly ...” His words amplified the dread of the living people present there, who were now expecting even more dead people to come out of the grave. So most of them ran away. The one who cited 1 Thessalonians 5:3 finished the quote, “and they will not escape,” as it were to explain why he did not leave. He then witnessed more and more of the dead come out of graves, legions of them. Soon enough news came from other villages, towns, and cities that there too the dead were coming back from their graves, in the hundreds, thousands, millions. How many dead returned? Over one hundred billion!⁸⁷ (The “resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked” [Acts 24:15], in other words, general resurrection, would ensue from the successful attempt of one living *mortal*, whether or not he had proclaimed himself the Messiah, to resurrect one dead person, given that each dead assumes every name in history, including the specific name used by the one performing the resurrection.) It was all the more fitting that this general resurrection of the dead occurred during what was initially the resurrection of a specific dead man named Adam, since

prior to man’s partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and consequently dying before dying physically and as a corollary having a proper name, Adam meant “man” generically. Insofar as he or she is dead even while still physically alive, a mortal should intuit that were he or she to call a dead person to resurrect him or her, and were the call to be successful, it would be answered by every dead human since each dead human assumes every name in history (in the same letter in which Nietzsche wrote, “This autumn ... I twice attended my funeral,” he asserted, “Every name in history is I”; Nietzsche, otherwise so singular, is not in that letter revealing to us something specific to him, but rather that every dead assumes every name in history)—perhaps it is this obscure intuition that dissuades a living *mortal* from trying to resurrect someone who is dead. Fundamentally, given that each dead human assumes every name in history, were a mortal to perform a resurrection successfully, it cannot be a resurrection of only one dead human but a resurrection of all the dead (she had entreated her mortal lover to resurrect her were she to die before him; and yet when he did resurrect her she, a mortal, thus someone who should have intuited better, was angry with him for resurrecting not just her but everybody else as well)—to resurrect only one dead, a singular dead, one has to be if not *the* life (which, according to John 11:25, the Christ was), then solely alive, whereas to resurrect all the dead can be done merely by the Antichrist, a mortal whose call can make the dead overcome the over-turn. The Antichrist can resurrect everybody who is dead (as mortals, that is, as dead even while physically alive again), but he or she cannot resurrect only one dead, the one he calls by a specific name. For the one who is perceptive, the miraculousness of what Jesus

Christ did to the dead Lazarus in the grave consisted not simply in bringing him back to life, but also in that in the act of doing so he did not also bring back to life all the other dead humans (thus to resurrect three dead humans, Jesus Christ had to perform three resurrections rather than one)—and in that, relatedly, the one he brought back from death was no longer a mortal but solely alive.

The Crucified

*Nobody until now has been able to solve riddles like this, I doubt anyone has even seen riddles here.*⁸⁸

Friedrich Nietzsche

“According to some [Muslim] commentators, when the Jewish authorities came to arrest Jesus, he was among a group of his followers. They did not know who among them was Jesus, because a Divine ruse had made them all appear the same, and one of Jesus’s followers was thus taken and killed in his place (IK,⁸⁹ T,⁹⁰ Z⁹¹).... Another account from Wahb ibn Munabbih (d. early second/eighth century) ... claims that it was one of Jesus’ perfidious followers (presumably Judas) who, after attempting to betray Jesus, was made to assume Jesus’ appearance and was killed in his stead. (IK, T, Z).... The idea that someone was killed in Jesus’ stead after having assumed his likeness, voluntarily or otherwise, is found widely throughout the commentary tradition.”⁹² Had the one who was crucified in place of and as Jesus of Nazareth been neither a die-hard follower nor a betrayer or foe of Jesus, then it would seem that the most likely candidate for such a substitute would have been another Jesus, one whom the chief priests of the Jews and their elders opted

to spare instead of Jesus of Nazareth: “Now it was the governor’s custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas. So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, ‘Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?’ ... The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. ‘Which of the two do you want me to release to you?’ asked the governor. ‘Barabbas,’ they answered. ‘What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?’ Pilate asked. They all answered, ‘Crucify him!’” (Matthew 27:15–22). Yet it was not Jesus Barabbas who was crucified as Jesus of Nazareth on that fateful day in Palestine circa 30 but someone who could be considered from one view of Jesus Christ, that of the Church, one of Jesus’s harshest, staunchest enemies, but from a different view of Jesus one of his most spirited defenders as someone who exemplified “the freedom, the superiority *over* every feeling of *ressentiment*”⁹³ (Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ*, §40) and discredited the concepts of guilt, sin, another world, and a redemption to come: “Jesus had done away with the very idea of ‘guilt’⁹⁴ ... The concepts of guilt and punishment are completely missing from the psychology of the ‘evangel’; so is the concept of reward. ‘Sin,’ any distance between God and man: these are abolished,—*this is what the ‘glad tidings’ are all about.* Blessedness is not a promise, it has no strings attached: it is the *only* reality....⁹⁵ Nothing is less Christian than the *ecclesiastical crudity* of ... a ‘kingdom of God’ that is *yet to come*, a ‘kingdom of heaven’ in the *beyond*....⁹⁶ The ‘kingdom of heaven’ is a state of the heart—not something lying ‘above the earth’ or coming ‘after death.’ ... The ‘kingdom of God’

is not something that you wait for; it does not have a yesterday or a day after tomorrow, it will not arrive in a ‘thousand years’—it is an experience of the heart”⁹⁷ (ibid., §41 and §34). Notwithstanding his vehement request in the “Preface” of the book he symptomatically titled *Ecce Homo*, “Do not mistake me for anyone else!” Nietzsche was mistaken, by those who could not have possibly read his book, for Jesus Christ, ostensibly the one regarding whom Pilate said on seeing him come out “wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe,” “Here is the man!”⁹⁸ (John 19:5). Nietzsche, a prescient philosopher, wrote in his book *Twilight of the Idols*, whose preface was written in “Turin, on 30 September 1888”: “To live alone, you need to be either an animal or a god—says Aristotle. But he left out the third case: you can be both—a philosopher” (§3).⁹⁹ To those who were present in the Piazza Carlo Alberto on January 3, 1889, and who were acquainted with him or knew who he was, it was solely a matter of the “curious incident” of Nietzsche interposing himself between a coachman and the horse he was hitting, thus substituting himself for the animal, receiving the coachman’s already initiated next whiplash and losing consciousness and collapsing, but as far as Nietzsche was concerned, as he leapt impulsively between the coachman and the old horse the latter was flogging repeatedly, he, across a lapse of consciousness, felt another kind of lash, which awakened him to a different setting, which, despite his amazement, he quickly recognized given that he had studied at the elite gymnasium Schulpforta, where, as in other gymnasia in Germany of the time, “Latin and Greek classes held primacy, even before German, with a remarkable number of lessons per week ... : Latin up to 16 lessons, Greek up to 12 or 14”¹⁰⁰; and that his thesis there was

written in Latin (*De Theognide Megarensi*); and that his studies in classical philology at the University of Bonn “were for a while directed at the *philological* side of gospel critique and the *basic research* of the New Testament.”¹⁰¹ He, who had written in *The Anti-Christ* that Jesus appeared as “a Buddha on a soil very little like that of India” (§31),¹⁰² was then a European (“We Europeans” [*Beyond Good and Evil*]) on a soil very little like that of Europe in the nineteenth century, Palestine circa 30. He saw what appeared to be some high priest tear his clothes and accuse him before an audience, ““He has spoken blasphemy! [The high priest (Caiaphas) had moments earlier said to Jesus, “I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.” “You have said so,” Jesus had replied. “But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One.” And indeed from then until the end of the crucifixion and the subsequent burial, Jesus, at the right hand of the Mighty One, was replaced by Nietzsche].... Now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?’ ‘He is worthy of death,’ they [the teachers of the law and the elders] answered. Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him” (Matthew 26:63–67). He, who had written in the book he had recently finished, *Ecce Homo*, “Do not mistake me for anyone else!” very quickly gathered that he was being mistaken for Jesus of Nazareth. “Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard” (Matthew 26:69). Did Peter actually disown Jesus Christ when he answered a servant girl who asserted, “This man was with him,” “Woman, I don’t know him” (Luke 22:56–57)? Or was he being perceptive, since the man in question was not Jesus but someone Peter could not have possibly known since he will be born, following his imminent death

on the cross circa 30, posthumously, on 15 October 1844 (referring to himself, Nietzsche wrote in *Ecce Homo* [1888], “Some are born posthumously”¹⁰³),¹⁰⁴ Then the Jewish leaders took Nietzsche in the guise of Jesus “from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor,” Pilate. “To ‘bear witness’¹⁰⁵ to himself, he said to Pilate the following words that appear in the foreword of *Ecce Homo*, “Under these circumstances there is a duty against which my habit, and even more so the pride of my instincts, fundamentally rebels, namely to say: listen to me! for I am such and such. Above all, don’t mistake me [for anyone else]!” then added, “In this case, for Jesus who is called the Messiah!” In response to Pilate’s incredulity, he ventured, “How much truth can a spirit *stand*, how much truth does it *dare*?—for me that has become more and more the real measure of value.”¹⁰⁶ When Pilate retorted, “What is truth?” (John 18:38), he answered, seemingly whimsically, “Suppose that truth is a woman.”¹⁰⁷ Pilate exclaimed, “Are you saying this because my wife sent me a message, entreating me, ‘Don’t have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him’¹⁰⁸?” Under the relentless pressure of his Jewish accusers, his trial before Pilate ended with his condemnation to be crucified. “Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, ‘Do not write “The King of the Jews,” but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews.’ Pilate answered, ‘What I have written, I have written’” (John 19:19–22).¹⁰⁹ It is on hearing these words that the philosopher who had written in *The Gay Science*, “*For the*

new year.... Today everybody permits himself the expression of his wish and his dearest thought; hence I, too, shall say what it is that I wish from myself today, and ... what thought shall be for me the reason, warranty, and sweetness of my life henceforth.... *Amor fati*: let that be my love henceforth!”¹¹⁰ and in *Ecce Homo*, “My formula for human greatness is *amor fati*: not wanting anything to be different, not forwards, not backwards, not for all eternity,”¹¹¹ no longer protested against being mistaken for Jesus, but *affirmed* the substitution (almost two millennia later, he will title his autobiography *Ecce Homo*, and sign several of his final letters with “The Crucified”). It was not Jesus but someone else, “a man from Cyrene, named Simon,” who carried the cross to the spot where the crucifixion was to take place (Matthew 27:32), and it was also not Jesus but someone else who was crucified in his place and as him. “Those who passed by hurled insults at” (Matthew 27:39) the crucified, Nietzsche in the guise of Jesus. He exclaimed, “They do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). Then he said (in Latin or Greek?), “It is a mere prejudice that I am a human being. Yet I have often enough dwelled among human beings and I know the things human beings experience, from the lowest to the highest” (from the letter in Nietzsche’s handwriting to Cosima Wagner as “Princess Ariadne,” Turin, January 3, 1889, in which he also wrote, “Among the Hindus I was Buddha, in Greece Dionysus ... *I also hung on the cross ...*” [my italics])—while the crucified meant by the lowest things humans experience being related to and associated with his mother and sister (“When I look for my profoundest opposite, ineradicable vulgarity of the instincts, I always find my mother and sister—to think of myself as related to such *canaille* would be a blasphemy against my

divinity” [Ecce Homo, chapter 1, §3]),¹¹² and being hung on the cross, a punishment “generally reserved for the rabble” (*The Anti-Christ*, §40),¹¹³ those who heard him assumed he was referring to such things as washing and drying the feet of his ostensible disciples (“He poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him” [John 13:5]) and being slapped in public (“The high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. ‘I have spoken openly to the world,’ Jesus replied. ‘I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said.’ When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby slapped him in the face” [John 18:19–22]). Then he said, “God is on the earth. Don’t you see how all the heavens are rejoicing?” (from the letter in Nietzsche’s handwriting addressed to Meta von Salis-Marschlins, Turin, January 3, 1889, and signed, “The Crucified”), and, “Sing me a new song: the world is transfigured and all the heavens rejoice” (from the letter in Nietzsche’s handwriting addressed to Peter Gast, postmarked Turin, January 4, 1889, and signed “The Crucified”). If Nietzsche signed several of his letters with “The Crucified,” it was because he was crucified sometime between December 31, 1888, when he signed his letter to Peter Gast with “N.,” and January 3, 1889, when he signed a letter to Meta von Salis-Marschlins with “the Crucified” and wrote in a letter to Cosima Wagner as “Princess Ariadne,” “Among the Hindus I was Buddha, in Greece Dionysus ... I also hung on the cross”—in one of those “intercalary days that are not included in the calendar of this world—though they are true as the day from here”¹¹⁴ (from one of the letters of a certain Antonin Nalpas, who replaced Antonin Artaud upon

the latter’s death before physically dying and who had the same handwriting). Nietzsche wrote in *The Anti-Christ*: “It took this death, this unexpected, ignominious death, it took the cross, which was generally reserved for the rabble,—it took this horrible paradox to bring the disciples face to face with the true riddle: ‘Who was that? What was that?’”¹¹⁵ Who was that? It was Nietzsche. What was that? It was the conjunction of a destiny (Nietzsche asserts in *Ecce Homo*: “I am a destiny”) and the reflexive logic of replacement—for replacement to work at a basic level the one replacing another has himself to be also replaced by another, exemplarily in the very act of replacing the other; Nietzsche was crucified surreptitiously, esoterically, in Jesus’s place, even while Jesus was ostensibly being crucified for others, all others (“He [Christ] died for all” [2 Corinthians 5:15]), including the one who replaced him on the cross.¹¹⁶ Jesus prayed to God twice to spare him dying on the cross: “Jesus ... fell with his face to the ground and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will.’ Then he returned to his disciples.... He went away a second time and prayed, ‘My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done’” (Matthew 26:39–42). He was spared once not twice: while Nietzsche replaced Jesus on the cross, Jesus, “the truth” (John 14:6), was crucified physically in lieu of and as someone who was reported to have exclaimed, *anā al-ḥaqq* (I am the Truth [i.e., God]); prophesized, “*fafī* [or ‘*alā*’] *dīn al-salīb yakūn mawtī*”¹¹⁷ (my death will be in the religion of the cross),¹¹⁸ and then was condemned to be crucified, Abū al-Mughīth al-Ḥusayn ibn Manṣūr al-Ḥallāj. Jesus appeared as “a Buddha on a soil very little like that of India”¹¹⁹ only up to the events leading to his apprehension by “a large crowd armed

with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people” (Matthew 26:47), and guided by Judas, for he then appeared, in the guise of al-Ḥallāj during the latter’s ostensible crucifixion, on a soil very little like that of Palestine, the Baghdad of 922. It appears that al-Ḥallāj uttered *anā al-haqq*, I am the Truth/Real, more than once; each time it implied something else, had a different logic. The first time, when it is to be viewed as a *shath*, a “theopathic” utterance, while it appeared that al-Ḥallāj was the subject of enunciation, it was actually God, as one can deduce from this *hadīth qudsī*, “My servant draws near to Me through nothing I love more than that which I have made obligatory for him. My servant never ceases drawing near to Me through supererogatory works until I love him. Then, when I love him, I am his hearing through which he hears, his sight through which he sees, his hand through which he grasps, and his foot through which he walks.” The second time, while it appeared that al-Ḥallāj was saying *anā al-haqq*, it was actually someone who had said, “I am ... *the truth*.... Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.... Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work” (John 14:6 and 14:9–10), and who could say I in a radical sense, i.e., who had an I even in the presence of the I of God, in other words, whose I would not be automatically annihilated by the I of God, one of the hypostases of God. When he cried out to God, “Why have you forsaken me?” did Jesus mean, “Why have You given me an I, a full-fledged I, distinct from Yours?”? He, in the guise of al-Ḥallāj, is reported by one of the latter’s disciples to have written, “And beware of affirming divine unity (*wa’yyāka wal-tawḥīd*)!”¹²⁰ “Say, ‘Who

would have any power over God if He desired to destroy the Messiah, son of Mary ... ?’ Unto God belongs sovereignty over the heavens and the earth and whatsoever is between them” (Qur’ān 5:17); and indeed God destroyed Jesus Christ as a distinct I in answer to the imploration the latter, in the guise of al-Ḥallāj, addressed to Him in the presence of people gathered at the Maṣūṛ Mosque in Baghdad, “Between me and You there’s an ‘I am’ that’s crowding me. Ah! Remove with Your ‘I am’ my ‘I am’ from between us” (this entreaty could not rigorously be attributed to al-Ḥallāj, since in the presence of God his ostensible I was already as nothing, indeed already nothing; were al-Ḥallāj to have asked for this removal, he could be viewed as a dualist), reducing him to nothing, to one of the creatures that have no necessity of existence and therefore reverts back to nothingness only to be recurrently recreated by God in order to momentarily function as one of His infinite self-disclosures.¹²¹ We have in this imploration, uttered apparently by al-Ḥallāj, one of the hypostases of *al-ḥaqq*, Jesus Christ, “the truth,” entreating, in an *élan* of strict monotheism (*tawḥīd*) and an ardent desire for union with the Beloved, another hypostasis of *al-ḥaqq*, the Real, to annihilate his I, resorb him radically into the one God. In the chapter “*Ṭā’ Sīn al-azal wal iltibās*” of his book *al-Ṭawāsīn*, al-Ḥallāj wrote: “There were no lawful declarations except those of Satan [Iblīs] and Muḥammad” and “there had been no monotheist (*muwaḥḥid*) comparable to Satan [Iblīs] among the inhabitants of heaven.... God had said to him ‘Bow down (before Adam)’—‘Not before another (than You)!’—‘Even if My curse falls upon you?’ ... Moses met Satan on Mt. Sinai and said to him: ‘O Satan! What keeps you from bowing down?’—‘What keeps me from doing it is my preaching of a Single Adored

One; if I had bowed down, I would have become like you. For you were called to only once, “Look toward the mountain!” and you looked;¹²² while I was called to a thousand times, “Bow down!” and I did not bow down ...¹²³ “You have set aside a Commandment (of God)” — “It was (to Him) a trial and not a Commandment.”¹²⁴ Given that al-Ḥallāj does not mention Jesus, who, in the former’s guise, entreated God, “Between me and You there’s an ‘I am’ that’s crowding me. Ah! Remove with Your ‘I am’ my ‘I am’ from between us,” as the third of the strictest, exemplary monotheists, that entreaty must have occurred after al-Ḥallāj wrote “*Ṭā’ Sīn al-azal wal iltibās.*” Al-Ḥallāj, who had reportedly implored people gathered at the Maṣṣūr Mosque to crucify him, and who ended up being condemned to be crucified, was not actually crucified, at least not in Baghdad in 922. “In the great prayer the night before the execution, he murmured over and over, ‘a ruse, a ruse (*makr, makr*),’ but at last he arose, shouting, ‘truth, truth (*ḥaqq, ḥaqq*)!’¹²⁵ How fitting that on the condemned man’s way from prison to the esplanade where he was to be executed, “the crowd formed into a mob; the commissioner ... said: ‘this is not he, Ḥallāj; Ḥallāj is still in the Dār al-Wazīr [the vizir’s mansion]’¹²⁶ (from the Official Testimony of the Clerk of Court, Zanjī). When “the Mu‘tazilite Abū’l-Hāshim Balkhī came to insult him [Ḥusayn ibn Maṣṣūr al-Ḥallāj on the gibbet] ... he felt Ḥusayn himself behind him, his hand was resting on his shoulder-blade and he was reciting the verse (Qur’ān 4:156): ‘No, they (the Jews: here the Muslims) did not kill him (Christ: here Ḥallāj) and they did not crucify him; rather they were deluded (*shubbiha lahum*: by a *sosia*?).’¹²⁷ According to the account by Zanjī: “Some of them [Ḥallāj’s disciples] claimed that they had seen him the very next day (Ibn Sinān:

on the same day) where they had seen him meet his end and his punishment, mounted on a donkey, going along the Nahrawan route; and, as they were welcoming him, he said to them: ‘Can it be that you are like those people who delude themselves into thinking that I am the one they scourged and put to death?’¹²⁸ While like Jesus, “al-Ḥallāj was accused of blasphemy and of claims to *ḥulūl* (substantial union with God); and his anxiety to give an inner significance to ritual acts (‘proceed seven times round the Ka‘ba of your heart’) was denounced as a wish to abolish the acts themselves,¹²⁹ the ostensible crucifixion of al-Ḥallāj did not simply present a similarity and have an affinity with the ostensible crucifixion of Jesus; it was during al-Ḥallāj’s ostensible crucifixion that Jesus was actually crucified! Therefore, what Jesus underwent during his actual crucifixion was far harsher than what was reported in the New Testament; we have an accurate description of his crucifixion in the accounts of the ostensible crucifixion of al-Ḥallāj. “Before an enormous crowd,” he, “with a crown on his head, was beaten.”¹³⁰ Given that according to the New Testament, “*He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross*, so that we might die to sin and live for righteousness” (1 Peter 2:24, my italics), I wager that one of *ahl al-kitāb*, the People of the Book, more specifically a Christian, yelled during the crucifixion of Jesus in the guise of al-Ḥallāj in Baghdad in 922, “If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell” (Matthew 5:30), and then added, “If your left foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. Indeed if

your whole body causes you to sin, get others to burn it; for it is more profitable for you that your whole body perish, for example, by earthly fire, than for it to be cast into hell.” “Once the thousand lashes had been administered, they cut off one of his hands, then a foot; then the other hand, followed by the other foot (N.B.: he then had to be hoisted in full view, on a stake).”¹³¹ “The caliph’s warrant for his decapitation did not arrive until nightfall, and in fact his final execution was postponed until the next day. During the night there spread accounts of wonders and supernatural happenings.”¹³² The next morning “his head was cut off. (Ibn Farhūn [bib. no. 576a or b], 242: then his body, in which there was still a trace of life, was hurled to the ground from the flagellation platform). And the trunk was burned (Watwāt, *Ghurār* [bib. no. 503-a], 129: wrapped in his mantle.—N.B.: or in a mat, which was customary and in accordance with Shiblī’s account.—‘In oil’ [*ibid*].—The cost of this cremation: nine dirhams in 333, according to Miskawayh II, 80).”¹³³ The Qur’ān does not deny the crucifixion of Jesus Christ absolutely, but denies specifically his crucifixion in Palestine circa AD 30: “We made with them [the People of the Book] a solemn covenant. Then for their breaking of their covenant ... God has set a seal upon them for their disbelief ... and for their saying, ‘We slew the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the messenger of God’—though they did not slay him; nor did they crucify him, but it appeared so unto them” (Qur’ān 4:153–157; “it is important to note that here the critique is not aimed directly at the belief in Christ’s crucifixion and death, but rather at the Jews’ claim to have killed him.... The verse only directly criticizes a Jewish claim to have killed and crucified Jesus”¹³⁴). Lebanese Christians, who assert, “Christ has risen (from death),” should assert, all the more since they

live among Muslims, “Christ was crucified, truly he was crucified—though not by his historical ‘contemporaries’ in Palestine circa 30, but in Baghdad on March 26, 922” (way after the date “Saint” Paul considered to be that of Jesus’s crucifixion: “I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.... None of the rulers of this age understood it [God’s wisdom], for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory” [1 Corinthians 2:2–8]).¹³⁵ While the Jewish priests and elders and their followers did everything they could to have Jesus of Nazareth crucified and believed that they succeeded in accomplishing their goal, it was certain Muslims in Baghdad in 922 who actually crucified him while believing that they were crucifying al-Ḥallāj! While believing that they crucified Jesus circa AD 30, the Jewish priests actually crucified Nietzsche, who had already, in the nineteenth century, that is, in a future that was inaccessible to them, attacked priests in general, and the Jewish priest, the latter’s original and paradigmatic figure, in particular while being extremely critical of anti-Semites (the following words appear in a letter in Nietzsche’s handwriting [though signed “Dionysus”] addressed to Franz Overbeck and his wife and received by them on January 7, 1889: “I am just having all anti-Semites shot”).¹³⁶

Iraq is important to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, not only because these three monotheistic religions trace their origin back to Abraham, who hails from Ur.¹³⁷ It is important for Islam also because it is with the destruction of Jesus Christ—in the guise of al-Ḥallāj—as an I distinct from God in Baghdad in 922 that we have the re-establishment if not the establishment *tout court* of strict monotheism, the Jesus of Christianity becoming the Jesus of Islam, a Muslim; and because the slaughter in

680 of the Prophet's grandson al-Ḥusayn b. 'Alī alongside a substantial number of his relatives and companions took place there, at Karbalā'; and because of the substantial number of great Sufis who were born and/or thrived there, for example, al-Niffarī, the author of *Kitāb al-Mawāqif* (*The Book of Spiritual Stayings*, trans. A. J. Arberry) and *Kitāb al-Mukhāṭabāt* (*The Book of Spiritual Addresses*, trans. Arberry), whose “*nisba* refers to the town of Niffar”; etc. It should be important for Christians also because the Christ was crucified there in 922 in place of and as al-Ḥallāj. And it is important for Jews also on account of their “forced detention ... in Babylonia following the latter’s conquest of the kingdom of Judah in 598/7 and 587/6 BCE,”¹³⁸ and a Babylonian then Iraqi diaspora that persisted notwithstanding the exile’s formal end in 538 BCE (“when the Persian conqueror of Babylonia, Cyrus the Great, gave the Jews permission to return to Palestine”¹³⁹) until the mid-twentieth century and that produced, among other riches, the “*Bavli*, also called *Talmud Bavli*, or the *Babylonian Talmud*, second and more authoritative of the two Talmuds (the other Talmud being the *Yerushalmi*) produced by Rabbinic Judaism,” which was “completed about 600 CE ... [and] served as the constitution and bylaws of Rabbinic Judaism”¹⁴⁰; and for the Tower of Babel, which, labyrinthine, they, like all mortals, have not left.¹⁴¹

Destiny's Multiple Bodies

One cannot accomplish one's destiny with one body only; destiny requires the timely collaboration on solving some problem, facing some challenge, responding to some threat, etc., of two or more different kinds of bodies, at least one of which is subtle/Imaginal thus exists in a different kind of

space and time than the ones in which one's natural, dense body exists. They may collaborate on one task that concerns one of them, or, better, all of them, or on several tasks that each concerns one of them. It is then that one can say that one is destined for this problem, threat or challenge. Destiny is related to a time that precedes one's present if not one's birth, not necessarily when it is formulated as an oracle (the oracle does not by itself instill a destiny in someone; one can make it part of destiny, in the process providing it with a different interpretation and meaning), but because at least one of the bodies, whether fictional, Imaginal, etc., that are to collaborate with one's natural body exists in a time that precedes the latter's present if not its birth—even when produced by it. Thus destiny cannot be a matter solely of this physical universe; it has to involve one or more of the other branches of a multiverse, or '*ālam al-khayāl* (the Imaginal World), or fiction that does not fall apart “two days” later, or dance's realm of altered movement, body, space, time, silence and music, etc. In some cases, the different body with whom one is to collaborate already exists, in the form of the subtle body in the Imaginal World, or the spectral body in the undead realm, or a more or less similar version of one in another branch of the multiverse; in other cases, one has to produce it, for instance, as a character in a fiction that does not fall apart “two days” later, or, if one is a dancer, as one's subtle version in dance's realm of altered movement, body, space, time, silence and music. In those cases where the one or more bodies one is to collaborate with on a destiny do not already exist but have to be produced or projected, the appearance of the double symptomatically indicates either that one did not even try to produce the other body or bodies because one preposterously hoped to have

it or them readymade, and thus that one failed one's destiny, or that one tried but failed to produce the other body or bodies, possibly because the double, having insinuated himself or herself during the one or more lapses of consciousness if not of being one is likely to undergo in the process of producing or projecting the other (sort of) body or bodies, interfered disruptively in the process. When the double appears, one should not initially counterintuitively mistake him or her for the needed extra body that is to collaborate with one on a destiny (the fantasy of the Yakov Petrovich Golyadkin of Dostoevsky's *The Double*, "We were made for each other. We're like twin brothers. We'll fox 'em, my dear fellow. We'll fox 'em together. We'll start an intrigue of our own to spite them"¹⁴²), and then, having realized that if he collaborates at all, he does so not with one on a destiny but with others in a sinister conspiracy against one whose goal is precisely to undo the possibility that what happens to one be a destiny, conclude that the presence of an extra body is itself the problem; one should rather feel all the more the urgency of producing and projecting one or more additional bodies to collaborate with one in one's fight with "one's" double, and, if the latter was compelled by this collaboration to vanish, on a destiny.

Suicide, an ostensibly solitary act, actually entails at least two bodies. In order for suicide to be one's destiny, one has to produce at least one other body that exists in a different kind of space and time and that collaborates with one's physical, dense body on the act of suicide. When a body by itself tries to commit suicide, it paradoxically experiences the suicide as a murder by another (body), the double, who intervenes almost always at the exact moment when one wavers in one's intent to commit suicide or no longer wishes to do it.

Destiny involves a special kind of initiation since the one prior to the initiation is not replaced by the one who results from the initiation, and who usually assumes a different name, but "coexists" and collaborates with him or her.

Deleuze wrote regarding Spinoza's "We do not know what the body can do": "This declaration of ignorance is a provocation. We speak of consciousness and its decrees, of the will and its effects, of the thousand ways of moving the body, of dominating the body and the passions—but *we do not even know what a body can do.*"¹⁴³ The body of a dancer can project another, subtle body in dance's realm of altered movement, space, time, silence and music.¹⁴⁴ Notwithstanding that in many musical films the ballet sequence is termed a "dream ballet," a dance is not a dream—and yet there is at least one similarity between the two: as soon as two people lying in the same bed start dreaming they are, as dreamers, no longer part of the same world, but are each in a separate unworldly realm, and as soon as two dancers begin a pas de deux a subtle version of each is projected in a separate branch of dance's realm of altered movement, body, space, time, silence and music, so that their maintenance of their pas de deux should feel as marvelous as the dying mother's continuation of her son's narration of his dream in the opening scene of Sokurov's *Mother and Son* (Son: "Last night I had a dream.... For a long time, I was walking along a path and someone was following me.... Finally I turned around and asked him why he was following me. Guess what he said." Mother: "He asked you to remind him of several lines." Son: "What lines?" Mother: "'I am seized by a suffocating nightmare. I awake terror-stricken, covered in sweat. God, dwelling in my soul, affects only my consciousness. He never extends to the

outer world ... [the son utters the continuation of the sentence concurrently with her] to the course of things ...' I saw and heard all of this." Son: "In your dream?" Mother: "Yes, in my dream"). Were two dancers to prove that they are a couple by persisting in dancing seamlessly together while each being in a separate branch of the realm of altered movement, body, space, time, silence and music into which dance has projected subtle versions of them, they are fully justified to conclude that they are destined for each other and as a result may, as two physical bodies inhabiting the same world, become through a Christian marriage, and while not dancing, one flesh ("Haven't you read, 'A man will ... be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh' [Genesis 2:24]? So they are no longer two, but one flesh"¹⁴⁵ [Matthew 19:4–6])!

Does the circumstance that events cannot be changed in the block universe of relativity make them all a destiny? No. What would make some of these events a destiny is that they be the result of the collaboration of several versions of the protagonist through the time travel of one of these versions to a largely similar branch of the multiverse. Does the circumstance that, according to (the Many-Worlds Interpretation of) Quantum Mechanics, "everything that can happen does happen" (the subtitle of Brian Cox and Jeff Forshaw's *The Quantum Universe*, 2012) in the various branches of the multiverse undermine destiny? No. "Sending particles through a double-slit apparatus one at a time results in single particles appearing on the screen, as expected. Remarkably, however, an interference pattern emerges when these particles are allowed to build up one by one."¹⁴⁶ In the double-slit experiment, the individual photons are destined to compose an interference pattern because they

collaborate with photons from other branches of the multiverse; this is all the more clear when the photons are sent one at a time toward the double slits ("Single-particle interference experiments ... show us that the multiverse exists and that it contains many counterparts of each particle in the tangible universe.... Every subatomic particle ... is interfered with only by those counterparts").¹⁴⁷ Moreover, were one to use a quantum computer to get the result of a calculation, one would be collaborating with largely similar versions of one who are also using quantum computers to get the result, thus one would be destined to get it ("A *quantum computer* is a machine that uses uniquely quantum-mechanical effects, especially interference, to perform wholly new types of computation that would be impossible, even in principle, on any Turing machine and hence on any classical computer.... *Quantum* computation ... will be the first technology that allows useful tasks to be performed in collaboration between parallel universes. A quantum computer would be capable of distributing components of a complex task among vast numbers of parallel universes, and then of sharing the results"¹⁴⁸).

To die before dying is to become aware of what one is already: dead even while still physically alive, a mortal. Unless one dies before dying, one does not heed one's dead version in the undeath realm and therefore fails to collaborate with him or her and thus misses one manner of having a destiny. Were one to have a destiny as a mortal it would not be because one would be bound to die physically—indeed physical demise will most probably sooner or later be done away with—but because of the untimely collaboration between the mortal's two bodies: the physical, alive one and the undead, subtle one.

One way of viewing Sophocles's *Oedipus the King* is as a play about someone who fails to have a destiny—notwithstanding that he is the protagonist in an oracle, indeed in more than one oracle. Having been told that he is the adopted son of Polybus, king of Corinth, Oedipus should have deduced that he must be the son of two fathers and two mothers: ones who are only symbolic, Polybus and his wife Merope, and ones who are biological and who are unknown to him. He should then have intuited that he is to somehow produce at least one additional body, one that belongs to another realm. Creon: “Laius, king, was lord of our land.... He was slain; and the god now bids us plainly to wreak vengeance on his murderers ...” Oedipus: “... Was there no comrade of his journey who saw the deed, from whom tidings might have been gained, and used?” Creon: “All perished, save one who fled in fear, and could tell for certain but one thing of all that he saw.” Oedipus: “And what was that? ...” Creon: “He said that robbers met and fell on them, not in one man’s might, but with full many hands.”¹⁴⁹ Oedipus reasons that the old man he slayed where three roads meet could not have been Laius since he confronted him and his companions alone. To Jocasta, he says, “You said that he spoke of highway *robbers* / who killed Laius. Now if he uses the same number, it was not I who killed him. One man cannot be the same as many.” And yet it will turn out that the old man whom Oedipus killed was Laius. How could it be that Laius was killed by one and many? The discrepancy in the number is symptomatic: it implies that several *should* have been at the crossroads where King Laius met Oedipus, and then at the confrontation with the Greek Sphinx, and that, once the required interpretation was accomplished, they would have been revealed to all be one, Oedipus. In a variant of

Sophocles’s play that begins prior to Oedipus’s encounter with King Laius where three roads meet,¹⁵⁰ and in which Oedipus would have already produced another body in another realm that collaborated with him during the encounter, King Laius would not have fought him and ended up being murdered by him, but would instead have dispatched him (and his collaborator) to fight the Sphinx. Given that the Greek Sphinx is a tripartite creature, part lion, part woman, and part eagle, then on the way to his confrontation with it Oedipus should have produced and projected a third body in another realm. “In his work on the ‘crushing demons’ with which he identified the Sphinx, the mythologist Ludwig Laistner pointed out ... that these mythical or legendary demons impose three types of trials on their victims: caresses, blows, and questions. As for the Sphinx, it is striking that she is known not only as a monster who proposes a difficult or insoluble riddle, but also as a brutal killer (severer of heads, eater of raw flesh), and furthermore, as Marie Delcourt has astutely noted, as a dangerous sexual seductress who threatens to carry young men off in a lethal erotic abduction.... It is eminently clear that they [the trials] correspond quite precisely to the three functional domains (the sacred, war, agriculture and sexual fertility) that Georges Dumézil repeatedly designated in his pathbreaking studies that seek to demonstrate the recurrence and the fundamental structuring role of these domains in the Indo-European cultural arena.... Thus, in Dumézil’s perspective, the operation of acquiring these virtues is ritualized by a triple initiatory trial.”¹⁵¹ The Greek Sphinx’s “What is that which has one voice and yet becomes four-footed and two-footed and three-footed?” is a riddle regarding what one ought to have accomplished by the time one confronts it: since

Oedipus walked then on two feet, he had to have produced a body that walked on four feet and one that walked on three feet, each of which belonged to a different realm and would collaborate with him on vanquishing the tripartite Sphinx properly and fully, including through enlarging his intuition with what they experienced and learnt. Had Oedipus produced the extra bodies needed in the struggle against the Sphinx, it would have been his destiny to encounter it. An Oedipus who would have projected two Imaginal avatars that correspond to and thus could address the sexual and warlike aspects of the Sphinx would not have killed his father and went on to marry and have sexual intercourse with his mother. Had he thoroughly overcome the (tripartite) Sphinx and ended up becoming a king, then we could have said in reference to King Oedipus that he has not two bodies (as in the cases explored by Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz in *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* [1957]¹⁵²) but three bodies. In this case, the king would have more than one body because he needed more than one body in order to become a king in the first place. The riddle has to do with interpretation in a fundamental manner: not only does it have to be interpreted, but its solution too requires to be interpreted. For example, in Sophocles's *Oedipus the King*, one interpretation of Oedipus's pointing to himself in response to the Sphinx's riddle is that the solution is "Man," for man crawls as a baby, walks on two feet as an adult, and uses a stick as an old man when walking—but then what to make of the specification that the entity in question "has one voice"? A second interpretation is that the riddle's solution is not man in general, but Oedipus, something that becomes clear only later, when Oedipus blinds himself and consequently has, even before old age, to resort to a

stick—yet again what to make of the specification that the entity in question "has one voice"? A third interpretation, for the aforementioned variant of Sophocles's play, is that the two extra bodies that joined Oedipus in his confrontation with the Sphinx are his avatars and could have either straightaway the same voice as him or two voices that while ostensibly different from each other and from his voice are revealed by interpretation to be the refracted versions in other realms of Oedipus's voice—a voice that might one day, like the analyst during a session of psychoanalysis, free associate, in this case about two strange figures existing in different regimes of time and space, one of which walks on four legs and looks like a Sphinx and the other walks on three legs. In Sophocles's play, Oedipus arrives in front of the Greek Sphinx alone (how foolish: years after his fight with the Sphinx, which led to his becoming a king, Oedipus will tell Creon, "Now is not thine attempt foolish,—to seek, without followers or friends, a throne ... ?"¹⁵³), with one body, hence misunderstands its riddle, reducing the three bodies mentioned in it to the chronological stages of a man's life and natural body, and overlooking that a human has more than one voice in the natural world since the voice of a crawling baby is not the same as that of an old man walking with the help of a stick (that a human does not have the same voice as a child and as an old man dissuaded the others who confronted the Sphinx from possibly answering, "Man")—having provided an answer that was fitting only partially, he had only an incomplete victory on the Sphinx, with the consequence that notwithstanding its death, he later functioned vis-à-vis Thebes as a double of the Sphinx, bringing the plague on the city. That we are told in Sophocles's play that the Sphinx kills itself implies that in his

contest with it one of the two avatars of Oedipus in other realms was supposed to be a Sphinx, or at least have the figure of the Sphinx as it appears in classical Greek art (I would advance that the iconic representations of the Greek Sphinx actually represent the avatar Oedipus should have produced in some realm rather than the Sphinx Oedipus encounters, who fits the riddle [it walks actually on four legs as a lion, virtually on two legs as a woman, and on three — — as—another riddle?] and thus makes solving it [as an indication of what one needs to have accomplished by the time one meets its utterer] all the more difficult). Had Oedipus confronted the Sphinx while being assisted by two avatars he would have produced and projected in other realms, he would have been far more likely to interpret the riddle as referring to his natural body and the two extra bodies he needed to produce and did produce to vanquish the Greek Sphinx. An Oedipus destined to confront the Sphinx would have been anomalous not, as in Sophocles's play, for disregarding the tripartite nature of the Greek Sphinx and thus foolishly confronting it alone, but for getting help and assistance from avatars he has produced and projected in other realms rather than, as in the normal Greek myth of royal investiture, from the traditional ready-made helpers, whether gods (Athena, Hermes ...) or a seer (for example, Tiresias).¹⁵⁴

If Only Oedipus Did Not Give Ground on His Desire!

What Jocasta tells Oedipus toward the end of Sophocles's *Oedipus the King*, "In dreams ... many a man has lain with his own mother," applied to him while growing up in Corinth: in dreams he lay with the woman he believed to be his mother, Merope,

whether she appeared in them in her figure in waking life, or in a different figure but with her recognizable voice, or with a different figure and voice but with her characteristic manner of laughing or picking up an object, etc.¹⁵⁵ As a result of his sexual desire for Merope, he felt, more or less unconsciously, that his father, King Polybus of Corinth, was a rival. One day, following one particularly vivid sexual dream in which Merope figured prominently, he, feeling distraught and guilty, got drunk at a dinner, and while in that state with other drunken people one of them said to him that he was actually a bastard. While part of him felt indignant and insulted, another part wished it to be the case! When he told his parents about this incident, they were dismayed to hear such a claim and denied it. Not fully convinced by their response, he soon went to check with the oracle of Delphi. There he was not given a clear answer as to whether they were his biological parents; instead, "[Phoebus] foretold other and desperate horrors to befall me, that I was fated to lie with my mother [Oedipus felt at that point that the god Apollo could read his fantasies, desires, and thoughts] and show to daylight an accursed breed / which men would not endure, and I was doomed / to be murderer of the father that begot me." Given that he had actually dreamt and fantasized about his mother, Merope, in a sexual manner, and, consequently, felt rivalry toward his father, Polybus, he gave credence to the oracle and felt trepidation that such a prediction would be actualized by him since it gave voice to his not-so-unconscious desires, and so he left the city of Corinth in a hurry. Even though according to the oracle he was bound to sleep with his mother, there was, unbeknownst to him, a choice for Oedipus as to which one of his two mothers, the symbolic one,

Merope, or the biological one, Jocasta, he would have sexual intercourse with. On his way into exile, he reached a crossroads where he was attacked by a band of men who attempted to subdue him apparently over a right of way conflict, but actually so that their leader, an elderly man, could rape him (unbeknownst to Oedipus, the elderly man, Laius, king of Thebes, had years earlier abducted and raped Chrysippus, also the son of a king, Pelops—would Laius have given ground on his desire to have sexual intercourse with the young man at the crossroads had he known he was his own son, Oedipus?). Oedipus successfully defended himself against the men attempting to subdue him, killed all of them but one, who managed to escape, and then killed their leader. Shortly after, he encountered the Sphinx and vanquished it. In a gesture of gratitude for freeing them from the Sphinx, who had brought the plague on their city, the Thebans offered him their queen dowager, Jocasta, as a wife. Oedipus yielded to the Thebans' gesture of gratitude and married Jocasta, notwithstanding that he did not desire her sexually, so as to make it far more difficult for him to head back to Corinth and kill King Polybus in order to marry and have sexual intercourse with Merope, the woman he believed to be his mother and whom he desired intensely (indeed, when years later he was told that the man he believed to be his father, King Polybus of Corinth, died of old age, which seemed to disprove the oracle, he continued to be anxious about the actualization of the oracle's second part, namely that he would end up having sexual intercourse with [the woman he believed to be] his mother, this implying that he still at some level felt an intense sexual attraction to Merope); and, unconsciously, as a way to take revenge on her for acquiescing to his biological father's scheme

to have him killed while still an infant.¹⁵⁶ When Jocasta figured in his dreams, she had the voice of Merope or the mannerisms of Merope or the smile of Merope or the characteristic gesture of bidding farewell of Merope, etc. Whenever he had sexual intercourse with Jocasta, including the four instances that led to her giving birth to a child, Oedipus fantasized that he was having sexual intercourse with Merope in order to be aroused and have an orgasm. When, through the investigation, it becomes clear and public knowledge that Oedipus, the father of four of her children, is her son, Jocasta rushes to her quarters and hangs herself. Oedipus follows her at a delay, finds her dead from suffocation, cuts the dangling noose, lays her body on the floor, and tears off the gold-chased brooches fastening her robe ostensibly to blind himself with them—what he sees then renders how he felt libidinally about Jocasta's body even while she was still alive: whenever he unfastened her dress in preparation to have sexual intercourse with her, he felt repulsion towards her body, which struck him as cold, even sort of dead, and it was only by fantasizing about Merope that he could engage in sexual intercourse with Jocasta. How come Oedipus was so relentless in pursuing his investigation as to the identity of the killer or killers of King Laius even after Jocasta repeatedly implored him to desist and despite his suspicion that it may reveal that he is the slayer of Laius and lead to his exile from Thebes, the punishment he himself declared for the culprit? He was guided by an obscure hope that he would be proven the murderer of Laius and consequently would be forced into exile, which would make it far easier for him, now that he learnt that Polybus had died of old age, to marry the woman he continued to desire perversely, Merope, and repeatedly engage

in sexual intercourse with her. But then Oedipus proves yet again anxious about giving himself up to *jouissance*, giving ground once more on his desire! Oedipus feels guilt not for killing Laius and marrying and having sexual intercourse with Jocasta, but because he did not consummate his sexual desire for Merope, a woman he believed to be his mother, for “in the last analysis, what a subject really feels guilty about when he manifests guilt at bottom always has to do with ... the extent to which he has given ground relative to his desire.”¹⁵⁷ If it is true that the vast majority of people identify with Oedipus (on October 15, 1897, Freud wrote to Fliess that “we can understand the riveting power of *Oedipus Rex*.... The Greek legend seizes on a compulsion which everyone recognizes because he feels its existence within himself”¹⁵⁸), it would not be because he slept with his biological mother and killed his biological father, but because, like them, he *did not* sleep with the woman who raised him and whom he desired, including sexually, and *did not* kill the man who raised him but toward whom he felt rivalry apropos of their common object of desire, the same woman. How cruel that Oedipus was made to suffer horribly for having had repeated sexual intercourse with his biological mother, Jocasta, for it induced *no jouissance* in him—Oedipus would have experienced *jouissance* had he slept with the woman he believed to be his mother and desired intensely, Merope. If there is a lesson to be drawn from *Oedipus the King*, it seems to be that one should not give ground relative to one’s desire: given the exorbitant price he paid, Oedipus might as well have slept with the woman who raised him and whom he believed to be his mother and desired, including sexually, and, so he would not function as an obstacle to his *jouissance*, killed the man he believed to be his father—indeed it may very

well be that he paid this exorbitant price for giving ground on his desire.

In Other Words

Gilbert Hage’s book of photographs of buildings damaged during Israel’s war on Lebanon in 2006 is titled *Toufican Ruins?* It was published in 2010 by Underexposed Books, whose publishers are Hage and me. Could he have asked me whether the buildings shown in his photographs were Toufican ruins, spaces-times to which my concept of ruin applies? I presume that he intuited that I did not know the answer in 2006 and continued not to know it in 2010. Indeed, in a book that I coedited with Matthew Gumpert and that was published in October 2010, *Thinking: The Ruin*, Hage’s contribution, “Toufican Ruins?” is followed by a photographic contribution by me also titled “Toufican Ruins?”—*with the question mark*. It is symptomatic of the lack of rigor of journalistic “reviews” in Lebanon that in the two “reviews” I’ve come across—one by Pierre Abi Saab in the *al-Akhbar* newspaper of July 23, 2010—¹⁵⁹ the question mark in the title of both Hage’s book and his exhibition is disregarded and thus omitted whenever the title is mentioned. How irresponsible! By committing this glaring omission these journalists confirm that they have very little to do with thinkers: however wary of believing in certain exceptional situations in the “omnipotence of thoughts” (Freud), a thinker would not carelessly write *Toufican Ruins* for *Toufican Ruins?*, not least out of apprehension that the removal of the question mark would affect these buildings and therefore those in them, contributing to or confirming the latter’s loss in a labyrinthine space and time. In his “Buddha Nature” (*Busshō*), in the *Treasury of the Eye of the*

True Dharma, Zen master Dōgen interprets the quotation “All sentient beings without exception *have* Buddha-nature” from the Nirvana Sutra as saying: “All sentient beings, that is, all existence, *is* Buddha-nature” (trans. Carl Bielefeldt; my italics)! Dōgen could very well have written: “‘All sentient beings without exception have Buddha-nature,’ in other words, ‘All sentient beings, that is, all existence, is Buddha-nature.’” Were a thoughtless journalist or curator (the vast majority of the lot of them) to read Dōgen’s “Buddha Nature” and to quote him as saying, “All sentient beings without exception have Buddha-nature,” it would be an inattentive, sloppy misreading and a misquote; yet I can very well imagine some future thinker or poet being led to rigorously read Dōgen as saying, “All sentient beings without exception have Buddha-nature.” In the texts of an aphoristic thinker or of a poet “in other words” does not indicate a paraphrase (for the sake of an example: the over-turn is a condition of impossibility of the call, in other words, the over-turn is a condition of possibility of the call)—how difficult and therefore rare it is for a translator to say in other words, those of another language, a text by an aphoristic thinker or a poet *without paraphrasing* it¹⁶⁰ (that is partly why I, an aphoristic thinker, thus averse to paraphrase, am reluctant to grant my permission for the translation of my texts)¹⁶¹!

Verbatim

At the beginning of David Lynch’s *Lost Highway*, Fred Madison hears through the intercom a voice, ostensibly a man’s, say: “Dick Laurent is dead.” Later, while leaving a party, he inquires of the host as he points across the room toward a mysterious man he just met: “Andy, who is that guy?” “I don’t know his

name. He’s a friend of Dick Laurent, I think.” “Dick Laurent?” “Yes, I believe so.” “But Dick Laurent is dead, isn’t he?”—he does not repeat verbatim and in an identical mode the sentence he heard through the intercom, but instead changes it into a question with the addition of “isn’t he?” and expands its beginning with the word “but.” He misunderstands what he heard through the intercom as imparting to him more or less credible information about someone called Dick Laurent, when actually he was being told a sentence he has to repeat in an identical manner, which he will do near the end of the film, when, pursued by the police, he drives to the same house, buzzes, and says: “Dick Laurent is dead.” It is by repeating this phrase that he is possibly no longer subject to the otherwise exhaustive variation of name (Pete Dayton ...), physical characteristics, age, job, conduct, etc., in a radical closure, thus ostensibly coincides with himself. While in the case of Raymond Roussel’s *Impressions d’Afrique* (*Impressions of Africa*), it is a matter of getting narratively from one sentence, *les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux billard* (the white letters on the cushions of the old billiard table), to another sentence with a meaning that’s worlds apart though it is composed, but for one different letter, of homonyms of the first sentence, *les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux pillard* (the white man’s letters on the hordes of the old plunderer), in two of David Lynch’s films, *Lost Highway* (1997) and *Mulholland Drive* (2001), it is a matter of having the same person to whom a sentence was conveyed repeat it verbatim while having the same name and body and, if it would be a performative were it to be uttered felicitously, in the right conditions, so as to suspend if not prevent, at least in his or her case, exhaustive variation (if in a future David Lynch film relating to radical closure a

homonymous sentence with one or more variant meanings is imparted to a character to repeat, then he or she has to do so while it still has the meaning it had when it was first imparted to him). In *Mulholland Drive*, Adam Keshner (played by Justin Theroux), a film director who is in the process of recasting his lead actress, is asked by the film studio to attend a meeting. In addition to Ray Hott, President of Production, the meeting is attended by the senior vice-president, the talent manager, and the Castigliane brothers, who seem to be mobster financiers. One of the Castigliane brothers sets a photo of a blonde girl in front of Ray. Adam: "What's the photo for?" Ray: "A recommendation ... a recommendation to you, Adam." Vincenzo Castigliane corrects him: "Not a recommendation." Luigi Castigliane asserts: "This is the girl." Adam, who has other actresses in mind for the lead role, exclaims: "What girl? For what? What is this, Ray? ... There's no way that girl is in my movie!" Luigi Castigliane reiterates: "This is the girl." As the Castigliane brothers begin to leave, Adam yells: "Hey! That girl is not in my film!" Vincenzo Castigliane affirms: "It is no longer your film." A clearly flustered Adam then insists while addressing Ray: "Every foot of film I've shot is in a vault at the lab that only I can access." But what would it matter for him to be the only one to have access to the film if he then enters the regime of exhaustive variation in a radical closure, in which he would be the director of another film, for example, one titled *Dedication*, then an actor, for example in films titled *Inland Empire* and *On High in Blue Tomorrows*, then a waiter getting customers an espresso, then a detective, then a chief of police, then an organized crime boss, then a lawyer, then a DJ, and be named Justin Theroux, Mark Brooks, Daniel Beckett, Clarence the Cowboy, Flav Santana,

James, David Bontempo, Timothy Bryce, Seamus O'Grady, Coop, Jack, Carlo Honklin, Bradley Lake, Guy Cooley, Jeremy Reardon, Larry Zito, Devon Berk, Billy Side, Nick Gable, Jesus H. Christ, Leezar, Seth, Gary Andrews, Pete, Frankie Stone, Frankie D'Amico, Raymond Brown, Jared, Vaughn Wysel, Nick Pierce, Simon Walker, Joe, John Hancock, Justin Anderson, Jan Jurgen, Kevin Garvey, etc.—hell is exhaustive if not inexhaustible permutation, thus (oneself as other, indeed all) the others.¹⁶² The film director at first considers that he is being enjoined to simply cast the girl as the lead actress. What his subsequent meeting with the Cowboy makes him realize is that he is being ordered to cast the designated girl by repeating the line as a performative: "You were recasting the lead actress anyway.... Audition many girls for the part. When you see the girl that was shown to you earlier today, you will say, 'This is the girl'" (Luigi Castigliane must have been told by the Cowboy: "During an arranged production meeting with film director Adam Keshner, you will say, 'This is the girl'"). His crucial function is not so much to make the film nor to effectuate by any means what the words indicate, for example, by pointing to her as his choice or by saying, "I have made my choice; she's the one," but rather to cast the specified actress by saying, as the film's director, in the right context, during a casting session, "This is the girl," so that this utterance would function as a performative. To cast her otherwise would soon enough result in her (and his) undergoing all the variations in the radical closure. The sentence has to be said by him before the permutations, which had already affected his relationship with his wife (who is now unfaithful to him) and his line of credit (the hotel manager tells him: "There seems to be some problem concerning your credit card.... Your line of credit

has been cancelled”), lead to his no longer being the director, but an actor or someone whose profession is altogether unrelated to filmmaking, thus someone whose uttering the words “This is the girl” would no longer function as a performative through which the specific actress whose photograph he was shown would be cast; and before they result in the woman who was shown in the photograph no longer being an actress; and before they affect the photograph itself so that another body appears in it. Unlike so many other matters that Adam Keshner may have assumed to pertain to him “most essentially,” to determine his identity, he thus ends up intuiting if not realizing that were he not to utter the words “This is the girl” in the proper circumstances, a casting session, and in his role of film director, that is, performatively, he would have no specific identity, no distinctive characteristics (or should one say, character tics?), no singular name, since he would then go through all the variations of the name within the radical closure, be, one at a time, every name within the radical closure. And so, following a screen test of the girl, he, as the film director Adam Keshner, says to the studio manager, “This is the girl,” in a loud enough voice to be overheard by the president of production, and as a result is immune to the (subsequent) permutations if not exits the radical closure¹⁶³ (it was a mistake on Lynch’s part to cast Justin Theroux as an actor in his subsequent radical-closure film *Inland Empire*, 2006; in a variant of *Mulholland Drive* [in another branch of the multi-universe] in which director Adam Keshner does not cast the designated actress performatively by saying, “This is the girl,” the other roles the actor Justin Theroux had already played in previous films as well as the ones he has gone on to play in later films, including that of an actor named Devon Berk in

Inland Empire, would function as some of the permutations he underwent as a result of his failure). I assume that one of the women was also instructed by the Cowboy to say the words, “This is the girl,” in relation to the same referent but while addressing her words to a hit man, but did not do it in time, before the variations affected the photograph so that it showed another actress; as a result she was subject to the exhaustive permutations, in names (Diane Selwyn, Betty Elms, etc.), etc. Shouldn’t Lynch have chosen a sentence that does not include a shifter, “this,” for example, “Camilla Rhodes is the girl,” an ostensibly far more specific sentence? No, first because Lynch’s aesthetic requires that he receive an idea or image or sentence and that he not change it, and it seems that he received the sentence “This is the girl”; and second because the sentence “Camilla Rhodes is the girl” would not pin down and determine who the girl is, since, given the exhaustive permutations that take place in a radical closure, all the girls in such a closure, whether they are waitresses or singers or casting assistants, etc., and have other bodies and names, for example, Rita (played by Laura Harring), or Betty Elms (played by Naomi Watts), or Diane Selwyn (also played by Naomi Watts), etc., would at some point or another be actresses and have Camilla Rhodes for a name. Indeed in a radical closure everything that has not been willed to recur eternally, and thus is subject to exhaustive variation, functions as a shifter, including names, for example, Camilla Rhodes (who is embodied by two actresses in the film, Laura Harring and Melissa George). Paradoxically, in the regime of exhaustive variation in a radical closure, including of the actress’s name, “This is the girl,” which includes a shifter, “this,” designates her no worse if not better than her name!

David Lynch: “An idea comes complete and you just have to stay true to those ideas all the way through the process of making the film”¹⁶⁴—notwithstanding this process’s vicissitudes (an actor who gets gravely sick or dies during the shooting of the film,¹⁶⁵ or an actress who gets pregnant just before filming is to begin or during it,¹⁶⁶ or a camera that jams during the filming of a long sequence shot of the destruction, through fire or explosion, of a set that cost a lot to build,¹⁶⁷ etc.). Hence Lynch’s nonchalance when it comes to exposing his audience to *jouissance*-overflowing imagery and sounds as long as he has managed to avoid a variation of the images or words (in the form of paraphrase ...) he saw or heard in a meditation or a dream^{168,169} I assume that “This is the girl” is a sentence David Lynch received (during one of his [transcendental] meditation soundings?) and felt he had to include, unaltered, in a TV series or film; “*Mulholland Dr.* ... is a retooling of a script originally shot as a 94-minute pilot for a TV series (co-written with TV screenwriter Joyce Eliason) for the channel ABC, which ... chose not even to air the pilot.... [In the Ryan Board Office scene] Luigi’s last line, ‘That is the girl’ (Pilot), was overdubbed to ‘This is the girl’ (Feature).”¹⁷⁰ While not an aphorism, “This is the girl” is, like it, not paraphrasable, therefore not common since it cannot be said in other words¹⁷¹—even in the guise of translation. Whenever subtitling Lynch’s *Mulholland Drive*, “This is the girl” should be left in English while placing in parenthesis its translation, i.e., its paraphrase in other words in another language; for example, the corresponding French subtitle should be, “*This is the girl* ([en d’autres termes:] ‘C’est elle’).”¹⁷² Lynch would have insisted that such a received sentence should under no circumstances be altered during the production process but also within *Mulholland*

Drive’s diegesis, and, since the latter is a radical closure and thus the site of pervasive permutations, he would have intuitively provided the condition for its maintenance unchanged, a character who willed its eternal recurrence. This sentence could not have been willed within the radical closure since the exhaustive permutation there provides hardly any possibility of achieving the will, because no one experiences even once, let alone countless, general repetition given that when the same phrase, posture, movement, etc., gets repeated it is each time associated with other names, bodies, etc.; rather, it must have been willed to recur eternally during a process of undergoing countless recurrence that took place outside the radical closure or prior to its establishment. It irrupts within the radical closure or is relayed to one or more of those stuck there by someone who does not appear to fully fit in the radical closure, thus in a Gnostic manner. Whether one came across this willed sentence or was informed about it by some Gnostic messenger, one’s chance is to intuit (in the first case) or admit (in the latter case) its specialness and latch on to it amidst the permutations, repeat it verbatim in the same manner one heard it uttered, and, if its utterance is de jure a performative, in the proper context, for then one may be spared the permutations if not be able to leave the radical closure altogether. Here are three examples of such a sentence: “Dick Laurent is dead” in Lynch’s *Lost Highway*; “This is the girl” in Lynch’s *Mulholland Drive*; and “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy” in Kubrick’s *The Shining*. If the latter, a proverb, is to be maintained by Jack Torrance, it must be that, in the context of the film, it happens to also be a willed phrase that does not belong to the radical closure of the Overlook Hotel. Unfortunately, Jack Torrance

repeatedly fails to write it without any variation, whether in the form of alterations in capitalization, the “no” becoming “NO,” etc.; combinations of a misspelling and a change in capitalization, “Jack a” turning into “JACa,” etc.; misspellings, “play” turning into “pplay,” “dull” into “dyll,” etc.; or changes in formatting, the sentence appearing at times to be part of a dialogue in a script (or of a quote in an academic essay), in the middle of the page, etc. Having failed to avoid the variation of the sentence, he himself becomes subject to the permutations: he is no longer a man in his thirties who arrived at the Overlook Hotel sometime in the 1970s but someone who was long before the caretaker of the hotel and, as shown by a photograph on one of the hotel’s walls, attended the July 4th ball there in 1921, etc. In *Mulholland Drive*, who, while outside the radical closure or before it got established, willed eternally that the sentence “This is the girl” be uttered as a performative to cast a specified actress, precluding it from undergoing the permutations in the radical closure? Is it the Cowboy (played by Monty Montgomery)? In *Lost Highway*, who, while outside the radical closure or before it got established, willed the sentence “Dick Laurent is dead,” that is, willed it to recur eternally? Is it the Mystery Man (played by Robert Blake)?¹⁷³ Optimally, the actor who played such a character should thenceforth play no other roles, since while in the case of relative-closure films appearing as another character in another film would most likely have a non-diegetic status, doing so in radical-closure films can function as an at-a-distance permutation, especially if the other film or films were made by the same filmmaker. I could very well imagine David Lynch saying to actors Robert Blake and Monty Montgomery what Robert Bresson told his *model* (rather than actor)

Humbert Balsan, who was Gauvin in *Lancelot of the Lake* (1974), on finishing the post-production, more specifically the post-synchronization: “Above all, don’t ever again work in cinema.”¹⁷⁴ Judging from the Internet Movie Database (<http://www.imdb.com>), the Mystery Man in David Lynch’s *Lost Highway* (1997) was the last role Robert Blake played (he has 164 credits as an actor), and the Cowboy was the only acting role of Monty Montgomery, aka Lafayette Montgomery (he played the same role in the 1999 TV pilot version of the film).

Labyrinth

While *Encyclopædia Britannica* does not note any difference between labyrinth and maze, “*Labyrinth*, also called *maze*, system of intricate passageways and blind alleys. ‘Labyrinth’ was the name given by the ancient Greeks and Romans to buildings, entirely or partly subterranean, containing a number of chambers and passages that rendered egress difficult. Later, especially from the European Renaissance onward, the labyrinth or maze occurred in formal gardens, consisting of intricate paths separated by high hedges.... In gardening, a labyrinth or maze means an intricate network of pathways enclosed by hedges of which it is difficult to find the centre or exit,”¹⁷⁵ according to *Wikipedia*, “In English, the term *labyrinth* is generally synonymous with *maze*. As a result of the long history of unicursal representation of the mythological Labyrinth, however, many contemporary scholars and enthusiasts observe a distinction between the two. In this specialized usage *maze* refers to a complex branching multicursal puzzle with choices of path and direction, while a unicursal *labyrinth* has only a single path to the center. A labyrinth in

this sense has an unambiguous route to the center and back and is not difficult to navigate.”¹⁷⁶ While, unlike *Encyclopædia Britannica*, I differentiate between a maze and a labyrinth, the distinction between the two is different in my books from the one in *Wikipedia*: I reserve “maze” for worldly configurations and “labyrinth” for unworldly unnatural spaces and times—for me, both of the aforementioned structures in *Wikipedia*’s “Labyrinth” entry are mazes. If we are just living beings, one type of animal, then we would be exclusively in the natural world, and in the natural world while there can be and are mazes, there isn’t, indeed cannot be a labyrinth (in years to come, it is likely that researchers would be able to assert, based on human neuroimaging,¹⁷⁷ that a certain mortal is experiencing being lost in a labyrinth, but that does not mean that the labyrinth itself is then part of nature and within the purview of science). It is not by crossing some natural threshold, for example, a river, or some man-made threshold, for example, a gate, that you will reach a labyrinth. You are not going to reach the labyrinth by airplane or train or car—except if the airplane or train or car crashes and you die.

With most spaces, we can rather easily detect where the threshold is. Where is the threshold of a mundane lecture room? A knock indicates where it is: at the door. Where is the threshold of a commercial maze? One reaches it after one pays at the cashier; as long as one has not paid yet, one can rest assured that one is not yet in the maze. This is not the case with the labyrinth. Where is the threshold of the labyrinthine realm of death or madness? That is, where is the last point prior to which one can still turn and go back (at the threshold of the labyrinth one cannot turn and go back since one undergoes there a lapse of consciousness if not of being and

“finds” “oneself” [dissociated] to the other side)? Apprehensive that one would otherwise inadvertently enter and become indefinitely lost “in” the labyrinth, one tries one’s utmost not to miss anything, however fleeting and seemingly insignificant, and then to interpret and reinterpret what one did not so much see clearly and unhurriedly as tried to discern in the darkness, or espied, or glimpsed from a moving car or a subway train or before averting one’s eyes or running away in terror, and that seems impossible—but this is what happens “in” the labyrinth: one interprets signs so as not to inadvertently enter and then so as not to become indefinitely lost “in” the labyrinth (this is all the more so since in the vast majority of cases, one mistakes the apparent threshold of the labyrinth, which one hasn’t yet crossed, for example, the open door at which the vampire tells Harker in Coppola’s *Dracula*, “Welcome to my home. Enter freely of your own will,” for the actual threshold of the labyrinth, which one has, unawares, already crossed in a lapse of consciousness if not of being). And so what at first seems a preventive measure against inadvertently entering the labyrinth later turns out, unbeknownst to oneself, to be a manner of extending being lost “in” the labyrinth. The way to be through the labyrinth out of the labyrinth is to resort to a suspension of interpretation and an eclipse of meaning. Is there a sign, an unambiguous sign—one that one would not have to interpret—that would indicate that one is now “in” the labyrinth and therefore that one should cease noting, let alone being on the lookout for signs and interpreting them, that one should disregard them, even though one is unable to determine one’s whereabouts or find one’s destination, and even though they link with each other and seem to reinforce and confirm each other, indeed appear to

address one directly if not talk to one? No. While it is very difficult to suspend interpretation “in” the labyrinth, one nonetheless may, out of desperation (for example, the one induced by one’s realization that death, whether through suicide or otherwise, does not provide a way out of the labyrinth, since following one’s death, one will “find” “oneself” still lost “in” the labyrinth), manage to do so. If one wishes then to be positive about the fortunate disappearance of any labyrinthine anomalies, one would consider that one is really back in the world—strictly speaking, though, having once been “in” the labyrinth, one thenceforth can never for sure assert: I am no longer “in” the labyrinth.

He was on the point of exiting the subway train that had just arrived at his destination when, suddenly, he saw an unworldly creature and event (what would be an apt paraphrase of Cioran’s “The essential often appears at the end of a long conversation. The great truths are spoken on the doorstep”¹⁷⁸ in these conditions? “The great untruths, for example, labyrinthine unworldly anomalies, are glimpsed at a subway train’s door on the point of closing so it can resume its journey, in the window of a car at a crossroads just as the lights turn green for it and red for the car in which one is seated ...”). He had seconds to decide whether to stay in order to confirm that he actually saw it and to make sure, all the more since the subway’s light was flickering, *what* it is that he saw or to leave since what he ostensibly glimpsed was too eerie and sinister and since the circumstance that he appeared to have reached his destination provided him with a ready-made justification to do so. He yielded to the impulse to rush outside just before the door closed again. He was left wondering: Did I actually see it in those few seconds or did I hallucinate it? How was he to try to answer this

question? He did some research to check whether others had reported similar sightings—someone beginning to undergo psychosis does more research more earnestly than most if not all PhD students, because it is a life *and* death matter for him or her.

You can allow yourself when reading a bad writer not to notice many things in the book because neither the writer *nor the book* registered them. But in a fine book, while the writer may not have noticed them, his or her book would have registered them, that is, they have consequences elsewhere in the book. For example, some things in a fine book will seem arbitrary if we do not take into consideration the literal meaning of figurative expressions, for instance, “dead silence” (in the case of “dead silence” the nonliteral meaning, “complete silence,” and the literal one fit well, since the only complete silence, silence-over, which cannot be interrupted by sounds, is encountered or undergone in death and produces a dead stop [“dead: 9. (only before noun) complete: *a dead stop*” (<http://www.macmillandictionary.com>)], i.e., immobilizes one). One sign that one is dealing with journalism: figurative expressions are used and function almost always only in the figurative sense; in literature when a figurative expression is used, the literal sense too has to be taken into consideration, so if someone is described as *more dead than alive*, these words do not simply mean “hurt and in a very poor state” (*Oxford Dictionary of English*, 3rd edition, 2016)—indeed the figurative expression is in a way used mainly to convey in an esoteric manner the literal sense. However poor the health of the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha (who was solely alive since resurrected by the life) might have been at some point prior to his second physical demise, and however hurt Jesus Christ, “the life”

(John 11:25), was while on the cross, a great book of literature or religion would not describe either as “more dead than alive.” When said about a mortal, three sorts of people would have understood “he was more dead than alive” only in the figurative sense, as “he was hurt and in a very poor state”:¹⁷⁹ a journalist/bad writer; a mortal, who is dead while still physically alive, in disavowal of his or her condition; and the disoriented mortal who suspects that he’s already “in” the labyrinth and has realized that noticing signs and landmarks would then be not a manner of finding out where he is and avoiding continuing to be lost “in” the labyrinth, but, misleadingly, a manner of getting more entangled “in” the labyrinth, and that he will not leave the labyrinth, which is not simply spatial, by opening some door and walking out but rather by a suspension of interpretation and an eclipse of meaning. “How to Read a Dostoevsky Novel as If One Is Reading a Newspaper?”: that could be the title of a workshop I could one day give to those who, most often one or two semesters after attending my seminar on the labyrinth, may rush into my office panicked that they are now discovering in newspapers lower depths and cryptic notes from the underground worthy of Dostoevsky.

Although I am writing about a generic labyrinth, its concept is signed Jalal Toufic, and although its concept is signed Jalal Toufic, “in” this labyrinth I would mistake myself for others and sign with their names.

At the threshold of the labyrinth one goes into trance, then one realizes that one is lost “in” the labyrinth. One may find oneself, following another trance, apparently outside the labyrinth. Given that one doesn’t experience leaving the labyrinth, one will, at least momentarily, have the feeling that a

part of one or a version of one or one oneself is still “in” the labyrinth.

“The [real estate] agent picked up the closest [photograph] to him. It showed the living room. He picked up a second photograph. It showed him in the building. He screamed: ‘But, I’ve never been here before!’ While he was picking up a third photograph, the vampire remarked: ‘The moment you enter the labyrinth, you’ve been there before.’ The agent let go of the photograph he had just glimpsed, uttered a scream and fell unconscious: the photograph showed him lying on the floor, blood on his neck.”¹⁸⁰ What Delbert Grady affirms to Jack Torrance in Kubrick’s *The Shining* regarding the labyrinthine Overlook Hotel where Torrance ostensibly arrived sometime in the 1970s, “You have *always* been the caretaker. I should know, sir; I’ve always been here,” applies *only once* Torrance “is” “in” the labyrinthine hotel.

Unless one is released from the labyrinth by some messianic figure, then were one to find oneself again “in” it after appearing to have left it, one would (again) feel that one has always been there—which would imply that one never left it—but as someone who is shown by his or her absence in the mirror not to be (fully) there, thus whose mode of existence “in” the labyrinth is haunting; who undergoes there lapses of consciousness if not of being; and who is lost there, including in the sense that he or she cannot be found there.

The least that one can say about someone who insists on being truthful in *death and the labyrinth*,¹⁸¹ where there is no truth (one ought not to trust one’s memory “in” the labyrinth—it is alright to do so in a maze), is that he is deluded as to his condition, or, in case he recognizes it, that he is incredibly, fetishistically disavowing his condition, or, if

the truth *in question* is a negative one, that he is a man or woman of bad conscience and *ressentiment*, guilty of opting to be guilty.

While, unless it is very simple, almost straightforward, or one is lucky, one will experience some repetition in a maze, one cannot repeat anything “in” the labyrinth. For example, you won’t be able to repeat the sentence “Dick Laurent is dead” “in” the labyrinth, because you are amnesiac there; and/or because you no longer coincide with yourself but are dissociated, with the consequence that if the first time you said it then the second time you will be its addressee; and/or because you’ve become subject to the regime of exhaustive permutation, assuming every name in history, and thus it is another who is repeating it; and/or because it is itself now subject to exhaustive permutation, with the result that you find yourself saying it as an exclamation, as an assertion, as a question, etc.; and/or because you will one time by saying it be saying what you consciously wanted to say, another time you will by saying it be committing a parapraxis, another time you will report it to your psychoanalyst as a parapraxis you committed, another time you will say it as an actor to another actor in a film or theater play, etc. To be able to repeat again suggests that one is already outside the labyrinth, in the world.

Would the exhaustive permutation of all the possibilities “in” the labyrinth end up making one find oneself outside the labyrinth? Anyway, having become subject to the regime of permutation, how can one be sure that the one who left the labyrinth is the same as (or different from) the one who entered it?

The shifter is basically labyrinthine. Whenever I say, “I,” a shifter, I am threatened with being seamlessly replaced by another (one manner of reading

“I is another” [*je est un autre* (Rimbaud)]), thus with being lost “in” the labyrinth. Having shortly before died before dying and feeling threatened by the labyrinth, Jalal Toufic minimized as much as possible the use of deictics, for example, *I, here, there, now*, replacing them, even in an emergency and even when addressing his siblings, mother, and friends, by his full name and a complete specification of the time and place. Running late and phoning to check whether his friend was already at the location where they had planned to meet, he responded to the latter’s, “Yes, I am there already,” with: “Jalal Omran Toufic will be at the Seminary Co-op bookstore, Chicago, at 11 in the morning of June 6th 1989 CE”—and then he hurriedly phoned his friend again to try to specify in which branch of the multiverse he was!

A mortal cannot be fully “in” the labyrinth because the labyrinth, which is all border, maintains one on the outside, and because, “in” the labyrinth, one is dissociated from oneself as alive.

How come when I am reading a book on the labyrinth I can feel intuitively that certain sections don’t work while others do (the former sections don’t trigger my anxiety but the latter sections do)? It is because, as a mortal, that is, as dead even while still physically alive, I am, possibly under another name, already “in” the labyrinthine realm of undead. In the revised and expanded edition of my book (*Vampires): An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, I wrote: “My body, sensing the proximity and imminence of the threshold, and not fooled by my ongoing mental rationalization, performs a bungled action, most characteristically tripping, to provide me with time to deliberate if I want to go through with my one-way trip to the altered realm, given that at the threshold itself I do not have the chance to deliberate, to make a decision, since I am then and there

entranced, thus have no will of my own, and find myself when I come out of the trance already to the other side of the threshold, ‘in’ the labyrinth, always already ‘in’ the labyrinth.”¹⁸² It is not, strictly speaking, my physical body that feels the proximity of the labyrinth, for my physical body is part of nature whereas the labyrinth isn’t; it is rather something in me as a mortal, as dead even while still physically alive, that feels the proximity of the *false threshold* (i.e., the actual threshold, which is usually reached prior to the apparent threshold) and whose interference in my physical body’s movement results in a bungled action that provides me with an interval to reconsider my unconcerned progress. The replacement of one body, the natural, physical one this side of the threshold of the undead realm with another, subtle body to the other side happens in the lapse of consciousness if not of being one undergoes at the threshold. In order to leave the labyrinth, a kind of resurrection, one has to regain the natural body.

We can deduce from the circumstance that we can be together in a certain space that it is not a labyrinth; indeed, I can deduce from the circumstance that I am not dissociated that I am not in a labyrinth (“in” the labyrinth one is alone not only in relation to others but also to oneself [as alive]). Unlike in a maze, one can no longer be part of a group, say, “we,” “in” the labyrinth—were one to hear, for example from the voices-over, that someone else is with one “in” the labyrinth, one would feel that they are lying to one or that the other is one’s double, in relation to whom one is *alone with the alone*.¹⁸³ This out-and-out subtraction from any worldly community is a sign that I must have died or become mad—or that I am at the Last Judgment. A group of people sets out to the undead’s haunt. One of them forgets the cross he believes would protect

him. How come he forgot it? Was it a paraproxia? Did he sense already at the point of departure that the journey is one of no return and so unconsciously forgot the cross in order to have an excuse to go back before it was too late, purportedly to fetch the object he forgot? The others go ahead. But, soon enough, another member of the group, a lucky one, gets lost, physically and temporarily, in the forest (in the world) ostensibly leading to the (unworldly) labyrinth. These separations from the group heading to the haunt of the undead continue, then one man or woman realizes that he or she is now alone. If one is lucky, one will realize this before the threshold of the labyrinth, when it is still not too late to reconsider and rejoin the others in a community and the world (one may still choose then, crazy as one may prove to be, to go ahead into the labyrinth—yet “in” the labyrinth one did not ever make a choice to enter it since once one crosses its threshold one has always been “in” it); if one is not lucky, one, dissociated, having separated from oneself, will notice too late, past the threshold of the labyrinthine realm of no return, that one is now alone (as long as one has not undergone dissociation, been separated from “oneself,” one is not fully alone). Even though those who intuitively stayed behind may witness two people crossing together into what turns out to be a labyrinth, each of the two will “find” himself/herself, past his or her trance and therefore lapse of consciousness at the *entrance* of the labyrinth, alone “in” the labyrinth, having lost the other. We can head together to the labyrinth but we cannot be together “in” the labyrinth. Till death do us part, that is, till the labyrinth do us part.

Insofar as he or she “is” dead even while still physically alive, a mortal is lost “in” the labyrinth, alone “in” the labyrinth, having, as a result of one

circumstance or another, separated from the living people. And yet he or she is now accompanied by previously unheard and unseen others, for example, the voices. That is why however foreign they may seem to one, these voices can nonetheless be considered to be inextricably related to one, *extimate* (to borrow this coinage of Jacques Lacan), since one can be lost together with them “in” the labyrinth, in other words, since they are not lost to one “in” the labyrinth but keep one company there—thus, in a way, proving to be more related to one than oneself (even when, as if one doesn’t exist, they hold prolonged conversations that do not address or refer to one) since “in” the labyrinth one undergoes dissociation, dissociates as (un)dead from oneself as alive.

One cannot have an overview of the labyrinth; if one seems able to have an overview of it, for example, from a helicopter or a satellite, it could be that one is mistaking a mundane maze for an unworldly labyrinth, since one can locate a mundane maze on Google Earth, zoom in on it, then direct someone lost in it on how to leave it. Notwithstanding that there can be no overview of the labyrinth, one may come across paintings, floor plans, or scale models that seem to show the layout of the labyrinthine zone, only to then, across a lapse not only of consciousness but also of being, “find” oneself in them and then discover that what looked like a representation of the labyrinth is part of the labyrinth and thus itself constantly changing without anyone doing the alteration.

“In” the labyrinth what one may have assumed to be the left may turn out to be “the other right.” In Adrian Lyne’s *Jacob’s Ladder*, 1990, Jacob’s chiropractor, Louie, tells Jacob, who died physically or died before dying physically: “Turn on your right side.” When he turns in the wrong direction, the

chiropractor muses: “How about the other right?” Unlike mortal chiropractors in disavowal of their being dead even while still physically alive, and unlike angels (Jacob: “You know, you look like an angel, Louie, like an overgrown cherub. Anyone ever tell you that?” “Yeah”), thinkers who died before dying are aware that in *death and the labyrinth* the two sides are not always, if ever, right and left but right and the other right—with no left. Given that he had died before dying, and, as a result, was lost “in” the labyrinth, had his chiropractor been standing to one side of him and an intern to the other side and Jacob turned toward the intern, he would have been amazed to realize that he either still faced the chiropractor or, while no longer facing the chiropractor, did not end up facing the intern.

“If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also ... that you may be children of your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:39–45), in other words, that you may not find yourself, following your physical demise, fully in hell or death, both labyrinthine realms, hence realms where one cannot turn the other cheek even if one mustered the unequivocal wish to do so, since even when one ostensibly manages to turn the other cheek for the next slap, one discovers from the pain that one feels that one is still being slapped on the same cheek, for example, by one’s unprovoked double¹⁸⁴ (how reassuring it would be in labyrinthine death to be able to turn one’s other cheek for anything, including a slap, and how soothing it would then be to feel that one is indeed being slapped on the other cheek). Is turning one’s other cheek for another slap an exorbitant price to pay for never entering the labyrinth, through the reduction of death to simple physical demise, or rather, since we are mortals, therefore already dead even while still physically alive, for getting

resurrected by *the life* from the death realm, becoming fully alive?

Can a living person in the natural world write a labyrinthine book? No, for the labyrinth is not part of the world. Can the one “in” the labyrinth, for example, a dead man or woman, write a labyrinthine book? No, since, undergoing *word salads*, glossolalia, *theft of thought*, etc., he or she finds it extremely difficult if not well-nigh impossible to think and write. To write something that is related intimately to the labyrinth, one has to be outside the labyrinth (to continue to be able to write) but in an untimely collaboration with someone “in” it (for example, the dead, including oneself insofar as, a mortal, one is dead even while still physically alive, and the mad [who died before dying physically]), who is in no condition to think and write (and who may undergo this untimely collaboration in the manner of *thought broadcasting* [and, in the reverse direction, *thought insertion*]). It is not enough for a living mortal to write about the labyrinth a novel or a seemingly short story that does not fall apart “two days” later and that he or she, insofar as he or she is dead even while still physically alive or is collaborating in an untimely manner with a dead or mad person lost in a labyrinthine space and time, intuitively finds accurate; the novel or seemingly short story has to be intimately related to the labyrinth, and it can be that only if it manages to make possible, indeed induce labyrinthine variants of itself, that is, variants of itself “in” the labyrinth. The essential and specific reader of such a novel is someone lost “in” the labyrinth, thus someone to whom the novel cannot be sent, but who sooner or later comes across a labyrinthine variant of it “in” the labyrinth and discovers that he is one of its protagonists and that while it very accurately

relates events from his past life it also shows him participating in other events that are impossible with them as well as ones that ostensibly belong to his future. Perhaps it is time, now that I have finally finished and published the revised edition of the fourth and last of my books that required emendation (my first four books), to try to write a book about the labyrinth that would induce its own labyrinthine variants “in” the labyrinth, thus a book that would have numerous editions that I did not myself edit. David Deutsch: “‘Displace one note and there would be diminishment. Displace one phrase and the structure would fall.’ That is how Mozart’s music is described by Peter Shaffer’s 1979 play *Amadeus*. This is reminiscent of the remark by John Archibald Wheeler with which this book [Deutsch’s *The Beginning of Infinity: Explanations That Transform the World*] begins, speaking of a hoped-for unified theory of fundamental physics: ‘... how could it have been otherwise.’ Shaffer and Wheeler were describing the same attribute: being hard to vary while still doing the job. In the first case it is an attribute of aesthetically good music, and in the second of good scientific explanations.”¹⁸⁵ While there is exactly one way for a novel relating to the labyrinth not to fall apart, that is, to manage to construct a world that keeps falling apart as a labyrinth that does not itself fall apart, paradoxically numerous if not a limitless number of labyrinthine variants of the novel turn out to be not only possible “in” the labyrinth (as impossible) but also actual and seemingly lasting an inordinate, incredible time, giving the impression that they are older than the universe itself, and therefore older than the corresponding book in the world that ostensibly induced them. Such variants are instances within the labyrinth of a sort of creation ex nihilo, since they do not seem to have an

author there; and since even though they appear to have been made possible if not induced by a book written by a specific mortal author (that is, one who is dead even while still physically alive) outside the labyrinth, the latter did not actually write them. I, who refuse adamantly that my finished screenplay concerning the labyrinth, *Jouissance in Postwar Beirut* (Forthcoming Books, 2014),¹⁸⁶ be changed in any way, for example, at the recommendation or demand of some film producer, uphold its changing drastically outside my control “in” the labyrinth. The one who writes a novel that does not fall apart “two days” later and that’s intimately related to the labyrinth suspects sooner or later that even if he or she does not end up doing any revised editions of it, it has many variants “in” the labyrinth, that it keeps changing there. Some time after he, as a physically alive mortal, finished the novel he was writing concerning the labyrinth, “he,” insofar as, a mortal, he was concurrently dead, “found” “himself” (lost) “in” the labyrinth only to discover that “in” the labyrinth no book is finished, that every book “in” the labyrinth keeps changing. At some level, it is madness to manage to write a novel that’s intimately related to the labyrinth, for the “punch line” of its labyrinthine variants, uttered in no uncertain terms by some weird figure (a hallucination?) or by the voices(-over) and heard or over-heard by its over-sensitive mortal, thus dead even while alive, author is, “You’ve always been lost ‘in’ the labyrinth, where, undergoing *word salads*, glossolalia, *theft of thought*, etc., you cannot write.”

Notwithstanding such structures as the pyramids of ancient Egypt and mausoleums, architecture has, except *in* rare novels, seemingly short stories, and fiction films, failed the dead and schizophrenics, who died before dying physically, by failing

to devise spaces (not necessarily mazelike ones) that make possible if not induce variants of them “in” the labyrinth, that is, labyrinthine variants.

“As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.... Then they said, ‘Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth’” (Genesis 11:2–4). Was the tower a folly? The folly was to consider that they, the descendants of mortal Adam (from Hebrew *’ādhām*; prior to man’s dying before physically dying on eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, *’ādhām* was not a proper name but meant generically “man”), thus of someone who, once he partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, was dead (“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die” [Genesis 2:16–17, King James Version]) even while still physically alive (following his eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, “Adam lived a total of 930 years, and then he died” [Genesis 5:5] physically), could, while mortal, still have “one language and a common speech,” which amounted to omitting and unheeding as dead even while still physically alive glossolalia and more generally the languages of *the voices*, which are unworldly ones and which cannot be fully understood by the one hearing them intimately; and that they, notwithstanding their being, as mortals, as dead even while still physically alive, “in” a labyrinth, lost to each other, indeed lost each also to himself or herself (thus undergoing dissociation and depersonalization), could still be together—other than merely exoterically (the only community of the dead is that of each one’s feeling:

every name in history is I; each of the dead is torn between his or her feeling “every name in history is I” and the alienating experience of seeing each of the others divested of all others—in contrast, each of the living has a singular name but enters into the composition of others and others enter into his or her composition¹⁸⁷). Since Genesis 10 runs through and details the scattering of the descendants of Noah and the diversification of their language following the Flood, Genesis 11’s account of the scattering of Noah’s descendants and the diversification of their language must involve an additional kind of scattering of people and multiplication of languages. “The LORD said, ‘Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.’ So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth” (Genesis 11:5–9). What God said had only to let itself be understood as addressed to someone else (“Come, let us ...”) for it to be used by the devil as an invitation to collaborate on the multiplication of the language and the scattering of the people (the tree of the knowledge of good and evil instances a previous such collaboration of the devil with God): God would scatter them in the world, in a worldly Earth, and the devil would scatter them in an unworldly Earth, that of the falling apart world “in” the labyrinth. If the unfinished and crumbling Tower of Babel that the survivors of the Flood had tried to build as a means to “continue” to be one community and avoid being dispersed remained a folly, then its builders were simply then scattered by God over the whole Earth; but if it amazingly or devilishly metamorphosed from an apparent ruin into

an actual ruin (the danger to God, the threat to “the Order of the World” [to use Daniel Paul Schreber’s expression in his book *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*] was not the building of a skyscraper but the latter’s lapse into a ruin), turning into the “first” labyrinth, actually into a token of the first labyrinth (which was the first spatiotemporal contribution of the devil, a *folie*), the one “in” which, once he died (before dying physically) on tasting the knowledge of evil, Adam (as well as Eve and their mortal descendants) was lost, then the dispersal of its mortal builders, indeed of all mortals, was also “within” the labyrinth, which, while seemingly a part of the world, is as large as the world, indeed larger, immeasurable. The humor of the devil was to push the proliferation of languages to the level where one could not fully understand and communicate with “oneself,” for example, with the voices “in” one’s head, and to push the scattering to the point where people are scattered “in” a labyrinth, with the result that each is dissociated not only from others but also from himself or herself. They were scattered *from* worldly Babylon by God and they were scattered “in” labyrinthine “Babylon” and its tower, the Tower of Babel, by the devil. If a Messiah is needed to end the Diaspora even though the state of Israel, “the Jewish state,” was established on much of Palestinian land, and millions of Jews immigrated to it and were promptly made its citizens, it is because Babylonian Captivity persists, since it is a captivity “in” the labyrinth. While “exiled” from it, many Jews felt nostalgia for Jerusalem and the “holy land” in Palestine in general; if they, after moving there and displacing hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, continue to unconsciously feel nostalgia *in* Jerusalem and the “holy land” in general, and will continue to do so until the coming of the Messiah, it is that they

concomitantly continue to haunt labyrinthine Babylon. But why do Jews, as well as all other mortals, feel nostalgia for labyrinthine Babylon notwithstanding that it is the realm they would do anything to leave? It is because on “finding” “one-self” “in” the labyrinth, *even when doing so ostensibly for the first time*, one sooner or later comes across various signs implying that one has been there before (“The moment you enter the labyrinth, you’ve been there before,”¹⁸⁸ in other words, “There is a *false threshold*¹⁸⁹ of the labyrinth: prior to it one is outside the labyrinth, past it one has always been ‘in’ the labyrinth and can thenceforth be outside it only through it”¹⁹⁰); and because one cannot will the eternal recurrence of being lost “in” the labyrinth;¹⁹¹ and because while one cannot leave the labyrinth, one is never fully in it (“You’ve always been lost ‘in’ it, that is, you cannot be found there. Are you then ever ‘in’ the labyrinth from which you cannot leave? On a[n ever changing] map, a labyrinth is formed of one line that meanders on and on, twists and involutes, forming an object with a fractional dimension between one and two, with the following two consequences. First, the labyrinth is all border, hence one cannot be fully inside it: if one can hide ‘in’ the labyrinth, it is not because one is inside the labyrinth, for the labyrinth maintains one on the outside [thus it has aura], but because it is ‘in’ the labyrinth that one is lost. Second, lapses [of consciousness if not of being] are sure to occur to one ‘in’ the labyrinth since it does not have a dimension of 3, is not a full volume”¹⁹²). If Babylon has come to epitomize captivity and exile, it is not simply on account of the captivity of Jews there from 598/7 BCE to 538 BCE (which would seem to be the case from reading, for example, *Encyclopædia Britannica*: “The Babylonian Exile, also called Babylonian Captivity:

the forced detention of Jews in Babylonia following the latter’s conquest of the kingdom of Judah in 598/7 and 587/6 BC. The exile formally ended in 538 BC, when the Persian conqueror of Babylonia, Cyrus the Great, gave the Jews permission to return to Palestine. Historians agree that several deportations took place [each the result of uprisings in Palestine], that not all Jews were forced to leave their homeland, that returning Jews left Babylonia at various times, and that some Jews chose to remain in Babylonia—thus constituting the first of numerous Jewish communities living permanently in the Diaspora”), for the Jews were, according to the Bible, also captive in Egypt, enslaved there for generations; but also because of the esoteric and more basic captivity “in” Babylon and its tower as a labyrinth, from where it is impossible to fully leave—a captivity that is coexistent with mortals’ ostensible, exoteric scattering all over the earth. The essential Babylonian Captivity precedes the exile of many Jews to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar; it is related to the labyrinth that Babylon became in Genesis 11 and/or to which it gave its “name.” Babylon concerns and should concern Jews as much as Jerusalem does, not only on account of the Babylonian Talmud and other Jewish religious texts from that culture, but also because the full *aliyah* (ascent) to Israel is not possible as long as Jews, like all other mortals, are dead even while still physically alive, thus still captive and exiled “in” the labyrinth, “in” “Babylon” (the name that the labyrinth assumed in Genesis 11)—the warning of some messianists against moving to Palestine since it would be a *forcing of the* (messianic) *end* implies an oblivion of the persistent captivity and dispersal “in” the labyrinth, *including* on the part of the Iraqi Jews who immigrated to that country in the 1950s—even were all Jews living outside of

Israel, who are mortals, to move to Palestine, that would still not force the (messianic) end. While in the twentieth century many Jews, including the Iraqi ones who immigrated to Israel in the 1950s, appear to have accomplished the *aliyah*, the ascent to Palestine, in the absence of the Messiah, they are still subject to Babylonian Captivity and will not be released from it except by the Messiah, who would thus initially and radically reduce the scattering to what it is generally taken to be, a geographical one in homogenous space and time that can be reversed by an exoteric *aliyah*. Even were all Jews to immigrate to Palestine, the Messiah would still be needed: to make possible and accomplish the ingathering by abolishing mortality, the death concomitant with life, and thus do away with the labyrinth associated with the former. There can really be a *forcing of the* (messianic) *end* only by someone who, acting like Jesus, the life, resurrects the dead as well as mortals, insofar as the latter are dead even while still physically alive, in such a way that they become fully, solely alive. As “the life” (John 11:25), Jesus, through his resurrections of three dead inhabitants of the “holy land,” which, by making them fully alive, rendered possible their thorough *aliyah* (since they would not then have been “in” the labyrinth “Babylon” as dead people even while in Palestine as living people), *forced the* (messianic) *end*, that of his assumption of the role of the Christ. Until now it seems only three or four Jews have returned from Babylonian captivity, that is, accomplished fully the *aliyah*, the ascent to the “holy land”: the three people Jesus of Nazareth, the life and the resurrection, who was never a mortal, and therefore was never “in” the labyrinth of “Babylon,” resurrected, specifically “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 21:20) and whose name prior to his resurrection was Lazarus; the young man

from the town of Nain (Luke 7:11–16); and the only daughter of Jairus, a synagogue leader, a girl of about twelve (Luke 8:41–56). It is in this sense rather than the exoteric one that the Messiah will end the Jewish diaspora, by making those still exiled and subject to the coexistent Babylonian Captivity “in” the labyrinth able to fully leave it—in the case of those Jews presently living in Palestine this would be tantamount to accomplishing the *aliyah* not only exoterically but also esoterically, thus fully. If the *aliyah* is one of the signs announcing the coming of the Messiah, it is that only the Messiah can accomplish it not only exoterically but also, more radically, esoterically. While Moses led the Jews out of their exoteric captivity in Egypt; and while Jesus Christ, as the life, released less than nine Jews, one at a time, as individuals, from the labyrinth of “Babylon” by resurrecting them to full life; and while the Nizārī imam Ḥasan ‘*alā dhikrihi*’*l-salām* (on his mention be peace) freed his followers as a community from their esoteric captivity “in” labyrinthine “Babylon” and its tower through the Great Resurrection,¹⁹³ which officially lasted from 1164 to 1210, the year of its ostensible annulation (one could advance that compared to the Nizārī Great Resurrection, there was something exoteric about the action of the Christ as the life and resurrection, in that he reportedly resurrected only those who were already physically dead), the other Messiah, or the Christ at his Second Coming, would end mortality for all, “Jews and Gentiles,” thus releasing them from “Babylon” as the labyrinth ushered in in Genesis 11. Thus the task of the Messiah is far greater than Moses’s leading the Jews out of another captivity, in Egypt, the “house of bondage,” and miraculous since it is impossible to (fully) leave the labyrinth. Babylonians, including those Jews who remained in Babylon when others returned

exoterically from Mesopotamia to their “holy land,” were also scattered, though not as alive but only as dead, “in” the labyrinth that came to be named the Tower of Babel. With the exception of Jesus Christ and the between four and eight people he resurrected, we all remain, as mortals, “Babylonians.”

Don't Look Back

During Orpheus's sojourn in Hades, the land of the dead, we find one of the most famous examples of “Don't look back.” The god of the death realm did not whimsically order Orpheus not to turn back; he rather informed him, who died to reach his dead wife in order to then bring her back to life, about one of the characteristics of his current condition, the over-turn, which undoes any turn. Yet, shortly after hearing Hades's words, dead Orpheus turned his head backward in the direction of the one he still remembered as his beloved wife—only to hear her inquire of him, with the same words with which the wife of the Hamilton of Philip K. Dick's *Eye in the Sky* addresses her ostensible husband, who died (before dying physically?) in a laboratory explosion, as she sees him motionless on the stairs with his back to her, “Won't you turn toward me? Must you have your back to me?” I imagine that he responded the same way Hamilton would do millennia later: “‘Sure I'll turn toward you.’ ... He made a cautious about-face—and found himself still facing ...” away from her. Not once, but repeatedly, did Orpheus in Hades, that is, dead Orpheus, longingly turn in the direction of his dead wife, but each time his turn was overturned by a 180-degree over-turn—until he reached life when his turn was, this time, successful. He could then see her: something obscene and horrible (when in Hades, Orpheus was, as a result of

over-turns, spared seeing his horrible face then in water). What the god of the underworld told Orpheus can be rendered accurately and unfolded thus: “You cannot look back as long as you are in Hades, that is, dead, since your turns would be overturned by over-turns, so don't bother to turn; and once you reach life and are, insofar as you are alive, no longer subject to over-turns, you are well advised not to look back until your wife too has reached the life realm, that is, has become alive again, for then you would be able to recognize her, albeit not without some difficulty, as your beloved wife, as you knew her when she was alive—it is inadvisable for the living to see the dead for then, the dead being appalling, obscene, abject, as horrible as, if not more horrible than, the maenads [Orpheus will not reject the latter as vehemently as he will his dead wife upon turning successfully toward her], the living would feel keenly (either immediately on glimpsing the dead man or woman, or, past the latter's resurrection, on failing to forget his or her unsightly image, voice and demeanor while dead) that they are ready to be with anyone *except this*, vehemently rejecting him or her.”

Any rigorous book should be reread whenever a new concept that has bearing on it has been created, since the concept would reveal to us something about the book that nobody, not even its author, who wrote it in untimely collaboration with creators who chronologically belong to the future, could have seen in it prior to the concept's creation. When I first read Genesis 18–19, long before coming up with my concept of over-turn, I, like the vast majority of, if not all, its other readers over the centuries, understood it to mean that following the intercession of Abraham God spared Lot and his two daughters getting killed in the cataclysm He unleashed on the inhabitants of Sodom. While

constructing my concept of over-turn, I remembered that Lot, his wife, and two daughters were told by the angels of the Lord, “Don’t look back.” In deathly situations, “Don’t look back” is almost always a moralistic misunderstanding or mishearing of the ethical clarification “You cannot look back.” If they cannot look back, is it because their turn would be overturned by a 180-degree over-turn? But it is the dead who undergo over-turns! “How twisted is the expression: ‘Don’t look back ... or you will be swept away!’ as well as its equivalent: ‘Don’t look back, or you will die.’ It puts its addressee in a double bind: if he or she turns, he will cease to live; but if he or she fully obeys the ‘prohibition’ against looking back, the end result is tantamount to being constantly subject to over-turns and thus already dead, since over-turns are a characteristic of the undeath realm.”¹⁹⁴ And yet according to my memory, Lot, his wife, and two daughters were made to flee the city in time to escape its destruction. Then I reread Genesis 18; “Then Abraham approached him [the LORD] and said: “Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? ...” The LORD said, “If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake” (Genesis 18:23–26). Abraham then repeats the question-entreaty invoking the possible presence of forty-five, then forty, then thirty, then twenty righteous people in the city, and each time the Lord responds that in that case he will spare the city (Genesis 18:27–31). ‘Then he said, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?” He answered, “For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it” (Genesis 18:32). But were there ten righteous people

in Sodom? The angels of the Lord tried to find other righteous people beside Lot, his wife, and their two daughters. But even the two men who were pledged to marry Lot’s daughters thought he was being facetious when he warned them, ‘Hurry and get out of this place, because the LORD is about to destroy the city!’ (Genesis 19:14), revealing themselves not to be righteous. There turned out to be only four righteous people in the city, so God did not spare it for their sake; indeed he swept away the righteous with the wicked. ‘As soon as they [the angels of the Lord] had brought them out, one of them said, “Don’t look back ... or you will be swept away!”’ (Genesis 19:17).... Thus, appropriately, Lot, his two daughters, and his wife were not spared in two different ways. Lot’s wife looked back successfully and by that turn conjointly revealed that she is not a mortal and ‘became a pillar of salt’ (Genesis 19:26). Lot and his two daughters possibly, indeed probably, turned, but their turns were overturned by over-turns, this revealing that they were already dead.”¹⁹⁵ Had that episode in the Bible been written or edited by a mediocre writer or editor, then even though he will be told by the angels of the Lord, “Don’t look back ... or you will be swept away!” Lot would have left Sodom with at least nine other people; or Abraham’s pleading with God would have ended with, “May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only four or even three righteous people can be found there?” and the Lord would have answered, “For the sake of four or even three, I will not destroy it.” You can really fight the Bible rather than your misreading of it only when you recognize its rigor; you cannot really fight the Bible if you have read Genesis 18–19 to mean that Lot and his two daughters, to whom it was said, “Don’t look back ... or you will be swept away!” were spared death.

The Shortage of Righteous People in the Christian Era

The Messiah is said to appear on an earth that is full of either inequity or justice: how come Jesus appeared on Earth at the time he did? Clearly, it was not full of justice, so it must have been full of injustice. Despite appearances, were there no righteous people then? “Then Abraham approached him [the LORD] and said: ‘Will you sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? ...’ The LORD said, ‘If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake.’ Then Abraham spoke up again: ‘Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city because of five people?’ ‘If I find forty-five there,’ he said, ‘I will not destroy it.’ Once again he spoke to him, ‘What if only forty are found there?’ He said, ‘For the sake of forty, I will not do it.’ Then he said, ‘May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?’ He answered, ‘I will not do it if I find thirty there.’ Abraham said, ‘Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?’ He said, ‘For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it.’ Then he said, ‘May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?’ He answered, ‘For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it.’” (Genesis 18:23–33). From Abraham’s entreaty to God in Genesis 18:23–33 onward, Earth or some part of it will be spared destruction by God if it includes at least ten righteous people—otherwise it would be *reckoned full of injustice* and consequently destroyed. There were at least ten righteous people when the archangel

Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary, but with the coming of Jesus Christ, a nonmortal, indeed the life, *righteous* was redefined to primarily mean one who was never a mortal or is no longer a mortal, i.e., never or no longer dead while alive. Were there then at any point during Jesus Christ’s presence on Earth ten righteous people? While eleven of his twelve ostensible disciples (but not “Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve,” whom “Satan entered” and who “went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus” [Luke 22:3–4], and who was not subsequently resurrected by the Christ, the life) might have been regarded as righteous did they live in the time of Abraham (even this is questionable in the case of Peter: “Jesus turned and said to Peter, ‘Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me’” [Matthew 16:23]), they, being mortals, were not righteous in the time of “the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25); as dead while physically alive, they knew of evil, indeed were under the sway of the *jouissance* of evil. Jesus Christ waited (in vain?) for someone to come to him to be healed of his mortality, of being dead while alive, rather than of some sickness. The condition of possibility for the twelve ostensible disciples to have been righteous would have been for Jesus Christ to have resurrected them even while they were physically alive; we do not have an explicit mention of this, and I do not believe that Jesus Christ did this (I would like to believe though that Jesus, according to John 11:25 the life, resurrected, in what would have seemed, from an exoteric perspective, an *avant la lettre* quixotic act, at least one mortal who was then physically alive [Joseph of Arimathea?]¹⁹⁶). Was the generation in which Jesus appeared a candidate for destruction by God? It would seem that it was: it elicited from Jesus

the following response, “You unbelieving and perverse generation, how long shall I put up with you?” (Matthew 17:17, cf. Mark 9:19; it was also described by Jesus as “this adulterous and sinful generation” [Mark 8:38]). It seems there were at most four or five righteous people then: Jesus Christ, the three physically dead people he resurrected (the brother of Mary and Martha, whose name prior to his resurrection was Lazarus; the young man from the town of Nain [Luke 7:11–16]; and the only daughter of Jairus, a synagogue leader [Luke 8:41–56])—and the physically living mortal he resurrected: Joseph of Arimathea. And so God swept away the righteous, including and paradigmatically Jesus, who was crucified, with the wicked, as prophesized by Jesus: “As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. ‘Tell us,’ they said, ‘... what will be the sign of ... the end of the age?’ Jesus answered: ‘When you see standing in the holy place “the abomination that causes desolation,” spoken of through the prophet Daniel ... then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now—and never to be equaled again.... Immediately after the distress of those days “the sun will be darkened, / and the moon will not give its light; / the stars will fall from the sky, / and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.” ... Truly I tell you, *this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened*. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.... As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them *all* away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of

Man” (Matthew 24:3–39, my italics). Then God re-created everything as it was just before its destruction (“Were We then worn out by the first creation?” [Qur’ān 50:15]), with the consequence that almost all people were “in doubt about a new creation” (ibid.). With the withdrawal of the life and the resurrection, resurrected Jesus, from the world following his crucifixion, there cannot have been ten or more righteous people at any moment in the Christian era and therefore humans if not the universe have continued to be repeatedly destroyed and recreated and will continue to be repeatedly destroyed and recreated until they or their successors end up abolishing death-as-undeath, most likely through achieving the epochal will by managing to will the eternal recurrence of various events. From this perspective, with (the Son of) God’s earthly incarnation—which possibly invested matter with a necessity of existence—as a Messiah who is the life and the resurrection (John 11:25), we move from an ahistorical ontological reason for renewed creation,¹⁹⁷ the radical ontological poverty of creatures due to their lack of a necessity of being according to Muslim and Jewish atomism and occasionalism, to an ethical reason for it, the absence of ten righteous people, i.e., ten people who are no longer mortals, dead while alive, which has entailed God’s repeated destruction of humanity, indeed of the universe—with the exception of Jesus’s words, which have continued in being without having to be recurrently recreated (“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words¹⁹⁸ will never pass away” [Matthew 24:35]).

How Not to Be Subject to Variations on Guilt and Innocence

In Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps*, having just rushed out of a theater where gunshots were heard, a woman asks the man standing next to her: "May I come home with you?" He asks her: "What's the idea?" She replies: "I'd like to." He responds: "It's your funeral!" I presume that both consider that he is being facetious; actually "It's your funeral!" is an expressed that calls for a certain answer of the real in the state of things, while itself remaining an incorporeal event. Shortly after their arrival in his apartment, she says to him: "Would you think me very troublesome if I asked for something to eat? I've had nothing all day." While he is preparing her dinner, she is startled by a noise. "Nervy? Upset by those shots tonight?" "I fired those shots ... to create a diversion. I had to get away from that theater quickly. There were two men there who wanted to kill me." "You should be more careful in choosing your gentlemen friends.... Have you ever heard of a thing called 'persecution mania'?" "You don't believe me? ... Go and look down into the street then." While still holding the knife with which he was slicing bread for her, he gingerly heads to the living room, peeks through the window, ascertains that there are indeed two men surveilling the apartment from the street, then walks back to the kitchen, with the knife still gleaming in his hand. Deleuze wrote in the chapter "The Affection-Image: Qualities, Powers, Any-Space-Whatevers" of his book *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*: "[In Georg Wilhelm Pabst's *Pandora's Box* (1929)] there are Lulu, the lamp, the bread-knife, Jack the Ripper: people who are assumed to be real with individual characters and social roles, objects with uses, real connections between these objects

and these people—in short, a whole actual state of things. But there are also the brightness of the light on the knife, the blade of the knife under the light, Jack's terror and resignation, Lulu's compassionate look. These are pure singular qualities or potentialities—as it were, pure 'possibles.' Of course, power-qualities do relate to people and to objects, to the state of things, which are, as it were, their causes. But these are very special effects: taken all together they only refer back to themselves, and constitute the 'expressed' of the state of things, whilst the causes, for their part, only refer back to themselves in constituting the state of things.... In themselves, or as expresseds, they are already the event in its eternal aspect, in what Blanchot calls 'the aspect of the event that its accomplishment cannot realize.'¹⁹⁹ I would paraphrase Deleuze's words regarding Pabst's *Pandora's Box* thus in relation to Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps*: "There are the agent who goes by the name of Annabella, the apartment, the bread-knife, Hannay: people who are assumed to be real with individual characters (Hannay appears to be hospitable ...) and social roles (she is an agent ...), objects with uses (the bread-knife with which he slices the bread ...), real connections between these objects and these people (he's using the knife to make her, who is hungry, dinner ...)—in short, a whole actual state of things. But there are also the sentence "It's your funeral," the brightness of the light on the knife, the blade of the knife under the light, the stealthy way Hannay walks with the gleaming knife to the kitchen where 'Annabella' is seated. These are pure singular qualities or potentialities—as it were, pure 'possibles.' Of course, power-qualities do relate to people and to objects, to the state of things, which are, as it were, their causes. But these are very special effects: taken all

together they only refer back to themselves, and constitute the ‘expressed’ of the state of things, whilst the causes, for their part, only refer back to themselves in constituting the state of things.... In themselves, or as expresseds, they are already the event in its eternal aspect, in what Blanchot calls ‘the aspect of the event that its accomplishment cannot realize.’” To the perceptive viewer, one symptom of the impossibility of fully subsuming these power-qualities under the state of things in which one encounters them is that they would fit as well if not better another state of things; for example, the first variation on Hitchcock’s *The 39 Steps* in my *Variations on Guilt and Innocence in 39 Steps*²⁰⁰ (75 minutes, 2013) presents a more fitting state of things for his response to her request to come home with him, “It’s your funeral!” and for the gleaming knife in his hand as he heads stealthily toward her in the kitchen than the one in Hitchcock’s film: he uses the knife to kill his guest rather than to resume slicing bread (the gleaming knife continues not to be fully actualized in the more appropriate state of things; as the expressed, it is “the aspect of the event that its accomplishment cannot realize”). If in Hitchcock’s *The 39 Steps* Hannay momentarily considers giving himself up to the police isn’t it in part on account of an unconscious feeling of guilt? If he unconsciously feels guilt, it is not because he might have wished for her death, but because in the unconscious his stealthy walk while still holding the knife was extracted from its original context and reedited in such a way that he looks like he killed his guest.²⁰¹ Were he to father children with the woman he falls in love with later in the film, these children might suffer an incorporation of his unconscious secret and guilt (in his “Notes on the Phantom: A Complement to

Freud’s *Metapsychology*,” 1975, Nicolas Abraham wrote, “The phantom is a formation of the unconscious that has never been conscious—for good reason. It passes ... from the parent’s unconscious to the child’s,”²⁰² and Anne Ancelin Schützenberger continued in *The Ancestor Syndrome*: “From a trans-generational perspective, a person who suffers from a ghost leaving the crypt suffers from a ‘family genealogical illness’ ... From a psychoanalytical perspective, Abraham and Torok perceive in this kind of manifestation ‘a formation of the dynamic unconscious that is found there not because of the subject’s own repression but on account of a direct empathy with the unconscious or the rejected psychic matter of a parental object’”²⁰³). To be radically innocent requires refraining from indulging, with “the unbearable lightness” of those who are unconscious of the unconscious, in ambiguous gestures, figurative speech, and the use of words whose etymology they do not take into consideration, through which they would be providing the unconscious, with its mechanisms of dissociation, condensation, etc., the opportunity of concocting a different narrative, one in which it seems that one is guilty.²⁰⁴ To be a *ma’sūm*, “someone immune from error and sin,” infallible (in Twelver Shi’ism, the imam is said to be *ma’sūm*), it is not enough to conform to the religious law (Sharī’a); in addition, one’s gestures and words should be such that they cannot be edited by the devil or the unconscious to appear to breach the religious law. To be a *ma’sūm* then requires either an omniscient God who foresees all possible edits of a gesture, utterance, etc., and then guides the one He chose to be infallible to do only those gestures and to utter only those phrases that can in no way be included in montages where they would appear to breach the religious law; or an omnipotent God who

deflects (*yaşruf*) the devil, the accuser, or the unconscious from actually concocting a different narrative from those of the chosen one's gestures, movements, and words (for example, figures of speech) that, placed in a different context but without any other alteration, would implicate him or her in a breach of the religious law (in a similar manner to how, according to some Muslim thinkers, God deflected those who would otherwise have been able to produce linguistically something that has the quality of a *sūra* of the Qur'ān from trying to do so, thus maintaining the Qur'ān's "*idjaz*, since the second half of the 3rd/9th century [the] technical term for the inimitability or uniqueness of the Kur'an in content and form," but which literally means "the rendering incapable, powerless"²⁰⁵); or having unceasingly practiced not only that which God has made obligatory for one, but also supererogatory works: "My servant draws near to Me through nothing I love more than that which I have made obligatory for him. My servant never ceases drawing near to Me through supererogatory works until I love him. Then, when I love him, I am his hearing through which he hears, his sight through which he sees, his hand through which he grasps, and his foot through which he walks" (a *ḥadīth qudsī*)—one is then infallible because one has gone beyond good and evil; or having been resurrected by the *life* (according to John 11:25, Jesus Christ) from the death that, as a mortal, one undergoes even while still physically alive, thus becoming fully alive, without an unconscious, hence not subject to a reediting of at least some of one's gestures and utterances.

Creating Universes and/or Worlds That Don't "Fall Apart 'Two Days' Later"

There is a place in the universe where anything can happen: a bad film or novel or painting, thus a film, novel, or painting that falls apart even as it is being made. In a good film, as in dreams, only certain things can happen. What takes the longest to achieve for a thinker or writer or filmmaker who is constructing "a universe that doesn't fall apart two days later" (Philip K. Dick) is to discern which concepts, images, sounds, characters, etc., are compossible in the same universe, which, if it is not to be radically closed, must, as with our universe with its black hole singularities where it falls apart locally behind the event horizon, nonetheless contain (in both senses of: "1. to keep within limits: as (a) restrain, control <could hardly *contain* her enthusiasm>, (b) check, halt <*contain* the spread of a deadly disease>, ...; 2. (a) to have within: hold (b) comprise, include <the bill *contains* several new clauses>"²⁰⁶) at least one *framed* extimate impossibility. Were the entities from another branch of the multiverse no longer to be contained within some frame, for example, the event horizon of a black hole, then they could result in the falling apart of the host branch of the multiverse.

The "death" of a branch of the multiverse in a heat death or a Big Crunch is not a manner for it to fall apart (in the case of the Big Crunch, while it is becoming ever more compacted as it contracts), since such a death follows from the laws of that branch of the multiverse or of the multiverse as a whole.

Since a museum or an exhibition may contain several artworks that each presents "a universe that doesn't fall apart two days later" (Philip K. Dick),

it follows that it may contain several universes, in other words, branches of the multiverse!

There is something hallucinatory about many if not most creative images since they are at the intersection of this branch of the multiverse, from which they borrow their matter (paint, clay, etc.), and another branch of the multiverse, or the Imaginal World (*'ālam al-khayāl*), or the dance realm. The presentation of the intersection between branches of the multiverse is clearer in cinema, particularly 3D cinema, than in painting, and it will become even more palpable through virtual reality emulations.

The work of an increasing percentage of those who are included in the sociological category of "artist" is limited to the objects, problems, and modes of functioning *in* this branch of the multiverse, thus is oblivious of the other branches of the multiverse—and of the other realms related to this branch, for example, the undead realm, the Imaginal World (*'ālam al-khayāl*), and the dance realm (many branches of the multiverse don't have such supplements); as well as of this branch as a world. That is, it is more and more limited to a very small part of reality. Art can be concerned with the mundane, giving us, to use Deleuze's words, *reasons to believe in this world* (notwithstanding that it includes the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant²⁰⁷ and Wahhabism in general,²⁰⁸ etc.); and/or implicated in the otherworldly or unworldly, by constructing radical closures in which otherworldly or unworldly ahistorical fully-formed entities can irrupt; and/or engaged in providing us with a window on the Imaginal World (this is the case with many of the great miniatures of Islamic art) thus giving us access to the Imaginal version of what happened; and/or occupied with creatively presenting other branches of the multiverse. Art

and literature and thought can create in our branch of the multiverse, which hasn't fallen apart in "two days," exceptions to it that don't fall apart "two days" later and that present within it, intrinsically framed (the physical frame merely makes explicit this intrinsic frame), other branches of the multiverse that haven't fallen apart in "two days." The other branches of the multiverse that art can present may be ones in which art is possible or they may be ones where there is culture, which is the norm (Godard), possibly in the form of film festivals, bienales of "art," etc., but no exception to it in the manner of artworks that present other branches of the multiverse that don't fall apart in "two days." Were it the case that we live in a multiverse, then as long as we continue to be unable to time-travel, that is, to travel to other branches of the multiverse,²⁰⁹ Paul Klee's counsel "not to render the visible, but to render visible" has to be qualified, since one of the tasks of art then is, through creatively building universes that don't fall apart "two days" later, to render visible what, while being visible in another branch of the multiverse, would otherwise be invisible to us in our branch of the multiverse.

Given that we happen to be in a branch of the multiverse where the framed inclusion of other branches in ours through thought, art, film, and literature has not triggered its falling apart, it would be a waste to limit thought, art, film, and literature to exploring our branch. While our branch of the multiverse can accommodate works of art or literature or thought that present or instance other branches, this does not necessarily apply to all branches, indeed may be something rather rare for a branch of the multiverse. In the other type of branch of the multiverse, prohibiting the creation of images that belong to a different branch would be wise

since such images would lead to the falling apart of the host branch—indeed this may be how a number of the branches of the multiverse inhabited by creative intelligent life fell apart.

In a film or novel rendered from the point of view of a schizophrenic, the diegetic world must fall apart at least at certain points but the book or film presenting this diegetic world must not itself fall apart two “days later.”

I fully agree with Heidegger that anxiety and profound boredom are two fundamental attunements in which one is primarily concerned not with this or that object, but with the world: in profound boredom, “we are not merely *relieved* of our *everyday personality*, somehow distant and alien to it, but simultaneously also *elevated beyond* the particular situation in each case and beyond the *specific beings* surrounding us there. The whole situation and we ourselves as this individual subject are thereby indifferent.... Yet this does not happen in such a way that we first run through individual things including ourselves, and then evaluate them in accordance with whether they are still of any worth to us.... This *indifference of things and of ourselves with them* is not the result of a sum total of evaluations; rather each and every thing at once becomes indifferent, each and every thing moves together at one and the same time into an indifference. This indifference does not first leap from one thing over onto another like a fire ...; rather all of a sudden everything is enveloped and embraced by this indifference. Beings ... become indifferent *as a whole*, and we ourselves as these people are not excepted.... Through this boredom Dasein finds itself set in place precisely before beings as a whole, to the extent that in this boredom the beings that surround us offer us no further possibility of acting

and no further possibility of our doing anything.... There is a telling refusal on the part of beings as a whole with respect to these possibilities.... What do we mean by this expression ‘*as a whole*’? ... We shall designate the expanse of this ‘*as a whole*,’ which manifests itself in profound boredom, as *world*”²¹⁰ (Heidegger then refines his “definition” of world thus: “world is ... *the manifestness of beings as such as a whole*”);²¹¹ and while “that in the face of which we fear is a detrimental entity within-the-world which comes from some definite region ... that in the face of which one has anxiety is not an entity within-the-world.... That in the face of which one is anxious is completely indefinite. Not only does this indefiniteness leave factually undecided which entity within-the-world is threatening us, but it also tells us that entities within the world are not ‘relevant’ at all. Nothing which is ready-to-hand or present-at-hand within the world functions as that in the face of which anxiety is anxious.... The obstinacy of the ‘nothing and nowhere within-the-world’ means as a phenomenon that *the world as such is that in the face of which one has anxiety*. The utter insignificance which makes itself known in the ‘nothing and nowhere’ does not signify that the world is absent, but tells us that entities within-the-world are of so little importance in themselves that on the basis of this *insignificance* of what is within-the-world, the world in its worldhood is all that still obtrudes itself.... Being-anxious discloses, primordially and directly, the world as world”²¹²—in the process of falling apart (my qualification of Heidegger), thus no longer able to exclude what is not part of it, what is *out of the world*, if not what is unworldly, for example, the voices, “fleeting-improvised men” (Daniel Paul Schreber: “I ... thought I was the last real human being left, and that the few human shapes

whom I saw apart from myself—Professor Flechsig, some attendants, occasional more or less strange-looking patients—were only ‘fleeting-improvised-men’²¹³ created by miracle^{214”215}), or “the Man of Jasmine.”²¹⁶ What triggers anxiety is not “entities within-the-world ... but the world as world” in the process of falling apart, and the *out of the world* if not unworldly entities the falling apart world, which includes oneself, can no longer exclude. Those who witness the world fall apart almost always anxiously try to arrange it. When this fails, they try to rearrange it, at the exorbitant, maddening price of feeling that the whole world is implicated in a conspiracy—paranoids prefer to poverty in world as a result of the world’s falling apart a world that seems to be nothing but an all-encompassing conspiracy. Does this work? No, they themselves then break down (Rilke: “And we ..., / turned toward the world of objects, ... / arrange it. It breaks down. / We rearrange it, then break down ourselves”²¹⁷), turning into psychotics if not schizophrenics. While broken down themselves (hearing voices, uttering *word salads*, etc.) they may still intuit that the way to go about regaining *belief in this world* (Deleuze) is to create another world that integrates the *out of the world* objects and occurrences irrupting in this world that has fallen apart, since these objects and occurrences then have a tendency, once integrated into a world, if not to separate from this world altogether then at least to become framed, one then relating to them the way one relates to a painting or *pictures in a book* (in the words of the psychic Head Chef of the Overlook Hotel in Kubrick’s *The Shining*)—which does not mean that they are not real, since the book may be presenting another branch of the multiverse. Given that in profound boredom “the beings that surround us offer us no further possibility of acting

and no further possibility of our doing anything,” is creating another universe or an otherworldly object that implies or enfolds another world²¹⁸ the only possibility in terms of acting and doing left to Dasein in such a fundamental attunement? While the one who had an episode of profound boredom can, once no longer profoundly bored, cathect all sorts of objects, he or she is, insofar as he or she continues to heed this experience, most profoundly interested in bringing to the fore objects’ belonging to a world, their worldliness—and in creatively building another world that doesn’t fall apart “two days” later so that were he or she to fall under the sway of another episode of profound boredom he or she would be able to say: “There is ‘a telling refusal on the part of the beings of this world as a whole,’ including myself, *that’s all*.” It is in anxiety and profound boredom that we have *mondialisation*; one of the main functions of *globalization* has been to avert the fundamental attunements of anxiety and profound boredom and thus *mondialisation*.

It would seem from the Bible that having so easily created various objects (“God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light” [Genesis 1:3] ...) as well as the world (which is not mentioned in the body of the Biblical text until Genesis 11:1,²¹⁹ “The Tower of Babel” [i.e., when it is threatened by the labyrinth of Babylon], “Now the whole world had one language and a common speech!”), (the limited) God (of Genesis) came to the realization, as the world did not fall apart “two days” later (irrespective of whether the measure of such a day be “fifty thousand years” [Qur’ān 70:4] or “a thousand years of what you count” [Qur’ān 32:5]), that somehow He knew not how to get rid of it if not undo it, at least not directly. Out of His unknowing, an unfathomable creature appeared: the devil. The devil would

then have presented the following bargain to God: "I" will make the world fall apart, but in order to do so I, in my capacity as demiurge, need to create and then introduce some things, states, and trappings in what You have created. And he produced and introduced evil; *jouissance*; death as undeath, and, therefore, death's labyrinthine space and time; etc. Yet by doing so, he did not make the world fall apart *tout court*, but rather led perversely to the coexistence of the world with its esoteric falling apart. It may be a particularity of this world, which includes schizophrenics, who died before physically dying, and mortals, who are dead even while still physically alive, that it keeps falling apart while continuing to exist for the sane living.

In our universe, seeing two people on Earth float in the air would induce the feeling that the world as we know it is inconsistent and falling apart. Not so in a Tarkovsky film; indeed, in a Tarkovsky film, were bodies never to float, the universe it is presenting would fall apart. Regrettably, Tarkovsky provides extrinsic diegetic justifications for this levitation: in *Solaris* (1972), the levitation of the two protagonists is explained by the predicted thirty seconds of weightlessness ascribed to a change in the station's orbit around the sentient eponymous ocean; in *The Mirror* (1975), the levitation of one of the protagonists happens ostensibly within a dream; in *The Sacrifice* (1986), the levitation of the protagonist and his housemaid, who is reputed to be a witch, could be attributed to the latter's presumed occult powers—Tarkovsky should not have provided such extrinsic justifications, but should have stuck to the intrinsic implicit justification that levitation is a constituent element of his universe. In *The Mirror*, he subtly altered newsreel footage of the Soviet Army crossing Lake Sivash, Crimea, in November 1943,

during World War II, by repeating some of the shots and placing over the later part of the footage a poem read by his father in voice-over, managing thus to make what it shows part of his universe, with the consequence that, even though we do not actually see any of the soldiers levitate, levitation becomes implicitly a possibility of the soldiers' bodies.

It is sometimes difficult to discern whether a novel or film is presenting a different kind of universe with its variant time and space and bodies or whether it is revealing to us a facet of our universe and its time that we would otherwise not be able to perceive. For example, if in an eighteenth-century book various characters referred to a table as almost completely empty space, a reader living at that time would most probably have considered that the book was about a different kind of universe, while a twentieth century reader with an adequate layman's knowledge of atoms would most likely consider that the book is about our universe since an atom's "nucleus is incredibly tiny compared with the orbits of the electrons.... Imagine squeezing all the space out of an atom. Well, if you did that to all the atoms in all the people in the world, you could indeed fit the entire human race in the volume of a sugar cube."²²⁰

"Rewiring ourselves for relativity was hard enough, and for Quantum Mechanics it was much harder. Predictivity or determinism had to go, and the failed classical rules of logic had to be replaced by quantum logic. Uncertainty and complementarity were expressed in terms of abstract, infinite, dimensional Hilbert spaces, mathematical commutation relations, and other bizarre inventions of the mind.... For most of us, the breakdown of concepts such as simultaneity (in Special Relativity) and determinism (in Quantum Mechanics) are no more than obscure

oddties that only a few physicists are interested in. But in reality the opposite is true: it is the agonizing slowness of human motion and the ponderous mass of the 10^{28} atoms in the human body that are odd exceptions of nature. There are roughly 10^{80} elementary particles in the universe for every human. Most of them move at close to the speed of light.... Out of every 10,000,000,000 bits of information in the universe 9,999,999,999 are associated with the horizons of black holes. It should be evident that our naïve ideas about space, time and information are wholly inadequate to understand most of nature."²²¹ What forced this rewiring of many a scientist's intuition that Leonard Susskind writes about were experimental results such as those of the double-slit experiment, in which "a coherent light source such as a laser beam illuminates a plate pierced by two parallel slits, and the light passing through the slits is observed on a screen behind the plate. The wave nature of light causes the light waves passing through the two slits to interfere, producing bright and dark bands on the screen—a result that would not be expected if light consisted of classical particles. However, the light is always found to be absorbed at the screen at discrete points, as individual particles (not waves).... Furthermore, versions of the experiment that include detectors at the slits find that each detected photon passes through one slit (as would a classical particle), but not through both slits (as would a wave). These results demonstrate the principle of wave-particle duality"²²²; Bell's inequality experiments, "which were designed to demonstrate the real world existence of certain theoretical consequences of the phenomenon of entanglement in quantum mechanics which could not possibly occur according to a classical picture of the world, characterized by the notion of local

realism,"²²³ etc. But how does the artist or filmmaker or thinker rewire his or her intuition in order to creatively construct an artistic or literary or conceptual work that does not fall apart "two days" later and that presents another branch of the multiverse that is markedly different from his or her own, where his or her intuition was fashioned, if he or she has no way of visiting the other branch or of being visited by travelers hailing from it given that "no time machine provides pathways to times earlier than the moment at which it came into existence"²²⁴?

Given that "no time machine provides pathways to times earlier than the moment at which it came into existence"²²⁵ and that "all fiction that does not violate the laws of physics is fact,"²²⁶ fiction may very well be our only way currently to present and "explore the possibilities opened up by parallel universes,"²²⁷ and will continue to be our main if not only way to present other branches of the multiverse that do not have time travel machines. If we end up having time machines and are visited by intelligences from other branches of the multiverse, then some of these intelligences will be from fiction films whose diegeses present other branches of the multiverse that have time machines. Regrettably, as far as I know, scientists are not resorting to fiction that doesn't fall apart "two days" later to study scientifically other branches of the multiverse and, in the process, expand if not radically rewire their intuition.

A writer may destroy his unpublished fiction less by simply erasing its file on his computer or burning his unpublished manuscript than by inserting in it what would make it fall apart.

What we are most likely to mistake for the ultimate version of a book that creatively presents another branch of the multiverse is its penultimate

version or edition. Strictly speaking, we cannot have the ultimate version of a book that creatively presents another branch of the multiverse in our branch: even were a writer to succeed in making the final change or changes that would have turned the penultimate edition of such a book into its ultimate version, to the rest of the world it would appear that he or she failed or opted not to make that final change or changes, since to manage to write the ultimate version of a book that creatively presents another branch of the multiverse is to manage a disappearing act, that of the book from this branch of the multiverse, for a book that creatively renders another branch of the multiverse would no longer be a successful presentation of that branch but would be part of it, with the consequence that the inhabitants of this branch would no longer be able to access it—and then of what use to this branch of the multiverse would be that ultimate version of a book that creatively presents another branch? So a writer would be well advised to stop at the penultimate edition rather than continue to the ultimate version of such a book. But wouldn't the penultimate version fall apart in less than two days since it includes an impossibility in the branch of the multiverse it is creatively presenting? Not necessarily. An inconsistent universe does not necessarily fall apart instantly: how quickly it falls apart depends on the maximum speed at which information can travel in it. For example, our own universe, where the speed of light, c , which is 299,792,458 meters per second in a vacuum, is “the maximum speed at which all energy, matter, and information in the universe can travel,”²²⁸ would fall apart when information, moving maximally at the speed of light, would have had enough time to travel between two of the universe's constituents that are inconsistent. That is, unless

the speed of information in it is infinite, it is not the case that a universe can detect immediately that it is inconsistent and consequently fall apart. Through setting the appropriate maximum speed at which information can travel, one can build a universe that would not fall apart two days later, indeed 13.8 billion years later, despite its inclusion of many inconsistencies and impossibilities.

The Ethics of *Jouissance*

When is one really related to ethics? Always? No, it is when promptly after starting to feel *jouissance* catastrophes, mishaps, and debacles begin to befall one or one's loved ones: one learns that one's wife had a car accident; and/or one's hard disk, containing a voluminous manuscript one has just completed, suddenly stops working; and/or one comes across an egregious mistake in one of one's published books notwithstanding that one had quoted the paragraph in which it appears several times without coming across it; and/or one notices an ominous change in the size and color of a mole on one's body; and/or one's apartment is consumed by fire while one is on a short trip abroad. These appear to be a warning to desist from further actions that may trigger *jouissance*. In relation to the actions, *jouissance* or joy of ethical persons, one can say, “By their fruit you will recognize them” (Matthew 7:20) not solely in the *barzakh*/bardo or at some Last Judgment, but also promptly in one of the branches of the multiverse—a version of him or her who did not engage in an action that induced *jouissance* would likely experience a variant of the world where no such catastrophes took place. One is an ethical person even if one does not alter one's conduct in reaction to the debacles that followed

promptly one's *jouissance* or actions concerning which one had qualms; one is no longer an ethical person if one day there is no such prompt "answer of the real" with respect to one's *jouissance* or questionable actions. That the fruits of the action of an ethical person are promptly perceptible in the world does not entail that interpretation is no longer relevant and required; on the contrary, interpretation becomes more crucial then.

Doug Rice's book *Between Appear and Disappear* (2013) includes photographs. I consider that the action of taking photographs by Rice in the case of his book *Between Appear and Disappear* had in part the function of replacing the activity of writing when the latter became overfilled with *jouissance*. I imagine that when taking photographs was not enough to replace the activity of writing words and syntax overfilled with *jouissance*, he placed whatever he wrote that had an affinity with and close association to his earlier, *jouissance*-overfilled book *Blood of Mugwump: A Tiresian Tale of Incest* (1996) not below the lower borders of the photographs he had taken, as captions to them, but on their backs, as one does with postcards, and then printed the photographs facing the "reader," thus burying the words written on the photographs' backs (the few photographs included in *Blood of Mugwump* do not hide any words behind them). The book is thus between appearing and disappearing, between the words one can read and the words buried under the printed photographs, a *hidden treasure*. These photographs were chosen not necessarily because of what they would add to the book, but because of what they would subtract from it: the *jouissance*-overfilled writing that was placed on their backs and that had to be buried—and yet while burying the *jouissance*-overfilled writing, the book honestly

refers to them through its title, *Between Appear and Disappear*. The photos in *Between Appear and Disappear* are not a window on the world, but rather a tomb for the writing that's most overfilled with *jouissance* or with associations to an earlier book that was too big for the author on account of being overfilled with *jouissance*.²²⁹ Was there a rivalry of his beloved with his writing? I wager that there was: not with much of what he was writing while he was her companion, but with his already published *jouissance*-overfilled book *Blood of Mugwump*. He could bear that something nefarious would soon occur following his achieving or indulging in *jouissance*-overfilled writing when it primarily and directly affected him, but not when it threatened her. It proved as difficult if not more difficult to deal with and integrate the *jouissance* emanating from his *Blood of Mugwump* (and possibly also from *A Good Cuntboy Is Hard to Find* [1998]) than to deal with the death of his beloved. Once Rice's constrained relation to the unbearable intensity associated with *Blood of Mugwump* is overcome then I expect his writing to transitionally invade the surfaces of the printed photographs—only then would there be a chance for Doug Rice the photographer, and for a new relation between words and photographs. While most writers' first books prove to be approximations of what they and others would later view as their singular universes and styles, some writers' first books (often preceded by some aphorisms or short poems published in various journals, a completed short essay or story, or an unfinished and unpublished manuscript) are already, as if miraculously, too big for them, for example, a universe that doesn't fall apart "two days" later or writing overfilled with *jouissance*, yet exactly in their style. Then the latter writers are, often following a short sequel that

seems to imply that they could very well go on churning out books, no longer able to write for a protracted period; or find themselves scribbling texts that are compromise formations that unintentionally present various manners of botching the first book, or retroactively exhibit various stages on the way to it; or, worse, become merely a means for the repetition, with minor variations, of the first book—minor variations that would be interrupted by the death of their mediums before they have exhausted them unless the imitation by a fan or a “promising” student alerts them to the danger they were disavowing: being reduced to repetitively rendering *jouissance*. When one’s first book is a *jouissance*-overfilled text, how not to yield to the repetition compulsion? One manner of doing so is to replace *jouissance* with another kind of intensity that is too big for one: joy. But in our present age, joy is far more difficult to attain than *jouissance* (when, during its midnight screening at the Istanbul Film Festival, Gaspar Noé introduced his film *Enter the Void* [2009] as a [psychedelic] trip, I immediately assumed that it would be a bad trip, and so it was—and so soon enough I left the screening). When, for a protracted period, a writer’s first, *jouissance*-overfilled book increasingly appears to be his or her last book, in order to write again, he or she may have to die before dying. How symptomatic of academia that it should come up with and/or validate the saying: Publish or perish! The venue where the motto “publish or perish” applies is one of the 1,785 journals included in the Arts & Humanities Citation Index. The venue for texts whose condition of possibility is perishing in the manner of dying before physically dying (if not one’s own dying, then that of another writer or thinker or filmmaker or artist with whom one is collaborating in an untimely manner), for example,

Daniel Paul Schreber’s *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* and my (*Vampires*): *An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film* (the first of my books written [rather than published: *Distracted* was published in 1991] following my death before dying in 1989 in Evanston, Illinois) and *Two or Three Things I’m Dying to Tell You* (whose title should imply to those who know how to read that I had to perish in the manner of dying before physically dying in order to be able to transmit to them the mentioned “two or three things”), and regarding which the motto would be, “Perish and publish,” is certainly not one of the journals of the Arts & Humanities Citation Index.

Devilish *Jouissance*; or, *Jouir de la jouissance de l'autre*

In Lana and Lilly Wachowski’s *The Matrix*, 1999, humans are entertained with simulations by an exploitative AI so that it can optimally extract bioelectricity from them (“the human body generates more bioelectricity than a 120-volt battery and over 25,000 B.T.U.’s of body heat”) to initiate fusion reactions; how unintelligent and apathetic! I can very well imagine them being fed *jouissance*-inducing simulations by advanced beings who do not feel *jouissance* on watching the same images and sounds, indeed any images and sounds, and who therefore need to get it directly, in a pure state, in a “vampiric” manner. One can say the same of the devil, the tempter: he cannot feel *jouissance* on engaging in any activity or perceiving any images and sounds; he can only feed on the *jouissance* of others, he *jouit de* (enjoys) the *jouissance* of others, and so he tempts humans to do those acts that would sooner or later produce *jouissance* in them. “Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted [the

Greek for *tempted* can also mean *tested*] by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights, he was hungry. The tempter came to him and said, 'If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread.' Jesus answered, 'It is written: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" [Deut. 8:3].' Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down. For it is written: "He will command his angels concerning you, / and they will lift you up in their hands, / so that you will not strike your foot against a stone" [Psalm 91:11–12].' Jesus answered him, 'It is also written: "Do not put the Lord your God to the test" [Deut. 6:16].' Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor. 'All this I will give you,' he said, 'if you will bow down and worship me.' Jesus said to him, 'Away from me, Satan! For it is written: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only" [Deut. 6:13].' Then the devil left him" (Matthew 4:1–11). It is inaccurate to say that Satan tempted Jesus but Jesus resisted the temptation; Satan failed to tempt Jesus since Jesus did not feel any *jouissance* in relation to Satan's suggestions. Quoting is not an argument from authority when done by (the Son of) God. Jesus's quotations indicate two things: that he does not libidinally get the temptation, which is related to *jouissance*; and that the words of the Old Testament he quotes in the New Testament, whose various compilers and authors do unconsciously libidinally intimate the temptation, are related to an episode in which someone was actually tempted (whether the latter overcame the temptation or not is another matter), i.e., got the temptation libidinally (if we do not find the temptation in that episode, then this

could indicate that that episode was tampered with by the editors of the Old Testament). For example, according to Matthew and Luke, Jesus responded to Satan's first attempt to tempt him by quoting part of Deuteronomy 6:16. This would indicate that one is to look for *jouissance* in the episode mentioned in Deuteronomy 6:16, which in full is: "You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah." That's how one can know that Massah was a site of *jouissance*. "He named the place Massah [i.e., testing] and Meribah because of the quarrel of the sons of Israel, and because they tested the Lord, saying, 'Is the Lord among us, or not?'" (Exodus 17:7). How does one put the Lord, in his guise as the angel of the Lord,²³⁰ to the test? One does it by indulging in *jouissance* to such a degree that were He not to leave in time, He would become a fallen angel. What is the *jouissance* implied by Jesus's reference in Matthew 4:4 to Deuteronomy 8:3 during his testing by the Tempter? One reads in Deuteronomy 8:3: "He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord." But these words in turn refer to the episode narrated in Exodus 16: "In the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the dew was gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground appeared on the desert floor. When the Israelites saw it, they said to each other, 'What is it?' ... Moses said to them, 'It is the bread the Lord has given you to eat. This is what the Lord has commanded: "Everyone is to gather as much as they need. Take an omer for each person you have in your tent.'" The Israelites did as they were told; some gathered much, some little. And when they measured it by the omer, the one who gathered much did

not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little. Everyone had gathered just as much as they needed. Then Moses said to them, ‘No one is to keep any of it until morning.’ However, some of them paid no attention to Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but it was full of maggots and began to smell” (13–20). Some of those who kept part of the manna (“The people of Israel called the bread manna” [Exodus 16:31]) until morning began to crave it warts and all, in other words, only if it was full of maggots and smelly, and each day would not sate their appetite but keep some of the manna to the next morning so it would again be full of maggots and smelly. I imagine that when Moses went on to say to them, “Man does not live on bread alone ...” the most witty, shameless and articulate among them thought, if not bluntly said, “but also on the maggots in the bread and the resultant smelliness.” In Psalm 91 we read: “If you say, ‘The Lord is my refuge,’ / ... he will command his angels concerning you / to guard you in all your ways; / they will lift you up in their hands, / so that you will not strike your foot against a stone. / ... You will not fear ... the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, / nor the plague that destroys at midday. / A thousand may fall at your side, / ten thousand at your right hand, / but it will not come near you. / You will only observe with your eyes / and see the punishment of the wicked.” It is symptomatic that the devil omits the words “to guard you in all your ways” when he quotes Psalm 91:11 to Jesus. Among those who observed with their eyes the effects of “the plague with which the Lord” struck “all the nations that fought against Jerusalem” (Zechariah 14:12), some were seized by *jouissance* on seeing the flesh of the nations that fought against Jerusalem “rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes ...

rot in their sockets, and their tongues ... rot in their mouths” (ibid.), in other, medical terms: the bleeding from their mouths, noses, or rectums, or under their skin; the gangrene of their extremities, most commonly their fingers, toes, and noses; and the swelling of their lymph nodes “situated in the groin, armpit or neck,” which became “about the size of a chicken egg.”²³¹

Thinking across Lapses of Consciousness If Not of Being

Deleuze: “‘What’s happening to me is too big for me.’ That’s the lament. So I would love to say every morning, ‘What’s happening to me is too big for me,’ because that’s joy. In a certain way, it’s joy in the pure state.... There you have the lament: it’s too big for me, unhappily or happily—generally unhappily, but that’s really just a detail.”²³² But for the last words, “unhappily or happily—generally unhappily, but that’s really just a detail”—*a detail raised to infinity or eternity is no longer a detail*—Deleuze’s words are a good description of heaven, with its joy, and hell, with its *jouissance*, which are realms suffused with laments. In hell, one’s lament regarding *jouissance* is impaired by one’s protest against the compulsive drive to repeat it, while in heaven, given that joy, even though it is too big for one, *even as a subtle body then*, is willed, that is, willed once and for all to eternally recur, one’s lament is unimpaired.

What is ‘*adhb*, sweet, when experienced once, twice, or some desired and manageable number of times becomes ‘*adhāb*, torment, when it is repeated compulsively endlessly; since its compulsory endless repetition is intrinsic to *jouissance*, the sweetness of *jouissance* has something tormenting about it even

the first time around, though this becomes clear with the first (compulsory) repetition. *Jouissance* then is a ‘*udhūba tu’adhhib*, a ‘*adhāb ‘adhb* (both Arabic words ‘*udhūba* and *ta’dhīb* originate in the trilateral consonantal root ‘*ayn dhāl bā*’: “*adhuba ... aor...., inf. n. ‘udhūba*, said of water ... [and app. of wine or other beverage, and of food ...], *It was, or became, sweet ... or it was, or became, easy and agreeable to be drunk or swallowed.... ‘adhhabahu*, inf. n. *ta’dhīb*, *He punished, castigated, or chastised, him ... [and he, or it, tormented, or tortured, him:] originally, he beat him: then, he punished him in any painful manner*”²³³), a sweetness that torments, a torment that is sweet.²³⁴ The one who experiments what induces *jouissance* wishes the latter neither only once nor an endless number of times and days, but twice, one hundred and twenty days, one thousand and one times, yet he or she ends up undergoing it in the *mode* of endlessness if not infinity (Borges’s following words thus apply more accurately to *jouissance* than to *The Thousand and One Nights*—or to the latter only insofar as it is related to *jouissance*: “For us [I would say, for the drive and *jouissance*] the word *thousand* is almost synonymous with *infinite*. To say *a thousand nights* is [for the drive and *jouissance*] to say infinite nights, countless nights, endless nights. To say *a thousand and one nights* is [for the drive and *jouissance*] to add one to infinity”²³⁵)—hell, in which one has a different kind of body and experiences a different kind of time, eternity, is not a punishment for *jouissance* but the fitting setting for it. To most people, I would *not* say, “Go to hell”—how vain many people are to consider that they are prepared to go to hell, already deserving to be in it. The vast majority of people are not ready to continue for long in hell and would be out of it very quickly; the poet Rimbaud was ready to be in hell (through

jouissance) for only a season (as one can deduce from the title of the book in which he wrote, “I believe I’m in hell, therefore I am,” *A Season in Hell*). Rebirth into this world indicates that one is not yet ready for heaven or hell, in a way unworthy of either.

The continued presence of the angel indicates that what one is experiencing does not have to be undergone as *jouissance* but can, from a different viewpoint, be experienced as joy, in other words, be redeemed by the Messiah.

Sometimes you may believe that it is not too late to redeem yourself, yet the guardian angel leaves you: this indicates that in reality it is already too late for you to redeem yourself (but not for God to do so: “My mercy embraces everything” [Qur’ān 7:156]). Contrariwise, however abject your situation becomes and however determined by *jouissance* you become, as long as the guardian angel has not abandoned you—or fallen—it is premature to respond with, “It’s too late.”

It seems that as long as one has not attained joy, there is no recognition and satisfaction at the level of both the object and subject. With the object of desire, one sooner or later has the feeling, “*That’s not it*,” and then one looks for another object, again and again, in a recurrent eventual dissatisfaction. But with the object cause of desire, while one is not disappointed with it as one recurrently experiences it (strangely, it does not get depleted however much it is used), but feels, *That’s it!*, one senses that one’s repeated experience of it is compulsive and notes, in one’s fleeting moments of lucidity, that it is making one increasingly disappointed with oneself, indeed no longer recognize oneself so debased and abject

one has become, so that soon enough what most defines one is this *object a* rather than oneself. Be forewarned about what induces *jouissance* because while in relation to it one feels, “That’s it!” one gradually feels in relation to oneself as one changes while compulsively partaking of it repeatedly, “That’s not me!” (a protest that appears increasingly lame).

Agamben: “It is particularly instructive ... to read medieval treatises on the integrity and quality of the body of the resurrected. The problem that the Fathers had to confront first of all was that of the resurrected body’s identity with the body of the man in life. For the identity of these two bodies seemed to imply that all the matter that had belonged to the body of the dead person must come back to life and take its place once again in the blessed organism. But this is precisely where difficulties arose.... What about hair and fingernails? And sperm, sweat, milk, urine, and other secretions?”²³⁶ The urinary flow is one of the *objects a* (along with the mamilla, the voice, the gaze, the nothing, etc.), in other words, the objects cause of desire, according to Lacan. One of the criteria of a successful resurrection is that the (Lacanian) *object a* be regenerated along with the one who comes back; without the *object a*, the resurrection would not matter that much.

He entered the bathroom to urinate. He saw several strands of her hair in the toilet bowl (she had hurriedly left the bathroom just as she finished her shower to answer her ringing cellular phone). It seemed completely unacceptable to him to urinate over these fallen strands of her hair, even though she had already discarded them in the toilet bowl—whereas it would not have been out of the question for him to perversely urinate over her hair while

having sex with her. So he flushed the toilet then urinated then flushed the toilet again—only to hear her voice admonishing him for wasting so much water!

His team’s very complex, elaborate, sophisticated, and minutely organized scheme to obtain a precious object was proceeding according to plan when he glimpsed the *object a*, the “object cause of desire,” and once again he could not resist, felt that he was ready to let go of everything else, however detrimental that would be to his very dear collaborators, in order to try to get that object. What is missing from the so-called *Mission: Impossible* films so far (Brian De Palma’s *Mission: Impossible*, 1996; John Woo’s *Mission: Impossible II*, 2000; J. J. Abrams’s *Mission: Impossible III*, 2006; Brad Bird’s *Mission: Impossible—Ghost Protocol*, 2011; and Christopher McQuarrie’s *Mission: Impossible—Rogue Nation*, 2015), where the protagonist Ethan Hunt is played by the same actor, Tom Cruise, is the *object a*. It is the absence of *object a*, an object that would derail the mission assigned to the protagonist and his team, that precludes the mission in each of these films from being really an impossible one however difficult it seems. Nietzsche wrote: “The *sovereign individual*, ... the man who has his own independent, protracted will and the *right to make promises*, ... is bound to honor his peers, ... that is, all those who promise like sovereigns, ... who give their word as something that can be relied on because they know themselves strong enough to maintain it in the face of accidents, even ‘in the face of fate’”²³⁷; one can paraphrase Nietzsche’s “in the face of fate” as “in the face of the derailing *object a*.” A successful “mission: impossible” would be one in which one accomplishes the mission notwithstanding running into the *object a*, an object that was bound to derail

it. That *Mission: Impossible* has turned into a series can be generously read as a symptom of the odd absence of *object a* and a search for it: the series would stop once an *object a* is encountered since the film would then finally fit its title.

How do you know what, in a scene, is triggering your fetishistic desire? One way to try to detect it is to attempt to reproduce the object yourself, as it were artistically; it is quite possible that you would then discover that the fetish includes one or more elements that you did not consider to be part of it, and in the absence of which what you mistook for the fetish proves to be extremely disappointing (something you would throw in the garbage can rather than grab from it as a treasure), failing to produce its extraordinary effect, reduced to what those for whom it is *not* a fetish see in it: just a shoe or a high school sailor-suit uniform, etc.

With love one encounters what is irreplaceable, and thus in love there is the implicit expectation, at least in the Christian era of the resurrection and the life, that one would resurrect the beloved were he or she to die before one; while with perversion one encounters the “object” that, although made to the measure of one’s desire, is felt to be in principle replaceable, even though in actuality one may never come across it or an equivalent again.

How to make him always think of her? Counter-intuitively, she did so by having a complete dependence on him, thus implying that she is a projection of his desire and/or an emanation of his mind, and consequently that he was virtually always desiring and/or thinking of her.

Notwithstanding how dangerous it can be to assume such a position, what would many people matter were they not the fantasy of someone? In Hitchcock’s *Vertigo*, would Madeleine (as emulated and impersonated by Judy in a scheme devised by Madeleine’s husband to make his planned murder of his wife appear to be a suicide) strike Scottie as perfect were it not that she happens to coincide with his fantasy? To be the fantasy of someone, is that not one of the rare manners of being perfect just as one is? As for Judy, not as she is herself but as (melancholic Scottie’s) fantasy changes her into herself as Madeleine and perfect, does she not lovingly give what—in comparison to Madeleine—she does not have²³⁸?

In Hitchcock’s *Vertigo*, while Scottie already felt that his longtime friend Midge was in no way the object of his desire even before becoming intensely attracted to, indeed enamored of Madeleine, who gave every sign of being unconsciously haunted by and modeling herself on her dead great grandmother, Carlotta Valdes, including through the latter’s portrait at a museum, his feeling was starkly confirmed when Midge, in a fit of jealousy of Madeleine, painted a version of Carlotta Valdes’s portrait in which she substituted herself for her—in a great intuitive gesture of profanation that backfired. What would have released him from the melancholic spell of Madeleine, now dead, which drove him to model a woman, Judy, who resembled her physically, into a Madeleine lookalike (same clothes, hairstyle and hair color, etc.)? It would have been for the remodeled Judy to sit in the museum admiring the painting that Midge painted of herself in the position of Carlotta Valdes.

One of his previous lovers told him: “You are already thoroughly unfaithful to me, for the woman you are dating currently does not resemble me, has not really been *after me*.” If his new beloved wanted to know more details about his previous beloved, it was to make sure that she was not *after the latter*, but just a different beloved, if not the final beloved.

“I will love you until the end of the world.” And indeed he loved her until the end of the world, which for him ended with the onset of his schizophrenia even while it seemed to be continuing for others. Was she therefore unjust to accuse him of failing to fulfill his promise? Or was his madness, his death before dying, his way of ceasing to love her while still fulfilling his promise?

Nietzsche wrote in a 13 November 1888 letter to Franz Overbeck, “We recently had the melancholy pomp of a great funeral, in which the whole of Italy took part: that of Count Robilant, the most respected type of Piedmontese nobleman, actually also a son of King Carlo Alberto ...”²³⁹ He wrote in a letter dated January 5, 1889, ostensibly to Jacob Burckhardt, “Every name in history is I”²⁴⁰ and “This autumn ... I twice attended my funeral, first as Count Robilant.” In order to have a funeral, one must have already died physically—or died before dying physically, that is, found oneself in unworldly conditions in which one asked oneself, “Am I dead?” or concluded, based on the unworldly things and events one was witnessing, “I must be dead.” Having died before dying physically and, consequently, felt, “every name in history is I,” Nietzsche could attend his funeral as Count Robilant, one of the names of history. How to understand Nietzsche’s assertion that he attended his funeral

as Count Robilant? Did he *as Count Robilant* attend the latter’s funeral, one more time, or the funeral of a certain controversial German philologist and philosopher by the name of Friedrich Nietzsche, not recognizing then the latter’s corpse as his—but doing so retrospectively when he assumed the name “Nietzsche” as one of the names of history? Under whose guise did he attend his funeral the second time? Nietzsche does not specify. Was it in his own guise in Germany in 1888, getting one more confirmation that he died? Or was it as Jesus in what appeared to be Palestine circa 30 (his dying before dying physically having provided the condition for him to assume every name in history, Nietzsche was crucified as and in place of Jesus, one of the names of history—so that Jesus, both one of the hypostases of God and “the truth” [John 14:6], could be crucified in place of someone who exclaimed, *anā al-ḥaqq* [I am the Truth/Real, that is, God], al-Ḥallāj)? Nietzsche, who wrote in a letter that he attended his funeral twice, died physically twice: as Jesus in Palestine circa 30 and as himself in 1900. If one doesn’t die before dying physically then there’s at most a single funeral on one’s behalf that is attended only by others; but if one dies before dying physically, then one ends up attending one’s funeral more than once, under several names if not all the names of history, since in one’s undeath one assumes every name in history.

It is felicitous that I, who explicitly died before dying in 1989 in Evanston, Illinois, hence who would have died twice when I die physically, was officially born twice, in Baghdad according to my passport, and in Sidon, in south Lebanon, according to my Lebanese birth certificate.²⁴¹

Nietzsche must have briefly become aware, on dying before dying physically (“This autumn [of 1888] ... I twice attended my funeral ...”²⁴²), of the coexistence of his history, as well as history *tout court* (to which belong, among others, King Carlo Alberto²⁴³; the papal state secretary under Pius IX Antonelli²⁴⁴; Ferdinand de Lesseps²⁴⁵; the man named Prado who was condemned to death for killing Marie Agriétant on January 14, 1886;²⁴⁶ and Henri Chambige²⁴⁷), with a labyrinthine temporality that does not acknowledge, indeed undermines history (“I twice attended my funeral, first as Count Robilant [no, he is my son, insofar as I am Carlo Alberto, my nature below], but I was Antonelli myself.... I am Prado, I am also Prado’s father, I venture to say that I am also Lesseps.... I am also Chambige ... every name in history is I”).

As a mortal, I am not only going to physically die at some future date, I am already dead while alive, “simultaneously” dead, in the undeath realm, while alive. Why the qualification of *simultaneously* by quotation marks? It is because the temporality of the undeath realm is not a chronological, linear one, but labyrinthine. I, Jalal Toufic, am “simultaneously” alive in Beirut in December 2013 and dead under the same or, most likely, another name in a different city and in a previous or later time, for example, 1989 or 1962 (the year I, Jalal Toufic, was born) or 1889.

With most people the difficulty is to convince them that they, as mortals, are dead even while still physically alive; with almost all the others, for example, schizophrenic Daniel Paul Schreber in the mental hospital, the difficulty is to convince them that they are conjointly alive even while dead.

What is most difficult to accomplish is to realize and acknowledge what one already “is” or has: what is most difficult for a mortal is to become aware and acknowledge that he is dead even while still physically alive; and what is most difficult for a sentient being is to realize that he, she, or it already has or is Buddha nature.

With the possible exception of the messianic Parousia, there are aspects of the event that are not experienced. In the case of the event of dying before dying, in a way the paradigmatic event, one does not, unless one is a yoga/Zen/Sufi master, experience the transition to the undeath realm, and so one does not immediately recognize that one is dead but rather suspects it as a result of becoming lost “in” labyrinthine space and time, coming across immobilized people, having the impression that others (including his or her doctor or psychoanalyst) are extras (as in a film shoot), hearing one or more voices assert, “You’re dead!” or refer to one as dead, etc.—how strange to wonder in relation to a series of particular anomalies, “Am I dead?” for this ostensible question implies that one, who supposedly never died and who may consider that when one physically dies one is reduced to nothing, knows or intuits the state of death.²⁴⁸ Here’s a limit case where the event, in this case dying before physically dying, would be undergone without being experienced:²⁴⁹ a doctor’s prognosis-cum-performative that indicates that a certain mortal would die within a certain span, for example, “I give him at most two months to live,” but is accompanied by no patient changes in the latter’s experience within that span—had that mortal lived circa 30 in Palestine, the doctor’s prognosis could have been confirmed to be a performative had Jesus, who had advised a

prospective follower who professed he was going to bury his father, “Let the dead bury their own dead” (Matthew 8:22), not advised him against burying his dead father (what would have shown the prognosis not to be a performative would have been for Jesus, without resurrecting him, to have said to him, “Don’t bury your dead father!”).

I was listening to a recording I had made while driving to university a few days before, when suddenly I heard something I did not recall happening during that drive: a car screech followed by an ominous silence. I was momentarily anxious that I may have died or been severely injured in that car crash, and for a few seconds apprehensively waited to ascertain what the outcome was!

Prior to his resurrection by “the life,” the mortal Lazarus was exposed to two kinds of death: physical demise, which occurs when the infinity of extensive parts that were determined “by a mechanical law” to compose “the body’s characteristic or dominant relation” of rest and motion acquire, through “accidents and external affections,” a “*different relation* of motion and rest,” so that “what has been done away with is not the relation, which is eternally true, but rather the parts *between which* it was established and which have now assumed another relation....²⁵⁰ Death [I would say: physical demise] is all the more necessary²⁵¹ because it always comes from without.... It is death’s [I would say: physical demise’s] necessity that makes us believe that it is internal to ourselves. But in fact the destructions and decompositions do not concern either our relations in themselves or our essence. They only concern our extensive parts which belong to us for the time being, and then are determined to enter

into other relations than our own”²⁵²; and death as undeath, “an outside more distant than any external world because it is an inside deeper than any internal world”²⁵³ (it is no accident that Deleuze and Guattari’s description of “the plane of immanence” fits perfectly death as undeath, for the latter is one of the guises of this plane). Those who consider that the miracle performed by Jesus Christ, the life, in relation to Lazarus consisted solely in bringing the dead man back to life miss its full power and radicalness by not being aware that the man who came back from the grave was, unlike Lazarus prior to his physical death, fully alive, no longer a mortal, that is, no longer dead while alive. Spinoza’s assertion that death strikes always from the exterior actually applies to rare cases: Jesus Christ, “the life,” and the three (or four) mortals he resurrected.

For death not to be an accident, even if the sickness that led to it was accurately diagnosed and its ravages proceeded as predicted, one has to die before dying (otherwise it would still then be an accident that I have *this* deadly sickness).

Physical demise is accidental, even when it could have been predicted through genetic analysis, while the death one contains as a mortal is not an accident (until the will is accomplished, which abolishes death-as-undeath), although in most cases one becomes aware of it ostensibly accidentally (in some cases, one intuitively and unconsciously brings about the bungled action that leads to one’s death before dying in order to become aware that one was already dead while alive anyway).

Old age or a grave sickness do not as such provide a manner of approaching death but rather an

occasion to feel more and more at a remove from life. While still physically alive, the mortal has to do his or her damndest to approach what he or she cannot evade, death as undeath, a state that already applies to him as a mortal but with which from another perspective he cannot coincide since it happens to others, the other names of history he or she assumes in death. To approach death as something other than physical demise I have to be aware or at least keenly intuit that I am dead while alive, but to be aware that I am dead even while still alive I have to die before dying physically, when I suddenly “find” “myself,” after a lapse of consciousness if not of being, in conditions in which I soon enough ask myself, “Am I dead?” and feel, “I must be dead.” What is it to die prematurely? It is to have missed dying before one’s physical death.

The *late*: 1. one who did not die before dying physically; 2. an undead, whose past is retroactively influenced by the investigations into it by those who outlived him or her.

If there is nothing beyond physical death, if then one is no more, this would mean that dying other than in the uneventful manner of physical death (Epicurus on physical death: “Death is nothing to us, since when we are, death has not come, and when death has come, we are not” [Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*]) has to be done while still physically alive. Is one to risk this death that makes one’s sight piercing (*ḥadīd*), but also exposes one to evil, which was introduced by it, or is one to avoid it as one avoids hell?

If you did not “have” your death (which dispossesses you even of yourself through dissociation, theft of

thought, etc.) in you as a mortal, if, like the resurrected brother of Martha and Mary, you were not dead while alive, then *vous ne seriez pas en mesure de donner la mort autrement qu’en tuant; vous ne seriez pas en mesure de vous donner la mort autrement que par le suicide*; you would be able only to *give your life* for this or that. One of the manners if not the only manner of *se donner la mort* (*Collins French-English Dictionary* [mis-]translates this idiomatic expression as: *to take one’s own life*) without committing suicide is to die before dying physically.

The one or two days or nights in which Nietzsche attended his funeral (“This autumn [of 1888] ... I twice attended my funeral, first as Count Robilant”²⁵⁴), as well as the day in 1989 in which I died before physically dying, as well as the night in August 1939 during which Antonin Artaud’s cadaver was removed from Ville-Évrard occupy, in the words of Antonin Nalpas (who was “born posthumously” [Nietzsche] upon Artaud’s dying before dying physically [the latter occurred on March 4, 1848]),²⁵⁵ “the span of several intercalary days that are not included in the calendar of this world—though they are true as the day from here.”²⁵⁶

In the conditions in which one would ask oneself, “Am I dead?” sooner or later one would, if one belongs to the cinematic era, also ask oneself, “Am I in a film?” having witnessed immobilizations of people, in other words, dead stops (the equivalent of cinema’s freeze frames),²⁵⁷ and the temporal peculiarities made possible by these as the genetic element of movement, such as slow motion and backward in time motion; undergone lapses of consciousness if not of being (including by becoming immobilized), which result in an editing of “reality”;

felt that some of the others were extras, etc. But whereas “Am I in a film?” is actually a question, one that can be answered possibly negatively, “Am I dead?” is not actually a question but signals the same conviction as “I must be dead” and is a possible manner to say the unsayable “I am dead.” To manage to say, “I am dead,” implies that one is *not* dead; to ask, “Am I dead?” and answer, “Yes, I am dead,” is an indication that one is *not* dead—so long as I experience the “Am I dead?” as simply a question, I can be sure that I am not dead. A dead man or woman cannot assert, “I am dead,” since he or she cannot strictly and properly speaking assume the position of I—unless at the same time he or she comes to feel radically that “I” is a shifter, a deictic; in other words, I can say, “I am dead!” on the condition of assuming, while lost in labyrinthine time, every name in history. Nietzsche, who wrote in a letter, “I am Prado, I am also Prado’s father, I venture to say that I am also Lesseps.... I am also Chambige.... every name in history is I,” could have written not only an expression that *implies* that he’s dead, “This autumn ... I twice attended my funeral,” but also, “I am dead!”

During his youth, he was a solitary man who was ostensibly fully worldly. Then, while still ostensibly fully worldly, he constructed through writing a universe that, while different from the one in which he lived, did not fall part “two days” later. Then he managed a paradoxically more difficult feat: he dispersed the universe he had constructed and that had not fallen apart on its own “two days” later.²⁵⁸ Then he died before dying, becoming aware that he was all along a mortal, someone who was dead even while still physically alive, thus partially worldly and partially lost in an unworldly realm.

In his lecture from April 15, 1980, at the University of Paris 8,²⁵⁹ Deleuze indicated that “concepts ... are not unrelated to something that would, however, appear the furthest from the concept, notably the scream.... Each time that you need to scream, I think that you are not far from a kind of call of philosophy.” He gave examples of such philosophical screams in various of his lectures: Leibniz’s “Everything must surely have a reason,”²⁶⁰ Aristotle’s “It is indeed necessary to stop,”²⁶¹ etc. I would advance that one of the greatest screams of the philosopher Nietzsche was let out in the final letter we have by him, the one addressed ostensibly to Jacob Burckhardt: “Every name in history is I.”

Notwithstanding that not everyone may be able to comprehensively actualize madness (“*Ne devient pas fou qui veut*” [Lacan]), the usually largely contained madness of each and everyone, given that we have an unconscious and that as mortals we are dead while alive, is a transcendental condition of possibility for even one madman, for example, Nietzsche in January 1889, to be able to say, “Every name in history is I.”

For much of his life, and not only during his walk through the woods by Lake Silvaplana in August of 1881, when “the basic conception” of his work *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and Nobody*, “the *thought of eternal recurrence*, this highest attainable formula of affirmation, ... was dashed off on a sheet of paper with the caption ‘6,000 feet beyond man and time,’” Nietzsche was alone; then in his psychosis, in his dying before dying (“This autumn ... I twice attended my funeral”), he was all alone, writing in the last letter we have by him, “Every name in history is I.”

Around the beginning of January 1889, after the first or second instance of realizing that he had signed his letter with another name, Nietzsche, perceptive that he was, must have dreaded the moment when the name he would be assuming while writing a new letter would coincide with that of its addressee, going on a letter-writing spree to reach all those with whom he felt the urge to communicate before the aforementioned looming eventuality. And so from January 3 to January 5, 1889, we have in Nietzsche's handwriting a substantial number of letters (some of them only one or two lines long): to August Strindberg, Georg Brandes, Peter Gast, "the Illustrious Pole," and Malwida von Meysenbug (signed "The Crucified"); to Jakob Burckhardt, Cosima Wagner, and Franz Overbeck (signed "Dionysus"); etc. Then, on January 5, 1889, we have in Nietzsche's handwriting a letter that includes the assertion, "every name in history is I"^{262, 263} while this letter is nominally addressed to Jacob Burckhardt, it may very well be addressed to no other than Nietzsche himself, given that "Jacob Burckhardt" is one of the names of history. It is thus doubtful whether the writer of such a letter should at all have bothered sending it. Indeed, thenceforth Nietzsche ceased if not writing letters then at least sending them. In the same letter, Nietzsche asserted that he is God ("Actually I would much rather be a Basel professor than God; but I have not ventured to carry my private egoism so far as to omit creating the world on his account") and dead ("This autumn ... I twice attended my funeral, first as Count Robilant"): this double averment is not incongruous, since God fundamentally always addresses only Himself, albeit in the guise of the infinity of His self-disclosures; and since the dead cannot reach anyone else/of the living, in other words, since everyone in history (and

outside it) is one of the "self"-projections of the dead in the bardo.

Representation, whether in the form of acting or representative democracy, finds in death—not as physical demise but as undead—its condition of impossibility, since nobody can die (or be mad, i.e., die before dying physically) in my place ("dying ... is essentially mine in such a way that no one can be my representative"²⁶⁴ [Heidegger]), but also its condition of possibility, since it is in death (and madness, that is, death before dying physically) that "every name in history is I" and, accordingly, that I can be replaced by another, that one person can replace and represent another. Representative democracy that is not based on a basic experience of one's replaceability by another, indeed all others, exemplarily through dying before dying physically, is a sham, baseless, unfounded. Whether or not representative democracy is mad, it is based on madness and death, where "every name in history is I."

For the endeavor to do away with distance in all fields where it can be nullified to be salutary and emancipatory, not plebeian and resentful, the "phenomenon of a distance, however close it may be" (Walter Benjamin), that is, of the aura, has to persist in at least one domain (dance ...). It is the sensitivity to this other distance that cannot be done away with altogether, and the intuition of its subsistence in some domain that has made it possible for aristocrats to side with, encourage, indeed fight for movements whose aim was to reduce distance in terms of caste, class, gender, race, etc.

One can approach in space or through a telephoto lens a representation of an angel that is merely

that, a representation, but one cannot legitimately do this when the ostensible representation of the angel is actually his presentation, that is, when the angel is present in the guise of a representation, for example, a figure in a painting (it may be that what appeared to be representations of angels in the Hagia Sophia were angels, and that these angels ended up withdrawing sometime before or after the fall of Constantinople to, and its plunder for three days and nights by, the Ottoman army in 1453 and the turning of the church into a mosque and then into a museum, their figures becoming reduced then to just representations). Given the aura of the angel, he is indivisible into limbs and other parts, so that any accurate demarcation regarding him would have to be not of any joints, since he has none, but of his aura (in a fiction film there should be no close-up of the angel since, given his aura, he cannot be cropped so as to enlarge a “part” and he is as a whole already somewhat abstracted from the space-time where he appears during his visitation,²⁶⁵ as it were keyed on it). Had the angel appeared initially to be very far away and I, attracted to him notwithstanding my terror of being overwhelmed by his presence, formed the intention of walking toward him, then the impression that it was not I who was thenceforth approaching him but he who was approaching me would be confirmed by the lack of any tiredness on my part by the time I found myself the closest to him spatially that his aura allows. During the angel’s approach toward me, when I miss him as an apparition, which happens repeatedly since he does not move linearly in three-dimensional space, I nevertheless do not stop feeling his presence; and when I do not lose him from sight, although I can perceive more and more of him as a whole I do so *without feeling that*

the additional things I am perceiving are details (“from French *détail* [noun], *détailler* [verb], from *dé-* [expressing separation] + *tailler* ‘to cut’ [based on Latin *talea* ‘twig, cutting’]” [*Oxford Dictionary of English*, 3rd ed., 2016]).

Nota bene: As long as some poets and thinkers and filmmakers write or make films also if not exclusively for angels, it is inaccurate to say that no angels exist—indeed angels exist more as addressees of poetry, thinking, and filmmaking than as addressees of the exoteric prayers of religious people.

What the stigmata of the Christian saints should have implied was that on the cross Jesus bled though stigmata since, having an aura, no nails could touch him let alone penetrate his body.

Jesus knew that he was to be crucified but did not know how it would be possible for humans to kill him, *the life* (John 11:25)—that was one more mystery among the many his life contained. “God has died of his pity for man”²⁶⁶ (Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*). One way to read this diagnosis by Nietzsche is that out of his pity for humans God incarnated as a man to redeem them and ended up dying of physical wounds he sustained while crucified by them. I would read it otherwise: even when incarnated, he, *the life*, could not have died as a result of his crucifixion—it was his pity that killed him.

In Christianity, the intersection of God and man happens through the incarnation and death of God, in the figure of Jesus Christ. That’s an exceptional conjuncture invented by Christianity, for the more paradigmatic manner for such an intersection to occur is through the death/madness of man: since everything and everyone is “one” of the infinite

self-disclosures of God, and since each of the dead assumes every name in history, both can assert: “Every name in history is I.”

Every so often, my friend Fouad Elkoury reminds me that in one of our early conversations I said to him, “One day I may become a Sufi,” and then asks me if I am closer to becoming one. He seems unaware that to become a Sufi is to become vividly conscious that “wheresoever you turn, there is the Face of God” [Qur’ān 2:115]. Is Fouad Elkoury repeatedly asking me then, unbeknownst to himself, “When will you treat me, your recurrently recreated friend, as (one of the infinite self-disclosures of) God?”

For God to be interested in man, man has to be worthy of that: through being one of the infinite self-disclosures of God, and/or through *fana’* (obliteration) in God, etc.

Rilke writes in his *Duino Elegies*: “I won’t endure these half-filled human masks; / better, the puppet. It at least is full. / I’ll put up with the stuffed skin, the wire, the face / that is nothing but appearance. Here. I’m waiting. / Even if the lights go out; even if someone / tells me ‘That’s all’; even if emptiness / floats toward me in a gray draft from the stage; / even if not one of my silent ancestors / stays seated with me, not one woman, not / the boy with the immovable brown eye — / I’ll sit here anyway. One can always watch. / ... Am I not right / to feel as if I *must* stay seated, must / wait before the puppet stage, or, rather, / gaze at it so intensely that at last, / to balance my gaze, an angel has to come and / make the stuffed skins startle into life. / Angel and puppet: a real play, finally.” Will some visitor to Bernard Tschumi’s Acropolis Museum in Athens

wait in front of the statues there even if someone tells him or her, “The museum is closing,” and gaze at them (despite his or her apprehension that due to the reduction of some of them to a head or a hand the life into which they may be made to startle could very well be that of a part-object) until a god, more specifically Athena, would come and startle the statues into jubilation (an explanatory note in the museum indicates: “The Greek term *agalma*, meaning ‘statue,’ is derived from the verb *agallomai*, i.e., to jubilate”)?

During Jesus Christ’s resurrection of Lazarus, the latter’s dead body, which was as unrelated to what has a world as a stone, was *miraculously* made to once again be related to what has a world.

That a stone does not strike the one who has a world as completely alien, notwithstanding that, according to Heidegger, it is ostensibly “without a world,” implies that it is, “given the right playbook,” objectively readable as having a world: “Anything can be interpreted as possessing any abstract property, including consciousness and intelligence. Given the right playbook, the thermal jostling of the atoms in a rock can be seen as the operation of a complex, self-aware mind.... Our ‘mind children’ may be able to spot fully functioning intelligences in the complex chemical goings on of plants, the dynamics of interstellar clouds, or the reverberations of cosmic radiation.”²⁶⁷ Were this not the case, it would be incomprehensible that we can include in our world what has no world.

Capitalism thrives by making us forget that even the poorest sane one among us has a world, that the worst that we can fail to have or lose is not any of

what it can produce (the exploitative extraction of surplus value, globalization, cars, the obsolescence of cars and other products that are still functional ...) but the world. A skyscraper, even the tallest in the world (Burj Khalifa in Dubai), is not too big for me, since I, insofar as I am alive, have a world, a whole world.

Slavoj Žižek: “It is easy for us to imagine the end of the world—see numerous apocalyptic films—but not the end of capitalism.”²⁶⁸ If it is true that it is easy for us to imagine the end of the world, it is because, paradoxically, the end of the world has already occurred many times, in the “hallucinations” of schizophrenics and people on psychedelics and in the visions of mystics in *‘ālam al-khayāl* (the Imaginal World); were it not that it has already occurred in these visions and “hallucinations,” it would be incredibly difficult if not impossible to imagine the end of the world. The protracted crisis of capitalism, which may end up destroying life on Earth, continues to occult the fundamental crisis that each one of us is as a mortal, i.e., as already dead (and thus undergoing the end of the world) even while alive.

The “rebirth of history” can be found more in the delirium of someone in the first stages of schizophrenia, who suddenly becomes interested in an untimely, Imaginal history, than in what Alain Badiou refers to in his book thus titled. The schizophrenic experiences both the end of the world (Daniel Paul Schreber: “Very early on there predominated in recurrent nightly visions the notion of an approaching end of the world”)²⁶⁹ and the “birth of history.”

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels wrote in their *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848): “The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society.... All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air ...”—they forgot to explicitly note: including this book, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*—certainly a most *solid* piece of work.

Nietzsche wrote: “A people is a detour of nature to get to six or seven great men.—Yes, and then to get around them” (*Beyond Good and Evil*). One can paraphrase him thus in relation to a people in a revolution or an uprising: “A people is a detour of nature to get to a revolution or an uprising.—Yes, and then to get around it.”

Dalí: “Revolutions have never interested me by what they ‘revolutionize,’ which is always perishable and constantly threatened with becoming the opposite of what it was at the beginning. If revolutions are interesting it is solely because in revolutionizing they disinter and recover fragments of the tradition that was believed dead because it had been forgotten, and that needed simply the spasm of revolutionary convulsions to make them emerge, so that they might live anew.”²⁷⁰ Great revolutions bring about not only the disinterment of “fragments of the tradition” that were gradually buried by layers of culture or “willfully” repressed by leaders who imputed some defeat to them, but also the resurrection of those “fragments of the tradition” whose oblivion was the result of their withdrawal following a surpassing disaster.

It may very well be that it is easier to create anew works of tradition that withdrew past a surpassing disaster than to resurrect them, so difficult if not impossible is resurrection. It may be that the very notion of creation first appeared when a god who had failed in his attempt to resurrect what had withdrawn following a surpassing disaster came up with it as a last resort for making what had withdrawn available again.

The resurrection of Ottoman tradition (and the reactivation of the *strict minimum* of contextual Ottoman culture without which resurrected Ottoman tradition would remain unduly obscure) cannot be a solely Turkish task but requires the collaboration of the other peoples who contributed to this tradition: Arabs, Persians, Armenians, Kurds, Greeks, etc. In July 2010, I asked Selim S. Kuru to translate my book *The Withdrawal of Tradition Past a Surpassing Disaster* (Forthcoming Books, 2009) into Ottoman; he shortly translated some sections of it. In my book *What Were You Thinking?* (2011) I asked: “Will such a translation into Ottoman contribute to the resurrection of tradition?” In December 2014, in a Turkey ruled by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the “Justice and Development Party,” its National Education Council voted to make Ottoman language classes compulsory at religious vocational high schools and elective for other high schools. The withdrawal of Ottoman language and tradition as a result of one or more surpassing disasters was the actual condition of possibility of the effective implementation of Law no. 1353, “On the Adoption and Application of the New Turkish Letters,” which was passed by the Grand National Assembly of the Republic of Turkey on November 1, 1928, and which decreed the

replacement of the Arabic alphabet by the Latin alphabet for the writing of Turkish; and of the subsequent “purification” of Turkish language of as many Arabic and Persian words as (im-)possible. If the renewed teaching of Ottoman language in Turkey is to prove to be related to a resurrection of that language and tradition rather than merely a kitschy, nostalgic, and reactionary scrounging off Ottoman culture, then the Ottoman translation of sections of my book *The Withdrawal of Tradition Past a Surpassing* would have functioned as a condition of possibility of this resurrection.

Seeing throngs of viewers unable to read my photographs of Ottoman inscriptions at the opening of the 9th Shanghai Biennale (October 2, 2012–March 31, 2013), I came to question the pertinence of exhibiting these Ottoman inscriptions in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Shanghai. But then I recalled that with the exception of a few Ottomanists, inscriptions of the same type, for example, at the Main Gallery building of Santralistanbul, the restored and converted Silahtarağa Power Plant, which was the Ottoman Empire’s “first urban-scale power plant,” are unreadable by people in Turkey. Then, while paying for a coffee at the museum’s café, I noticed the word “bankası” written in the Arabic script on the Chinese currency bill! What is this Turkish word written in Arabic script doing in China? It turned out that the reverse side of the modern Chinese paper currency, the renminbi, “renders the phrase ‘People’s Bank of China’ in Chinese, Uighur, Mongolian, Tibetan, and Zhuang scripts.” I soon learned that Uighur people’s Turkic language is still written largely in the Arabic script and realized that some Uighurs might be able to read or at least

decipher the Ottoman inscriptions that were part of my artwork.

A surpassing disaster makes tradition unavailable through its withdrawal, but gives us, possibly, a better sense of what belongs to tradition and what instead belongs to culture. This demarcation of tradition from culture is no inconsequential matter, since tradition's confusion with culture in general, more specifically with the culture of the past, is a danger that does not remain external to tradition but can undermine it.

Deleuze regarding Francis Bacon, whose ninety-two most expensive paintings (which include *Untitled (Pope)*, 1954, sold in 2012 for a hammer price of \$26,500,000, and *Study from Portrait of Pope Innocent X by Velázquez*, 1959, sold in 2006 for a hammer price of \$9,016,584) have a total value of \$1,696,495,836 according to Skate's "Annual Art Investment Report, 2015,"²⁷¹ "Bacon is as severe with himself as was Cézanne.... He passes judgment: the series of crucifixions? Too sensational, too sensational to be felt. Even the bullfights, too dramatic. The series of Popes? 'I have tried very, very unsuccessfully to do certain records—distorted records' of Velásquez's Pope, and 'I regret them, because I think they're very silly ... because I think that this thing was an absolute thing.' What then, according to Bacon himself, should remain of Bacon's work? Some of the series of heads, perhaps, one or two aerial triptychs, and a large back of a man. Nothing more than an apple, or one or two jugs."²⁷²

"In the beginning, there are no clichés." Is that a cliché? What turns something into a cliché? Is it repetition? No! The experience of repetition, indeed

of countless repetition is, as a condition of possibility of ending up willing the eternal recurrence of some of the recurrent events, a prerequisite of the appearance of the following novelty: the will. What turns something into a cliché is our "discarding [from it] ... what has no interest for our needs, or more generally, for our functions" (Bergson, *Matter and Memory*).²⁷³ My failure during each of the sessions of my weekly seminar to notice the discoloration on the chair, the smudges on the floor, etc., given that my attention was then focused on teaching, makes of the classroom a cliché—already at the first session. It turns out I have given all my seminars not in classrooms but in clichés of classrooms.

The (bride and) model of the painter in Poe's *The Oval Portrait* "sat meekly for many weeks in the dark, high turret-chamber where the light [which] dripped upon the pale canvas only from overhead ... [and] which fell so ghastly in that lone turret withered the health and the spirits of his bride, who pined visibly to all but him.... And he *would* not see that the tints which he spread upon the canvas were drawn from the cheeks of her who sat beside him.... And when many weeks had passed, and but little remained to do, save one brush upon the mouth and one tint upon the eye, the spirit of the lady again flickered up as the flame within the socket of the lamp. And then the brush was given, and then the tint was placed; and, for one moment, the painter stood entranced before the work which he had wrought; but in the next, while he yet gazed, he grew tremulous and very pallid, and aghast, and crying with a loud voice, 'This is indeed *Life* itself!' turned suddenly to regard his beloved:—*She was dead!*" But once the painter placed the *final* brush upon the mouth and the *final* tint upon the eye, he was thenceforth structurally looking at the

painting posthumously, since what Derrida wrote about writing applies also to painting, particularly finished paintings: “To write is to produce a mark that will constitute a kind of machine ... that my future disappearance in principle will not prevent from functioning.... When I say ‘my future disappearance,’ I do so to make this proposition more immediately acceptable. I must be able simply to say my disappearance.... This absence is not a continuous modification of presence; it is a break in presence, ‘death,’ or the possibility of ... ‘death’ ... inscribed in the structure of the mark.”²⁷⁴

Did Reha Erdem manage in his fiction film *Hayat var (My Only Sunshine)*, 2008 to do the portrait of the twelve-year-old female character Hayat and/or of the pubescent actress Elit İşcan—in my sense of the portrait of the pubescent girl, which is a rite of non-passage, precluding the woman who would otherwise in a few years assume her name and memories from doing so?²⁷⁵ The film suggests that the girl is raped; the presence of such a trauma in the film implies that her portrait, that other manner of fixating her in pubescence, was not successful.

The old man’s doctor had given him a few years to live; as for her, she was a girl of ten. It would seem he had much less time to exist than she did. Actually both had little time: the old man before dying physically and the pubescent girl before she would be replaced by the woman who would soon lay claim to her name and memories. While it is the case that life expectancy at birth has increased in the world from 52.5 years in 1960 to 75.5 years in 2014, and in Japan from 67.7 years in 1960 to 83.6 years in 2014,²⁷⁶ regrettably so far the extension of the human life span has been limited to the years

of adulthood and old age. In the case of *certain* girls, science and technology should extend not so much the years of adulthood and old age but of physical pubescence, allowing these girls, if they so wished, to persist in that condition many more years than is presently possible, if not indefinitely—i.e., until their death (in which case they would at no point be replaced by the women who could claim their names and memories).

It is ironic that the pervasive use of the term “contemporary” to label artworks made nowadays (and as a periodization marker that refers to the ostensibly ongoing art period that followed that of modern art) has approximately coincided with the introduction of and then advances in computer simulation, which provide a primary condition for Nick Bostrom’s simulation argument, which was first put forward in his essay “Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?” (*Philosophical Quarterly* 53, no. 211, 2003), and which “starts with the assumption that future civilisations will have enough computing power and programming skills to be able to create ... ‘ancestor simulations.’ These would be detailed simulations of the simulators’ predecessors—detailed enough for the simulated minds to be conscious and have the same kinds of experiences we have. The simulation argument makes no assumption about how long it will take to develop this capacity ... 50 years ... 10 million years.... The conclusion of the argument is ... at least one of the following three propositions must be true: 1) Almost all civilisations at our level of development become extinct before becoming technologically mature. 2) The fraction of technologically mature civilisations that are interested in creating ancestor simulations is almost zero. 3) You are almost certainly living in a computer

simulation.... If both one and two are false, there will be simulated minds like ours.... We assume that technologically mature civilisations would have access to enormous amounts of computing power. So enormous, in fact, that by devoting even a tiny fraction to ancestor simulations, they would be able to implement billions of simulations, each containing as many people as have ever existed. In other words, almost all minds like yours would be simulated. Therefore ... you would have to assume that you [who may be using so assuredly the term ‘contemporary,’ for example in expressions such as ‘contemporary art’] are probably one of these simulated minds rather than one of the ones that are not simulated,”²⁷⁷ indeed that “you are almost certainly living in a computer simulation”²⁷⁸ designed and constructed possibly centuries or millennia later by far more advanced beings.

We act as if we are the contemporaries not of our time but of each other. Actually, it is the other way round: we are the contemporaries of our time, in other words, cannot be separated from it, and therefore we are best considered, poetically speaking, that is, strictly speaking, a form of *being-time*²⁷⁹ (Zen master Dōgen: “An ancient Buddha said: ‘For the time being stand on top of the highest peak.... / For the time being three heads and eight arms. / For the time being an eight- or sixteen-foot body....’ ‘For the time being’ here means time itself is being, and all being is time. A golden sixteen-foot body is time.... ‘Three heads and eight arms’ is time.... Yet an ordinary person who does not understand buddhadharma may hear the words *the time-being* this way: ‘For a while I was three heads and eight arms.... Even though the mountains and rivers still exist, I have already passed them.... Those mountains and rivers

are as distant from me as heaven is from earth.’ It is not that simple. At the time the mountains were climbed and the rivers crossed, you were present. Time is not separate from you, and as you are present, time does not go away” [“The Time-Being (*Uji*)”];²⁸⁰ but given that no signal can be faster than the finite speed of light, we are not the contemporaries of each other and of our surroundings, however close they may be, perceiving solely the past—only with the full advent of the Messiah/Mahdī will we become the contemporaries of each other and the world.

Even when they appeared on Earth, the Christ and the Twelfth Imam did not fight the ones who viewed themselves as their enemies since they were not their real contemporaries. I envision Jesus Christ telling his tormentors: “You can mock me and insult me, indeed crucify me—that does not make you my contemporaries.” The real contemporaries of the Christ and of the Mahdī are those who are going to be present at the Second Coming of the former and the return of the latter. Jesus Christ’s “Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword” (Matthew 10:34) applies to the Second Coming, not the first.

We continue to remember, indeed we feel the duty to remember that which happened to us but which we have yet to deserve. Ultimately, to deserve something is to imply that it can be willed to recur eternally, consequently that it does not need to be remembered. What is bad? It is that which we cannot deserve, what we cannot be worthy of, what, in this sense, undeservedly befalls us. What is evil? It is that which even the Messiah/Mahdī/Christ, the Redeemer, cannot reveal that we deserve. Who

is a victim? It is the one to whom something has happened that cannot be deserved even from the perspective of the Redeemer, the Messiah/ Mahdī/Christ.

Would a redeemer of (much of) the past be required if the past disappeared on its own? No. It is with relativity, particularly with its Minkowski rendition of the universe as a block one of space-time, that there is a need for a messianic redeemer of (much of) the past.²⁸¹ Both the Messiah and the Antichrist undo the *fait accompli*, the first for the living, the latter for the dead: the Messiah does so through willing the eternal recurrence of various events, thus making possible the ushering in of the epoch of the will, in which space and time do not compose a four-dimensional block universe; the Antichrist does so through the labyrinth, “in” which the dead’s past is not only no longer identical to his or her historical past while he or she lived, but keeps changing (including as a result of any research or investigation into his or her past by a living man or woman²⁸²).

One could imagine a kind of messianic irony that reveals itself in a series of worsening debacles that affect, at each subsequent episode, a higher percentage of Jewry. The distant descendants of some of the Jews who believed or entertained the notion that Jesus was the awaited Messiah then recanted and resumed their wait for the redeemer when he ended up crucified next to thieves became followers of Sabbatai Zevi as the Messiah then recanted and resumed their wait for the redeemer when he converted to Islam! Will their distant descendants follow as the Messiah someone who would end up being viewed as the Antichrist?

Is the messianic text to be discarded once the messianic time it has ostensibly announced has been actualized? Or is it rather the case that one of the functions if not the main function of the redeemed world is to provide, indeed exhibit the interpretation of the messianic text? The messianic time is the time when reality itself provides, indeed exhibits, the interpretation of the messianic text, that is, the time when to continue to oneself interpret is to be unaware that one is already in messianic time and thus, unbeknownst to one, to exile oneself from messianic time.

Domenico Ghirlandaio’s fresco *The Birth of John the Baptist* (1486–90) in the Tornabuoni Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence, shows Elizabeth resting in bed in the aftermath of the delivery, while a nurse seated nearby holds the baby John, and a young woman walks into the space. As a symptom of the circumstance that in Christianity the birth of John the Baptist cannot be dissociated from the still-to-come birth of Jesus, that is, the Birth, the young woman’s loose dress that’s inflated over her belly gives the impression she is pregnant and thus implies another, yet-to-come birth. It is as though it is not enough for adult John the Baptist to announce the coming of the Christ: even his birth is rendered in such a manner as to give the impression that *the Birth* (that of [the Son of] God) *is yet to happen*. The one destined to announce the coming of someone is born in abeyance, since the all-important, decisive birth is that of the awaited one; and once he has made the announcement he again lives in suspension, survives himself in *the Sunday of Life* (to use the title of a Raymond Queneau book), possibly in a prison or a mental hospital.

“The thousand and one” years of waiting for—the Mahdī.

Are there separate figures of the redeemer: one who redeems by descending “to hell ... not to minister to the dead, but to show that hell, which is not a locus of suffering for debased humans but the unbearable suffering of being banished away from God, can be endured (at the highest spiritual level), and thus spare Iblīs succumbing to the temptation of trying to forget, and consequently do away with the need for the continuing existence of the debased states” Iblīs as demiurge created “as a manner of forgetting the disaster of being banished away from the Beloved, God”;²⁸³ one who manifests, through his antinomian actions and explicit abrogation of the religious law, that the latter withdrew past a surpassing disaster;²⁸⁴ and one who is the overman who experiences countless repetition and ends up willing the eternal recurrence of some events, thus ushering in the epochal will, which “abrogates the laws of the unwilled, unredeemed world, including the ‘laws’ of nature” so “that the ones still there then would no longer be living in the block universe of space-time of relativity, in which all is preserved, even what is evil, even what is unforgivable, even what cannot be willed to recur eternally, but would be living in a universe where things are transient but subsist only because they are willed to eternally recur,”²⁸⁵ in the process making the speed of light “if not infinite then so fast that the light travel time from the most distant objects in the universe to a sentient being falls below the quantum mechanical uncertainty, and—allowing for the associated changes in the electron charge, e , and/or Planck’s constant, h , that would preserve the fine-structure constant and/or other changes that would permit

intelligent beings to continue to exist—those living then become the contemporaries of what they perceive, for example, of the overman as Messiah/Mahdī”²⁸⁶ and of each other and the universe?

While it is true that film producers have at times jeopardized if not compromised, and film censors can still make a mess of, the films through which we have access to Tarkovsky’s universe, all the producers and censors of the world cannot alter anything in that universe itself, for example, move the cup that the Stalker’s daughter displaced telekinetically in *Stalker*—it would take the Messiah to do so successfully.

He felt that for him to manage to stir the sugar he had just put in a cup of tea, he would have, however minimally, to move everything else in the universe, the sun and the moon, galaxies, etc., and so he waited for the sugar to melt on its own in the tea, hoping that it would do so before the latter became cold.

In Vincente Minnelli’s *An American in Paris* (1951), one of the protagonists introduces himself to us thus while addressing the camera: “Adam Cook is my name.... I like Paris. It’s a place where you don’t run into old friends—although that’s never been one of my problems. Strangely enough, I made a friend over here once. I worked for him. His name was Henri Baurel. You know, the French music hall star. Do you remember him?” At this point we hear the response, “I do, because that’s me,” while being provided ostensibly with the music hall star’s subjective point of view. The speaker continues, “My, how nice to be in the old quarter!” Those who happen to be in the street appear to greet him/the camera. “You see? Everybody recognizes me. I guess I

haven't changed so much after all. They've known me for a long time. But now, don't misunderstand. I don't mean to imply that I am old. I'm not. After all, I am only ... Well, what's the difference?" At this point the tracking shot reaches a mirror in the street. We assume that the young man who then appears in the mirror and pauses momentarily to adjust his hat is that same Henri Baurel whose ostensible point of view we were seeing since he assumed the role of the narrator, but we hear him protest, "No, that's not me. I am not that young. Let's just say I am old enough to know what to do with my young feelings." Between our becoming aware of our misidentification of him and our subsequent identification of him on seeing him in an objective shot, we have a pure movement, one that is neither the music hall star's, since he disclaims being the one in the mirror, "No, that's not me. I am not that young"; nor the camera's, since we do not see the camera in the mirror; nor that of the young man who appears in the mirror, since the one who was being greeted and recognized by the people in the neighborhood was the French music hall star Henri Baurel ("You see? Everybody recognizes me")—is encountering a pure movement an unexpected thing in a dance film?

While lost in conditions in which I "asked" myself, "Am I dead?" I felt the approach of silence-over as a hushing of the sounds; it was as if my ears were filled with cotton, since while I could see some people still moving their lips, they did so soundlessly. I also had the impression, partly because I could not hear their voices, that the people I was seeing were very far away—but then how to explain that I could perceive their lips moving? (Silence-over takes place in conditions, death and dance, in which one cannot, strictly speaking, be with others: in death

one is no longer part of the common world, and so has often the impression that others are extras, as during a film shoot; and in dance, each dancer is projected as a subtle body in a different branch of the dance realm, so that two subtle dancers engaging in a pas de deux are even spookier²⁸⁷ than two entangled subatomic particles,²⁸⁸ which belong to the same space and time). They persisted in moving and talking soundlessly only for a brief interval; then they became immobilized by the silence-over. While in principle I could have intuited silence-over and immobilization as a mortal, that is, as someone who is dead even while still physically alive, my witnessing (dead) people immobilized by silence-over during my death before physically dying made it possible for me to begin writing on dance, in whose realm too one may be subject to silence-over and the immobilization it produces.²⁸⁹ It should be obvious that the subtle dancer does not, indeed cannot hear silence-over, because the silence-over would immobilize him or her; what he or she can hear is, for a short interval, the approach of silence-over, which, if no music-over appears just in time, countering it, would immobilize him or her. If a particular dancer is fortunate, no silence-over appears in the branch of dance's realm of altered movement, space, and time in which he or she was projected as a subtle body; nonetheless silence-over remains a possibility of that realm. Is it right to say that it is part of the grace of a dancer that music-over appears whenever silence-over begins to fall or approach? That music-over appears like a guardian angel and saves the subtle dancer from being immobilized by the silence-over does not necessarily mean that that is its function, that that is *why* it exists; this is how the dancer, feeling the approach of silence-over, which would, if not countered, immobilize him

or her just as it had some or all of the other dancers, experiences the appearance at that critical moment of the music-over in his or her branch of dance's realm. Viewing music-over as a guardian angel is one manner for the subtle dancer to assuage his or her apprehension that it appeared by chance just as silence-over began falling and hushing the sounds, sparing him or her becoming immobilized by such a silence, and that it may disappear any moment and as a result make possible for the silence-over, which is immobilizing other subtle dancers who are not shielded from it by music-over in their branches of dance's realm, to immobilize him or her too. Being immobilized by silence-over is not a failure or weakness of the subtle dancer, since immobilization is a characteristic of the dance realm, indeed is, as the genetic element of motion, the condition of possibility of all sorts of extraordinary movements (slow motion, time-lapse, backward-in-time motion, etc.)—while it could be considered a grace to be repeatedly protected by music-over from the incipient silence-over, a dancer would be missing an element of dance, therefore not an accomplished one, if he or she was never immobilized by silence-over. While many who do all sorts of stylized movements often belonging to a genre ostensibly associated with dance, for example, ballet, are not for that matter actually dancing, since they have not been projected as subtle bodies into dance's realm with its altered space, time, silence, music, and movement, the subtle body that is frozen in dance's realm is dancing, although it is then not experiencing anything, not even dance—and yet this freezing still that is not experienced becomes part of the intuition of the dancer! One of Roland Barthes's books is titled *Writing Degree Zero (Le Degré zéro de l'écriture, 1953)*; one could say that the freezing still

of the subtle dancer is dance degree zero (*le degré zéro de la danse*).

The title of the Leslie Scalapino Memorial Lecture in Innovative Poetics I gave, "I Have Something to Say (Silence-Over) and I Am Saying It (Thanks to Music-Over) and That Is Poetry," is a rewrite of John Cage's "I have nothing to say / and I am saying it / and that is poetry ..." ²⁹⁰ that a dancer could say. Some mortals who died before dying physically and are thus aware of being dead even while alive can say: "Insofar as I am poor in world and witnessing people immobilized by silence-over, I have something to say, for example, 'Am I dead?' or 'I must be dead,' but, due to *theft of thought*, the frequent reduction of my utterances to a *word salad*, etc., I am unable to say it, at least not properly; and, insofar as I am alive yet have nothing to say, I am saying what is received from the dead (as in Cocteau's *Orpheus*) while wrapping in song (as Hölderlin required) the *jouissance* mingled with it, and that is poetry."

My text "The Subtle Dancer" is "dedicated to Merce Cunningham, whose dances suspend my interior monologue" ²⁹¹—indeed, once, annoyed by the continuing internal monologue of the imperceptive spectator seated next to me during a Cunningham dance performance, I turned toward him and shushed him. All artworks and thinkers' books suspend the interior monologue, though in most cases this suspension is the result of an excessive proliferation of associations that cancel each other or in which each association is drowned by the plethora of others.

Having *given his word* to avenge King Hamlet, Hamlet should have kept silent ("But break, my heart; for I

must hold my tongue” [*Hamlet* 1.2.159]; “Give it an understanding, but no tongue” [*Hamlet* 1.2.249]; “Give thy thoughts no tongue” [*Hamlet* 1.3.59]), as if in a dumb show, until he had fulfilled his promise.²⁹²

Ah, the melancholia of the revenant, who, failing to “accomplish” the work of mourning, did not end up accepting his or her death!

Juliet: “O Romeo, Romeo ... refuse thy name ... / 'Tis but thy name that is my enemy; / Thou art thyself, thou not a Montague. / What's Montague? It is nor hand nor foot, / Nor arm nor face, nor any other part / Belonging to a man. / O be some other name! / What's in a name?” (Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* 2.1.81–86). The name has an effect on organs; it prompts them to be the organs of the body, making the latter an organism. Without her beloved's name all there would remain of him would be part-objects: hand, foot, arm, etc. The mourners treated the one who died as thenceforth nameless, no longer called him, and yet, inconsistently, continued to view his corpse as a unit rather than as a potpourri of part-objects animated by and under the sway of an automatism.

The driven dead, who are “beyond the pleasure principle,” don't compromise. Not compromising, they don't feel guilt in relation to their compulsive acts. Does this imply that they do not feel guilt at all? If they feel guilt, it is about their life, when they compromised since life is usually a compromise, requires, at some level, adaptation.

The one who wills never regrets doing anything.

Deleuze: “Joë Bousquet must be called Stoic. He apprehends the wound that he bears deep within his body in its eternal truth as a pure event.... ‘My wound existed before me, I was born to embody it.’”²⁹³ Does one have to be Stoic to feel this way about an event, for example, a wound? No, one can be someone who has or had access, through some kind of initiation, for example, a visionary dream, to ‘*ālam al-khayāl*, the Imaginal World, which “is an Essential Presence (*ḥaḍra dhātiyya*) permanently receiving Ideas (*ma‘ānī*, literally, ‘meanings’) and Spirits so that it embodies them” (Ibn al-Arabī), and which, as the *khayāl munfaṣil*, the “detached imagination,” does not vanish “when the one who is imagining vanishes” (which is the case with the *khayāl muttaṣil*, the “attached imagination”); and his figure there has a wound, while his physical body does not yet have it—or has an unrelated, dissimilar wound at a different spot. If “my wound existed before me, [and] I was born to embody it,” am I then to simply wound myself? It is argued convincingly in Kleist's “On the Marionette Theatre” that in a human's movements and gestures there is most often if not always an affectation that makes them deviate from the trajectories they would have traced and the degree of intensity they would have had had they been produced through a process “that has no consciousness at all.” So the wound one would sustain physically through a mechanical accident has a far better chance of coinciding with the wound on the subtle body in the Imaginal World than the one one could inflict on oneself (the physical wound in this world is certain to coincide with the subtle wound in the Imaginal World if it is inflicted by a being that “has infinite consciousness,” God). It may be then that an artist, for example, Arnulf Rainer, or an angel rectifies on one's image the physical

wound one botched, or, if one's physical body has not yet been wounded, incises or inscribes the wound on one's image, one considering, once one has access to the Imaginal World and one's subtle body there, the resultant scratches, incision, mark, or line on one's photo as more intrinsic to one than the physical wound that missed its place! How do I feel the scratches, incision, mark, or line added to my image by an artist or angel? Magically? No, for it is not on my physical body that I feel it, but on my subtle body in the Imaginal World, where it "existed before me." A painter who, based on a visionary man's description of the wound on his subtle body in the Imaginal World, paints such a wound merely illustratively would have botched it, for the illustrative wound would remain separate from its Imaginal World model, failing to project the wounded man once again in the Imaginal World for a shorter or longer time. Bousquet: "Become the man of your misfortunes; learn to embody their perfection and brilliance."²⁹⁴ One manner of being worthy of one's misfortunes and of events in general, deserving them, is to touch base with if not be in constant simultaneous perception of the Imaginal World, where they are not accidental, and where, taking the guise of subtle bodies illuminated not by an external light but by their intrinsic light, they appear in their perfection and brilliance. Deleuze: "With every event, there is indeed the present moment of its actualization, the moment in which the event is embodied in a state of affairs, ... but on the other hand, there is ... the event considered in itself.... On one side, there is the part of the event which is realized and accomplished; on the other, there is that 'part of the event which cannot realize its accomplishment.'²⁹⁵ I would reword part of the quote from Deleuze thus in relation to the Imaginal

World: "With every event, there is indeed the present moment of its actualization, the moment in which the event is embodied in a state of affairs, ... but on the other hand, there is ... the event that has always been embodied in my subtle body in the Imaginal World, indeed that is part of it, never was external to it, never was an accident that occurred to it. On one side, there is the part of the event that is realized and accomplished in a state of affairs of this world; on the other, there is an aspect of the part of the event that remained incorporeal in relation to the world that, as in the case of Ideas and Spirits, becomes corporeal in the Imaginal World or the *barzakh*, and there is a side of that part that, notwithstanding the event's accomplishment, continues not to be actualized or disclosed or manifested *even in the Imaginal World*, since while there is nothing other than God and everything is a self-disclosure of God ("Wheresoever you turn, there is the Face of God" [Qur'ān 2:115]) that displays His names and attributes "nothing is like Him" (Qur'ān 42:11) in his essence (*dhāt*).

Some countries and cities have an affinity with their Imaginal World²⁹⁶ (*'ālam al-khayāl*, aka *'ālam al-mithāl*) versions; some others are quite different from their Imaginal World versions; and some have no Imaginal World version whatsoever! Once I missed my bus in Istanbul only to find myself, inexplicably, in the Imaginal World; not long after, I missed my ferry in order to once more find myself in the Imaginal World, yet instead found myself still in the earthly city! "What brought you to Istanbul? Is it to listen to some Turkish songs, for example, Seha Oku's *Ah İstanbul*, in situ?" "While those who ostensibly wrote its lyrics and composed it had to have lived in the earthly Istanbul to do so, and while

millions of Istanbulites feel that it conveys best their city, *Ah İstanbul* does not essentially belong to earthly Istanbul. One can listen to *Ah İstanbul* in situ not in earthly Istanbul, since there it is superimposed on the city's images when played back on a portable media player, and on the city's other sounds when sung live by a singer accompanied by musicians; but in the Imaginal World, where it is not sung by a singer accompanied by musicians, in other words, *not made by hands*, musical instruments and vocal cords, and where it is not one of the sounds of the city but the latter's one sound insofar as it presents a certain aspect and a certain configuration of events.²⁹⁷ In films that present, at least in some of their scenes, the Imaginal World, music that is not played by anyone in the diegesis is not for that matter non-diegetic music-over; and the absence of the earthly sounds we associate with various moving objects does not indicate an artificial hushing of these sounds by the filmmaker. Someone who is aware that a certain film or book is not idealizing a certain city but presenting the Imaginal World version of it would not be disappointed if on visiting the earthly city it proves to be far drabber or smaller than what he or she saw in the film or read in the book.

Refinement has to do with having a relation to the Imaginal World's subtle figures, colors, etc.

While some films already present a window on hell, and while with 3D films the spectator's perception of hell has become more vivid, indeed visceral, we are moving through virtual reality toward the construction of *les paradis artificiels* (to use the title of a Baudelaire book on hashish and other drugs) and artificial hells.

Even in her wildest dreams, she could never have imagined the *jouissance* in hell, since dreams are compromise formations.²⁹⁸

Were we the spiritual citizens of "our" dreams, we would not wake up.

The reason we persist at least for a while in dreaming even when we are having a nightmare, instead of immediately waking up, may very well be to avoid the dream's interpretation in waking life, which may indicate that the dream was even more nightmarish than it seemed.

A dream film is one whose interpretation, drawing on the free associations of each of the film's spectators, would lead each one to the realization that one or more of the film's characters is him or her.

It is alright to skip interpretation—in your dreams!

A dream told without the possibility of listening to the narrator's free associations can, strictly speaking, have only one of two interpretations: You are awake, or, You are still dreaming.

Antony Balch's *The Cut Ups* (1966), made in collaboration with William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin, is one of the most successful films at inducing a hypnotic state through the images, sounds, and their editing. Having constructed and edited the images and sounds in such a way that they may very well hypnotize the viewer (for example, in a series of images, a man puts a cigarette in his mouth then brings a lighter to the tip of the cigarette but does not use it to light the latter, and yet he exhales what appears to be cigarette smoke), Burroughs

repeatedly asks in voice-over, “Where are you now?” By doing so he is checking whether the viewer has already become hypnotized by the film, or, if the viewer has not yet been hypnotized, nudging him or her into hypnosis, the state where he or she cannot determine from initially locating his or her physical body in a certain space, for example, the hypnotist’s office or the cinema theater in which *The Cut Ups* is being screened, that he or she is experientially in it rather than at another space and time, for example, his or her elementary school when he or she was five years old, or on the beach at his or her present age or when he or she was fifteen years old. Burroughs’s voice also repeatedly intones, “Look at this picture; is it persisting?” “Look at this picture” is clearly an order. What about “Is it persisting?” If you are not hypnotized, then “Is it persisting?” is simply a question, so you could answer it with a yes or a no, depending on whether the picture is or is not persisting. But if you are already hypnotized, then “Is it persisting?” is not really a question but a leading suggestion that would make the picture, if it is not already so, a persisting one. How would the picture be persisting? It would be persisting by remaining even after it has been replaced by other images according to a spectator who at the point this ostensible question is asked is not (yet) hypnotized; and it would be persisting by irresistibly coming back to him or her following the screening, as a posthypnotic sequela, so not as a memory but as a hallucination or an insert in his or her mind.

For a long time he, affined to Buddhism, a vegetarian who was kind to animals, couldn’t fathom why he loathed rabbits. He was left wondering whether it was a karmic residue from a previous life. Then one day, while watching Kubrick’s *The Shining* (1980),

he saw the protagonist’s wife look into one of the rooms of the supposedly empty Overlook Hotel and witness, to her horror, a man dressed as a rabbit seemingly in the midst of fellatio. Then, years later, he watched with dread David Lynch’s *Rabbits* (2002), in which he witnessed three rabbits with human names and language and clothes engage in various disjointed conversations that were accompanied now and then by an eerie voice and canned laughter and applause. Then around a decade later, he watched Gore Verbinski’s *The Lone Ranger* (2013), where snarling, voracious rabbits exemplify “an evil spirit born in the empty spaces of the desert, with a hunger that cannot be satisfied, and the power to throw nature out of balance.”²⁹⁹ He came to the conclusion that a loathing that cannot be accounted for by one’s present life can possibly be explained by invoking not necessarily a karmic residue from a previous life, but a future event, one that moreover may be found only in a film, novel, or *‘ālam al-khayāl* (the Imaginal World).

It is disappointing that virtually no fiction films have shown as part of the urban fabric architectural projects that did not end up being actually constructed. I would like to see an extension of architectural competitions to fiction films, novels, and virtual reality. And I would like to think there would come a time when the oeuvres or at least a substantial part of the work of some great architects consist in fiction films or novels or virtual reality. I envision a monogram on an architect divided into the following sections: works built in the material world; works in fiction films and novels; submissions entered in competitions but not selected.

Could it be that there is not one case of an actor who had a psychogenic fugue and who in the fugue assumed one of the fictional characters he played in a film?

If there is to be a general resurrection at the Last Judgment, then it would have to include the mortal characters in those films, novels, and short stories that did not fall apart.

Fiction is required to present galaxies and stars that, due to the circumstances that information cannot travel faster than the speed of light, which is finite, and that the expansion of the universe is accelerating, will never be perceived by us and our descendants since any signal that leaves them can never reach us. "The domination of the expansion of our universe by the energy of seemingly empty space was inferred from the fact that this expansion is speeding up. And, just as with inflation, ... our observable universe is at the threshold of expanding faster than the speed of light.... The longer we wait, the less we will be able to see. Galaxies that we can now see will one day in the future be receding away from us at faster-than-light speed.... The light they emit will not be able to make progress against the expansion of space, and it will never again reach us. These galaxies will have disappeared from our horizon.... Since the galaxies in our local cluster of galaxies are all bound together by their mutual gravitational attraction, they will not recede with the background expansion of the universe discovered by Hubble.... In the far future ... not only will the rest of the universe have disappeared, as my colleague Robert Scherrer ... and I [Lawrence M. Krauss] recognized ..., but essentially all of the evidence that now tells us we live in an expanding

universe that began in a Big Bang will also have disappeared, along with all the evidence of the existence of the dark energy in empty space that will be responsible for this disappearance."³⁰⁰ What is the most appropriate term to describe fiction in the future that refers to stars and galaxies beyond the cosmological horizon as well as fiction in the even more distant future that relates events that imply or explicitly invoke an expanding universe that began in a Big Bang? It is *science fiction*.

Could it be that the view of reality as composed not of one universe ("the spherical region of space from which light has had time to reach us during the 13.7 billion years since our big bang"³⁰¹) but of a multiverse ("Level I: other such regions far away in space where the apparent laws of physics are the same, but where history played out differently because things started out differently; Level II: regions of space where even the apparent laws of physics are different; Level III: parallel worlds elsewhere in the so-called Hilbert space where quantum reality plays out; and Level IV: totally disconnected realities governed by different mathematical equations.... Inflation naturally produces the Level I multiverse, and if you add in string theory with a landscape of possible solutions, you get Level II, too. Quantum mechanics in its mathematically simplest ['unitary'] form gives you Level III"³⁰²) is an effect of the failure to acknowledge the other realms related to this world, for example, the undeath realm; the Imaginal World (*'ālam al-khayāl*, aka the World of Archetypes [*'ālam al-mithā'l*]); and the realm of altered movement, space, time, silence and music into which dance projects a subtle body of the dancer? Might it be the case that were these and other realms related to our world to

be acknowledged, one would end up finding a successful physical theory according to which there is only one universe?

Science is in large part about again and again reforming our intuition to include some of what was erstwhile counterintuitive. The scope of this reformation delimits the possible advance of science. A caveat: this reformation in light of the results of experiments, initiations, events, etc., should not override one's basic intuition, which one cannot productively change but only damage, possibly irreparably, if one forcibly tries to alter it, oneself then becoming not someone with an adaptable intuition, but someone with a semblance of intuition, actually intuition-less and disoriented thus determined by the doxa in the form of the latest "incontrovertible" theory. Without being through intuition or luck in the domain and the level, often emergent, that, unbeknownst to one, has the most affinity with one's basic intuition, for example, in the case of Einstein, "God does not play dice" (given that this was one of his basic intuitions if not his basic intuition, Einstein was right not to adapt to quantum physics), and, in the case of Leibniz, "nothing is without a reason" (the principle of sufficient reason, which, according to him, "must be considered one of the greatest and most fruitful of all human knowledge, for upon it is built a great part of metaphysics, physics, and moral science"), one cannot come up with great scientific theories or conceptual creations, but labors in vain for years if not decades. We are told by a proverb that "it takes all sorts to make a world"; one could say that the world, with its various domains and levels, let alone the multiverse, with its various branches and levels, accommodates all kinds of basic takes on and thus intuitions of reality (one way

of thinking of the multiverse is that it includes not only branches that are different from this one but also ones that seem the same as this one but would be better read as consisting of monads or strings or the result of renewed creation [of the Ash'arite or Malebranche sort]).

Sherlock Holmes: "I miss my Watson. By cunning questions and ejaculations of wonder he could elevate my simple art, which is but systematized common sense, into a prodigy.... My process of thought ... starts upon the supposition that when you have eliminated all which is impossible, then whatever remains, however improbable, must be the truth" (Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier*, 1926). But how to know what is impossible? Wouldn't Sherlock Holmes, particularly in the years 1901–1903, the dates between which the events of *The Adventure of the Blanched Soldier* take place, have considered time travel, to the future if not also to the past, impossible? And yet "in his special theory of relativity, Einstein proposed that the measured interval between two events depends on how the observer is moving.... The effect is often described using the 'twin paradox.' Suppose that Sally and Sam are twins. Sally boards a rocket ship and travels at high speed to a nearby star, turns around and flies back to Earth, while Sam stays at home. For Sally the duration of the journey might be, say, one year, but when she returns and steps out of the spaceship, she finds that 10 years have elapsed on Earth. Her brother is now nine years older than she is.... In effect, Sally has leaped nine years into Earth's future. The effect, known as time dilation, occurs whenever two observers move relative to each other. In daily life we don't notice weird time warps, because the effect becomes dramatic

only when the motion occurs at close to the speed of light.... Nevertheless, atomic clocks are accurate enough to record the shift and confirm that time really is stretched by motion. So travel into the future is a proved fact.... Speed is one way to jump ahead in time. Gravity is another. In his general theory of relativity, Einstein predicted that gravity slows time.... These time-warping effects have to be taken into account in the Global Positioning System. If they weren't, sailors, taxi drivers and cruise missiles could find themselves many kilometers off course.... A black hole represents the ultimate time warp; at the surface of the hole, time stands still relative to Earth. This means that if you fell into a black hole from nearby, in the brief interval it took you to reach the surface, all of eternity would pass by in the wider universe."³⁰³ Had Holmes considered it, wouldn't he have assumed that it is impossible for light to exhibit wave-particle duality? And yet it does, as shown by the double-slit experiment. Had he considered it, wouldn't he have assumed that it is impossible "that everything inside a region of space can be described by bits of information restricted to the boundary"³⁰⁴? And yet Gerard 't Hooft, who shared the 1999 Nobel Prize in Physics, "said ... that if we could look at the microscopic Planck-sized details on the walls of his office, in principle they would contain every bit of information about the interior of the room.... The three-dimensional world of ordinary experience—the universe filled with galaxies, stars, planets, houses, boulders, and people—is a hologram, an image of reality coded on a distant two-dimensional surface."³⁰⁵ Had he considered it, wouldn't he have assumed that it is impossible for an object to remain at the boundary of some peculiar compact mass even while crossing it? And yet this is what

happens at the event horizon of a black hole, when both the local reference frame and an outside reference frame are taken into consideration. One should be wary of yielding to (the) "systematized common sense" (of the historical time in which one lives) when judging what is impossible.

An exception can confirm the rule only when the rule itself is exceptional or related to what is exceptional (consequently when an exception confirms some rule, this is an indication that the rule, which may have seemed normal or related to what is normal, is actually exceptional or related to something exceptional—this should make us try to discern in what manner what we took initially to be normal is exceptional). Here's an example of an exception that confirms a rule, "It is impossible to leave the labyrinth," thus an exception that is related to something exceptional, the labyrinth: "While it may initially seem to others that I left the labyrinth, shortly enough discountenancing indications signal that it is another who left it, thus in Herzog's *Nosferatu*, while it seems that Harker succeeds in leaving *Nosferatu's* castle, it shortly becomes manifest, through his failure to recognize his fiancée, his dreadful repulsion by consecrated wafer, his two fang-like teeth and his remarkable pallor, that the one who left the castle is actually the vampire."³⁰⁶ General relativity requires the gravitational singularity as the exception that confirms it; that general relativity is confirmed by an exception, where it no longer applies, where it breaks down,³⁰⁷ indicates that it is exceptional. That general relativity, according to which "the world is curved space where everything is continuous,"³⁰⁸ is exceptional is reconfirmed in its relation to the other theory that is relevant regarding the gravitational singularity,

quantum mechanics, according to which the world “is a flat space where quanta of energy leap.”³⁰⁹ Godard: “Culture is the norm, art [I would add: and tradition³¹⁰ in general] is the exception”; from the reference frame of culture, which is the norm, the world is normal, but from the reference frame of the exception that art presents, the world is exceptional—certainly in relation to culture (which subsumes much of the current art scene, including much of what is exhibited at the most prestigious biennales, museums, and galleries).³¹¹

“What do you think are the characteristics that an ideal researcher should possess?” “An ‘ideal researcher’ is someone who, like Picasso,³¹² does not search yet finds, but, unlike Picasso, searches and researches once he has found.”

The universe constructed in an artwork, film, novel, or a thinker’s book can itself be several worlds, for example, *Last Year at Marienbad* can be viewed from *beginning to end* as a radical closure in which ahistorical characters, thus characters who do not have a past that predates their first appearance in the film, keep irrupting and disappearing (Robbe-Grillet: “The duration of the modern [*sic*; I would replace *modern*, an imprecise generalization, with *radical-closure*] work is in no way a summary, a condensed version, of a more extended and more ‘real’ duration which would be that of the anecdote, of the narrated story. There is, on the contrary, an absolute identity between the two durations. The entire story of Marienbad happens neither in two years nor in three days, but exactly in one hour and a half”³¹³); as a film on the flaws of memory, the female protagonist having seemingly forgotten altogether her ostensible encounter with the male protagonist the previous

year at Marienbad; as a film about the undead (“These frozen, silent figures, long dead no doubt, which still guard the corridors down which I walked toward you”), etc.

Schopenhauer: “Any book that’s worth anything should be read twice [I would have written: more than once].” Should we add: “Any event that’s worth anything should be experienced more than once”? But is this not what flashbacks accomplish anyway in the aftermath of psychedelic trips, traumas, etc.?

Michael Lesk: “How much information is there in the world? ... There may be a few thousand petabytes of information all told; and the production of tape and disk will reach that level by the year 2000. So in only a few years, (a) we will be able to save *everything*—no information will have to be thrown out, and (b) the typical piece of information will *never* be looked at by a human being.”³¹⁴ If this information is not being archived in order to be read, seen, or listened to, is it then being archived for the sole purpose of being preserved? But is this really necessary? According to relativity with its block universe of space-time, where nothing passes, whatever took place “in the past” is still there;³¹⁵ and according to physicist Frank Tipler, “simulation of all possibilities out of which the far future could have come almost certainly will be done in the drive toward total knowledge before the c-boundary [in other words, the final singularity] is reached.”³¹⁶

Nietzsche wrote: “My ambition is to say in ten sentences what other people say in a book—what other people do *not* say in a book.” These words appear in a book, *Twilight of the Idols*. If Nietzsche said in each “ten sentences” of his book *Twilight of the Idols*

“what other people say in a book—what other people do *not* say in a book,” he would have said in that book what is said in a library—what is *not* said in a library (did early Muslims think this way about the Qur’ān, that God said in that book what is said in a library, what is *not* said in a library—for example, the library of Alexandria [according to a bigoted, *apocryphal* story, the Caliph ‘Umar al-Khattāb responded to the inquiry of ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ, the Muslim commander who conquered Egypt, concerning whether to spare the library of Alexandria: “If these writings of the Greeks agree with the book of God, they are useless and need not be preserved; if they disagree, they are pernicious and ought to be destroyed”]?). To destroy the books of such a writer or thinker is to destroy (at least) a library.

The books of a real writer or thinker are more intelligent, more sophisticated, and more complex than he or she is as a living human, in part because creative writing and thinking are, most often unbeknownst to the writer or thinker, an untimely collaboration with past and future writers, thinkers, filmmakers, etc., as well as, sometimes, with the dead, including, given that he or she is a mortal, thus dead while alive, with “himself” or “herself” as dead. Consequently, it is reductive to ask him or her about them.

Ibn al-‘Arabī was absolutely dependent on God, a servant (*‘abd*) of God, since he, who had no necessity of existence, appears to have existed for a protracted period only because God recreated him each time he returned to nothingness; yet in relation to the book he received, *Fuṣūs al-ḥikam* (“I saw the Apostle of God in a visitation granted to me during the latter part of the month of Muḥarram in the

year 627, in the city of Damascus. He had in his hand a book and he said to me, ‘This is the book of the bezels of Wisdom; take it and bring it to men that they may benefit from it.’ ... I ... carried out the wish ... and devoted my purpose to the publishing of this book ... without any addition or subtraction”³¹⁷), he was a master since he did not work on it and since this book attributed to him is uncorrectable.

To consider that a book is not just a book of aphorisms but an aphoristic book, not only “its” aphorisms but it itself must have been received. In which case the order of the aphorisms may not be the optimal one in terms of the relations (humorous, paradoxical, etc.) that would ensue from placing certain aphorisms ostensibly next to each other across the abyss of the radical blank between them. The one who receives a book should resist the temptation or pressure to restructure it to flow in a more “logical,” “reasonable” manner.

I do not resist, indeed I desire the diminishment of my vocabulary (even at the price of a disability in everyday transactions, having increasingly to point to items) until it becomes limited to only those words required to formulate and elaborate my concepts.

Only some of the terms in my books are strictly speaking Toufican: silence-over, music-over, overturn, surpassing disaster, etc. It took me eleven years to emend any inaccuracies that were present in my first four books (2003 is the date of publication of the revised edition of my first book and 2014 is the date of publication of the revised edition of my fourth book), most importantly those having to do with the aforementioned concepts, for example, the occasional presence of “immobilization” or

“immobility” (which are produced by silence-over) where “motionlessness” should have been used. How long has an author to live in order for everything mentioned in his or her books to be not simply imported from the consensual reality in which he or she exists but, strictly speaking, created by him or her so as to fit the universe he or she is constructing? Were the human lifespan to be greatly extended, some writers and thinkers would gradually, across additional revised editions, come to singularize each one of the words and each one of the elements of style and punctuation in their books. Someone asked in my seminar “How to Create a Universe That Doesn’t Fall Apart Two Days Later”: “Would we be able to understand such a book? Would we need for that the author, physically present, to translate back as best as he or she can such a fully singular book into common or specialized parlance?” I answered that the decipherability of such a book requires the author’s earlier versions (whether editions or drafts), which trace the spreading differentiation and singularization of his or her vocabulary as a writer from the words’ common usage. As he or she gets closer and closer to achieving a completely singular book, a writer or thinker, even if he or she was initially averse to preserving the earliest drafts and editions of his or her book if not going out of his or her way to destroy them, would end up doing his or her best to secure their preservation.

How is a translator to choose between the different synonyms of a word in the language into which he is translating a text, when these synonyms differ in one or more of their other meanings, and when which one or more of these additional, apparently secondary meanings will prove most relevant and

felicitous in the text is dependent on the creation of future thinkers, through concepts, filmmakers, and novelists, through intertextuality, etc.? The only way to do so is through an untimely collaboration with these future creators, a feat that requires that translation itself be a creative activity.

Thinking requires both rational deduction of consequences from a rigorous concept the thinker constructed while drawing on his intuition (that is, through untimely collaboration with some past and future writers, filmmakers, artists, thinkers, etc., and/or with his or her undead version, i.e., through what does not seem to be that rational) and the delimitation of the concept’s domain of validity. A thinker, unlike others, follows the consequences of a rigorous concept all the way (however counterintuitive these may be to common sense, which is most often revealed to be actually *common nonsense*) within the concept’s domain of validity.

The reader has to initially resist the wild, ostensibly counterintuitive concepts of a thinker (all the more so since the thinker himself or herself did this while constructing his or her concepts, exclaiming at times, “What was I thinking?”), otherwise he or she will only half-heartedly accept them, and he or she will, consequently, shirk from if not repress some or all of their radical and “counterintuitive” (from the standpoint of what appears to be the world up to the point of the creation of the concept) consequences within the domain of validity of the concept, instead of insisting on if not fighting for these consequences. For him or her to at all initially resist the wild, ostensibly counterintuitive concepts of a thinker, the reader has to refrain from correcting the thinker’s writings³¹⁸ or viewing certain expressions

in them as exaggerations or an approximate or figurative rendering of something else. “The sun rises” is a figurative expression (since it is Earth that orbits around [“the center of mass of the solar system.... [which is] very close to”³¹⁹] the Sun), but the “You have seen nothing in Hiroshima” with which *Hiroshima mon amour*’s Japanese man responds to the visiting French woman’s assertions that she has seen both the hospital and the museum in Hiroshima sometime after the city’s incineration by an atomic bomb is not an exaggerated manner of saying “You have seen little in Hiroshima.”

Notes

1

The title of one of my previous books, published by Berliner Künstlerprogramm des DAAD in 2011.

2

“Thinking What’s Thought-Provoking!” functions as my statement as the editor of the book series by the same title published by the Sharjah Art Foundation.

3

Gertrude Stein, “Reflection on the Atomic Bomb” (1946), first published in *Yale Poetry Review*, December 1947, <http://www.writing.upenn.edu/~afilreis/88/stein-atom-bomb.html>.

4

Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, trans. J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 4.

5

Ibid.

6

If a thoughtful artist is to include thought in his work, he or she should, like the thinker, include mostly if not only thoughts that happen to be thought-provoking (for thought, alas, is not always itself thought-provoking)—and/or thought-initiating.

7

“The successful portrait of a pubescent girl is not a rite of passage but a rite of non-passage; what needs a rite is not passage, which is the natural state (at least for historical societies), but non-passage, the radical differentiation between the before, in this case a pubescent girl, and the after, a woman. In this era, initiation, which, with rare exceptions, no longer happens in the world, has, with all the dangers it entails, to happen through the portrait. Unlike so many other pubescent girls who could not wait to become young women, early on imitating their mothers or elder sisters in mannerisms and makeup, she intuited that for her not to be

falsely replaced by an imposter claiming to be her at an older age she had to get a valid portrait or else to commit suicide—the risk was that both would happen together, that in the process of the making of the portrait she would die (Poe’s “The Oval Portrait”) because the portrait was being made through a transference of her life to it. Through her portrait, the pubescent girl resists her (mis)representation by the woman who would otherwise assume her name and lay claim to her memories in a few years, for the pubescent girl’s portrait differentiates her not only from other people but also, radically, from that woman. The successful portrait of the pubescent girl must be recognizable to her and unrecognizable to the woman who would otherwise assume her name, must resist oblivion regarding her and produce oblivion for the woman who would otherwise lay claim to her memories” (Jalal Toufic, *The Portrait of the Pubescent Girl: A Rite of Non-Passage* [Forthcoming Books, 2011], 23–24; available for download as a PDF file at <http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads.htm>).

8

“Is it surprising that while putting on makeup in preparation for the dance, which will project a subtle version of each of them in its realm of altered movement, space, and time, dancers often surround themselves with tokens of their identity, for example, their photos, their reflections in the mirror, and some of their cherished belongings, and talk about their memories and projects? Such seemingly redundant assertions of identity and mentions of future plans often signal an apprehension that the threshold of a condition in which they may no longer have access to these is imminent” (Jalal Toufic, *The Dancer’s Two Bodies* [Sharjah, UAE: Sharjah Art Foundation, 2015], 10; available for download as a PDF file at <http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads.htm>).

9

“What Is the Creative Act?” in Gilles Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975–1995*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2006), 317.

10

The rarity of thought is the daily experience even of fertile thinkers, for example, Nietzsche; indeed even of those who “cannot stop thinking,” whether or not because they believe, as they live the “I am thinking, therefore I exist” (Descartes) not as an abstract proposition or argument but as an existential condition, that were they to stop thinking they would thereby cease existing. The rarity of thought is the daily experience of any thinker because there is a radical blank, whether implicit or, in the case of aphoristic thinkers, explicit, between any two thoughts, one that *may* go on for eleven years or indefinitely.

11

Thought inflation accords well with and evokes *cosmological inflation*. “Cosmological inflation, the hypothesis that the early Universe underwent an extremely rapid expansion, is a popular paradigm in modern cosmology.... In the 1980s, [Alan] Guth, [Andrei] Linde, [Andreas] Albrecht, and [Paul] Steinhardt proposed the theory of cosmological inflation to explain two puzzles in the big bang model of cosmology: why our Universe is approximately flat (i.e., it can be described as a Euclidian space, with a vanishingly small curvature) and why very distant regions in our Universe appear to have a nonrandom correlation in their temperatures (which suggests they were once causally connected).... Many models of inflation exist ...” (Parampreet Singh, “A Glance at the Earliest Universe,” *Physics* 5, 142 [2012], <http://link.aps.org/doi/10.1103/Physics.5.142>). “Inflation was both rapid and strong. It increased the linear size of the universe by more than 60 ‘e-folds,’ or a factor of $\sim 10^{26}$ in only a small fraction of a second!” (http://wmap.gsfc.nasa.gov/universe/bb_cosmo_infl.html).

12

The enfolding in the initiation into thought of countless thoughts in the fleeting interval between “I’ve never thought before!” and “I will imminently be both blown away and stupefied by the just began thought inflation” is one of the greatest if not the greatest involvement in condensation, overshadowing by far even the one, functioning partly differently, that we have in dreams (“The first achievement of

the dream-work is *condensation*. By that we understand the fact that the manifest dream has a smaller content than the latent one, and is thus an abbreviated translation of it.... You will have no difficulty in recalling instances from your own dreams of different people being condensed into a single one. A composite figure of this kind may look like A perhaps, but may be dressed like B, may do something that we remember C doing, and at the same time we may know that he is D. This composite structure is of course emphasizing something that the four people have in common.... In regard to the connection between the latent and the manifest dream ... a manifest element may correspond simultaneously to several latent ones, and, contrariwise, a latent element may play a part in several manifest ones ...” [Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, translated and edited by James Strachey, with a biographical introduction by Peter Gay (New York: Norton, 1989), 210–211 and 213]].

13

Here’s a kindred question: Can reading a book, watching a film, or looking at an artwork be an initiation into death (before physically dying), induce the reader’s or spectator’s dying before physically dying? In other words, can someone on reading a book “find” “himself” lost “in” labyrinthine space and time, witness immobilized people, etc., so that he ends up exclaiming, “I must be dead!”? Is there some reader who dates not so much his questioning whether he is dead before physically dying but his dying before physically dying to reading my book (*Vampires: An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film* (1993; revised and expanded edition, 2003)? If there is someone who died before physically dying on reading (*Vampires: An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, then he or she would thus have become aware that he or she is already dead even while he or she lives, indeed that throughout his or her life he or she was conjointly dead, indeed that he or she was *always* dead (“‘Die before you die’ [in Islam these words are attributed to the prophet Muhammad] is not to be taken as implying that if you do not do so you will be solely alive until you die [physically], but is rather to be understood to mean: do so in order to become aware that you are a mortal, that you are anyway dead while alive whatever you do” (Jalal Toufic, *What Were You Thinking?* [Berlin: Berliner

Künstlerprogramm des DAAD, 2011], 181n60; available for download as a PDF file at <http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads.htm>).

14

Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 1, edited, translated, and with an introduction by Nicholas T. Rand (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 173.

15

ibid., 171.

16

Here’s my version of Heidegger’s “Every thinker thinks one only thought.... And for the thinker the difficulty is to hold fast to this one only thought as the one and only thing that he must think ...” (Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, 50): “Every thinker thinks, through a process of creative unfolding, *at least one* thought among the seemingly countless ones that were received, enfolded, in his or her initiation into thought.... And for the thinker the difficulty is to hold fast to creatively unfolding *at least one* thought among the seemingly countless ones received, enfolded, in his or her initiation into thought—once he or she has accomplished this, some if not all of his or her other thoughts may be triggered by thought-provoking works by others, experiments, or events, ones bearing no direct relation to his or her initiation (some people forget their initiation into thought or allow it to be repressed until they encounter a thought-provoking artwork, book, experiment, or event, which reawakens that more radical experience; then it may very well happen that instead of thinking regarding that provocative work, book, experiment, or event, they resume trying to creatively unfold what was enfolded during the initiation).

17

Jalal Toufic, *Distraction*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley, CA: Tuumba Press, 2003), 98–99; the quote within the quote is from Richard Feynman, *The Character of Physical Law* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1967), 23–24.

18

Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. and ed. Seán Hand (London: Continuum, 2006), 52.

19

I continue to be asked to give lectures in parallel programs to an exhibition or a biennale, when it is the exhibition or biennale that should accompany one of my lectures, so little vitality and assumed mortality; formal experimentation; and thought is there in most exhibitions and biennales nowadays. It is increasingly the case that it is while waiting for the lecture of a thinker that one is to walk through an exhibition, which in the vast majority of cases is worth only the time and aesthetic attention one can muster during a noisy opening—or an auction.

20

From Tiantai Zhiyi's "Four Great Bodhisattva Vows":
"Beings are infinite in number, / I vow to save them all; / the obstructive passions are endless in number, / I vow to end them all; / ... / Buddhahood is the supreme achievement, / I vow to attain it."

21

"On the Endeavor of the Way" (*Bendō-Wa*), in *Treasury of the True Dharma Eye: Zen Master Dogen's Shobo Genzo*, ed. Kazuaki Tanahashi (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 2012).

22

Ibid.

23

"On the Endeavor of the Way" (*Bendō-Wa*), in *Moon in a Dewdrop: Writings of Zen Master Dōgen*, ed. Kazuaki Tanahashi, trans. Robert Aitken et al. (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1985), 145–147.

24

Ibid, 151–152.

25

"The ideal of the *Malāmātiyya* developed out of a stress on *ikh-lās*, 'perfect sincerity' ... Muḥāsibī had taught that even the slightest tendency to show one's piety or one's religious behavior was ostentation. Thus the Malāmātīs deliberately tried to draw the contempt of the world upon themselves by committing unseemly, even unlawful, actions.... These pious relied upon the Koranic words, 'and they do not fear the blame of a blaming person' (Sūra 5:59)" (Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975], 86).

26

Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 18, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology and Other Works (1920–1922)*, translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson (London: Vintage, 2001), 12–13.

27

Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, translated by Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998), 41.

28

One quite strange situation is feeling you are the only person who is alive and who is actually the one he appears to be while the others are extras (as during a film shoot). But another situation that is no less strange is feeling there are no "extras," but only the strict minimal number of persons you have to deal with in your various activities: for example, in a huge computer store, only the customer service representative who directs you to the section where you can find the specific ink cartridge for your printer and the employee at the checkout counter.

29

If we did not somehow have some intuition of what the death realm is like, in other words, if we were not mortals, that is, dead even while still physically alive, how would we ever ask, "Am I dead?" or feel or deduce, "I must be dead!"?

30

Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, foreword by Maureen Howard (San Diego: Harcourt, 1981), 86–87.

31

Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Continuum, 2005), 102 (my italics).

32

Jean Laplanche, *New Foundations for Psychoanalysis*, trans. David Macey (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 98–101.

33

The lord's brother, who used to be the former's "shadow," cautions about the risks a "shadow" runs, especially if he is required to play his role not intermittently but throughout the day for years. The two actors should have been warned against watching the opening moments of the film before the three figures they play are naturalized, i.e., revealed not to be unnatural doubles. Indeed, I can very well imagine a clause in the contract stipulating that the two actors are prohibited from watching these first moments of the opening scene, since were they to watch them they would no longer be able to recognize themselves in the figures they were playing, losing face and possibly more. Did the actor who was the first candidate for playing the roles of the lord and the thief intuit this danger? It would seem to be the case notwithstanding Donald Richie's final words in the following, otherwise informative quote: "Both Kurosawa and Ide [Masato] early thought that the main character ... could be played only by the lovable [Shinaro] Katsu. Katsu, however, was not so lovable on the set.... What happened is now generally agreed upon.... It occurred on the first day of shooting. Kurosawa, as usual, was using multiple cameras. Katsu arrived with his own television camera and his own crew. Kurosawa asked that Katsu's camera be removed because it would be within range of his own camera. Katsu said he needed it to document his performance to make certain he was doing a good job.... The conversation grew into an argument, grew more and more heated, and in the end Katsu quit or was fired.... *Kagemusha* was written with Katsu in mind; Katsu himself entertained

the ambition of becoming an international star; and this film would have been the ideal means to that end.... Katsu gave no explanation as to why he was so difficult. It is possible that he engineered his own dismissal, that he was afraid of working for such a demanding director" (Donald Richie, *The Films of Akira Kurosawa*, 3rd ed., expanded and updated, with additional material by Joan Mellen [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996], 206).

34

"Mr. Golyadkin's first movement was to look quickly about him, to see whether there were any whispering, any office joke being cracked on the subject, whether any one's face was agape with wonder, whether, indeed, someone had not fallen under the table from terror. But to his intense astonishment there was no sign of anything of the sort. The behavior of his colleagues and companions surprised him. It seemed contrary to the dictates of common sense. Mr. Golyadkin was positively scared at this extraordinary reticence. The fact spoke for itself; it was a strange, horrible, uncanny thing.... The figure that was sitting opposite Mr. Golyadkin now was ... Mr. Golyadkin himself, not the Mr. Golyadkin ... who liked to efface himself and slink away in the crowd, not the one whose deportment plainly said ... 'Don't interfere with me, you see I'm not touching you'; no, this was another Mr. Golyadkin, quite different, yet, at the same time, exactly like the first—the same height, the same figure, the same clothes, the same baldness; in fact, nothing, absolutely nothing, was lacking to complete the likeness." When, on seeing Golyadkin in distress, a colleague inquires about his condition, the following exchange takes place: "'Really ... Anton Antonovitch, there's a new clerk here.' 'Yes, there is, a namesake of yours.' 'What?' cried Mr. Golyadkin. 'I say a namesake of yours; his name's Golyadkin too. Isn't he a brother of yours?' 'No ...' 'H'm! you don't say so! Why, I thought he must be a relation of yours. Do you know, there's a sort of family likeness.' Mr. Golyadkin was petrified with astonishment.... To treat so lightly such a horrible, unheard-of thing, a thing undeniably rare and curious in its way, ... to talk of a family resemblance when he could see himself as in a looking-glass!" (Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Short Novels of Dostoyevsky*, with an introduction by Thomas Mann, translated from the Russian by Constance Garnett [New York:

Dial Press, 1945], 519–521). “In Dostoyevsky’s *The Double*, other people’s strange failure to notice [or be struck by] the uncanny resemblance between Golyadkin and his double when the two are together is conjoined to their mistaking his double for him when they are in different locations” (Jalal Toufic, *Vampires: An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, revised and expanded edition [Sausalito, CA: Post-Apollo Press, 2003], 39; available for download as a PDF file at <http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads.htm>).

35

Akira Kurosawa: *Interviews*, ed. Bert Cardullo (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008), 69.

36

Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, 89–91.

37

Given that every face has to have the two poles, reflecting surface and micro-movements, the affect as expressed by a face is always composite. Only the faceless can express a pure affect; unfortunately, except in the rare case of those who can tolerate being faceless, for example, great Sufis, who can have pure admiration for God under his name Jalāl (Majesty) or pure desire for God under his name Jamāl (Beauty), that pure affect is fear.

38

The course of events might have been different and the lord may not have died so soon had we heard the account by the brother over the opening credits, so that it would have been clear from the beginning that the three men are not doubles.

39

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 6.

40

Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, 98.

41

Ibid.

42

Ibid.

43

The opening of the dead woman’s eyes signals a resurrection, followed by that of the child, whose body was as motionless as the other, old motionless bodies in the same location—how come the vast majority of, if not all, film spectators do not feel that they have witnessed a resurrection when he moves?

44

Jalal Toufic, *Vampires: An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, 234–235.

45

Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, 89–90.

46

“They [the teachers of the law and the elders] spit in his [Jesus’s] face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him” (Matthew 26:67). Atoms from the aggressors’ hands interacted with atoms from the cheek of Jesus. Each of these atoms, “an image which I [Bergson] call a material object,” is obliged “to act through every one of its points upon all the points of all other images, to transmit the whole of what it receives, to oppose to every action an equal and contrary reaction, to be, in short, merely a road by which pass, in every direction, the modifications propagated throughout the immensity of the universe” (Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and William Scott Palmer [New York: Zone Books, 1988], 36). Jesus Christ, as (the Son of) God, is the absolute opposite; while “in” his cheek the atoms responded without any delay whatsoever to the atoms in the hand of the one who slapped him, he had at his disposal an infinite interval to respond (including at the Last Judgment), therefore infinite options of responding—or not responding. I imagine that what surprised the most the one who slapped Jesus Christ on the left cheek was not that he

turned the other cheek (since he had told them: “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, ... If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also” [Matthew 5:38–39]), but that there was no twitching of his lips and/or fluttering of his eyelids and/or reddening of his cheeks, in other words, no tendencies to respond in the form of micro-movements. Had he betrayed tendencies to respond in the form of micro-movements in his face, which would have implied that he subscribed to the code of conduct that required that he slap back, Jesus Christ would have, so to speak, lost face, that is, been humiliated, because he failed to effectively respond (“*Lose face* be humiliated or come to be less highly respected: *the code of conduct required that he strike back or lose face*” [Oxford Dictionary of English, 3rd ed., 2016]); instead, he lost face without being humiliated as a result of the complete absence of one of the two poles of the face.

47

Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London: Continuum, 2005), 2.

48

Ibid.

49

Ibid., 2–3.

50

A line in my book *What Were You Thinking?* appears to imply that black holes and their event horizons from the reference frame of an outside observer are the only natural objects that have aura: “If there is a natural object that has aura, it is the black hole and its event horizon from the reference frame of an outside observer” (pp. 27–28).

51

Were the referent of one of these 242 cm² photos titled “242 cm²” to be filmed, the filmmaker has to specify whether the film is to be screened exclusively in an IMAX theater, or on a large TV screen, or on a small computer screen, etc., or make different versions for an IMAX theater, a large TV screen,

a small computer screen, etc., so that the image continues to be 242 cm². Moreover, as I indicated in an email to Lyn Hejinian, one the two editors of *Floor Journal*, in which this text was to be published, “Since *Floor* is an online journal, Hage’s photographs could be viewed on various electronic devices, including ones where the photos would appear smaller than 242 cm², so I advise against including any of Hage’s ‘242 cm²’ photographs in the issue. In case one day a print version of the issue is to be made, then I would recommend including some of his photographs since in that case we can determine their dimensions for the viewer.”

52

“If the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, 1945, respectively, are a surpassing disaster then beyond not only the immediate death toll and the manifest destruction of buildings, including museums, libraries and temples, and of various other sorts of physical records, but also the long-term hidden material effects, in cells that have been affected with radioactivity in the ‘depth’ of the body, and the latent traumatic effects that may manifest themselves *après coup*, there would be an additional immaterial withdrawal of literary, philosophical and thoughtful texts as well as of certain films, videos, and musical works, notwithstanding that copies of these continue to be physically available; of paintings and buildings that were not physically destroyed; of spiritual guides; and of the holiness/specialness of certain spaces. In other words, whether a disaster is a surpassing one (for a community—defined by its sensibility to the immaterial withdrawal that results from such a disaster) cannot be ascertained by the number of casualties, the intensity of psychic traumas and the extent of material damage, but by whether we encounter in its aftermath symptoms of withdrawal of tradition” (Jalal Toufic, *The Withdrawal of Tradition Past a Surpassing Disaster* [Forthcoming Books, 2009], 11–12; available for download as a PDF file at <http://www.jalaltoufic.com/publications.htm>). I have not always been rigorous in my application of my concept “surpassing disaster,” since I have sometimes been influenced by the number of casualties and the extent of the destruction, rather than, which is the manner of going about it rigorously, deducing whether a disaster is a surpassing one from the presence of symptoms of the

withdrawal of tradition, including in the form of attempts at resurrecting what seems to have been spared by the disaster, as such attempts imply that there was a withdrawal.

53

“On ... 10 March 1948, a group of eleven men, veteran Zionist leaders together with young military Jewish officers, put the final touches to a plan for the ethnic cleansing of Palestine. That same evening, military orders were dispatched to the units on the ground to prepare for the systematic expulsion of the Palestinians from vast areas of the country. The orders came with a detailed description of the methods to be employed to forcibly evict the people.... Codenamed Plan D (*Dalet* in Hebrew), this was the fourth and final version of less substantial plans.... Once the decision was taken, it took six months to complete the mission. When it was over, more than half of Palestine’s native population, close to 800,000 people, had been uprooted, 531 villages had been destroyed, and eleven urban neighbourhoods emptied of their inhabitants” (Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* [Oxford: Oneworld, 2006], xii–xiii).

54

... and without a people, since it has at least two peoples, the Jewish Israelis and the Palestinian Israelis: no group can be considered a people if its most devastating catastrophes are not felt as common, and clearly the majority of Israeli Jews do not consider al-Nakba as a catastrophe—even in an extimate manner.

55

Not all manners of making one aware of one’s disavowal lead to its discontinuance.

56

The Indian Removal Act (May 28, 1830) was the “first major legislative departure from the U.S. policy of officially respecting the legal and political rights of the American Indians. The act authorized the president to grant Indian tribes unsettled western prairie land in exchange for their desirable territories within state borders (especially in the Southeast), from which the tribes would be removed....

Some one hundred thousand tribesmen were forced to march westward under U.S. military coercion in the 1830s; up to 25 percent of the Indians, many in manacles, perished en route. The trek of the Cherokee in 1838–39 became known as the infamous ‘Trail of Tears’” (*Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s.v. “Indian Removal Act,” <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Indian-Removal-Act>).

57

Wikipedia, s.v. “Aleppo University Bombings,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aleppo_University_bombings#cite_note-bbc-2.

58

Ibid.

59

“What Is the Creative Act?” in Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness*, 322–323.

60

To use the words of Groucho Marx as Rufus T. Firefly in Marx Brothers and Leo McCarey’s *Duck Soup* (1933).

61

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols; and, The Anti-Christ*, translated, with an introduction and commentary, by R. J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), 141–143.

62

“What Is the Creative Act?” in Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness*, 322.

63

See my book *Undeserving Lebanon* (Forthcoming Books, 2007), 66–68 (available for download as a PDF file at <http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads.htm>).

64

On the timeliness of arriving too late for resurrection, see “Arriving Too Late for Resurrection” in the revised and expanded edition of my book (*Vampires*): *An Uneasy Essay on*

the Undead in Film: “Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days’ (John 11:5–6). The narrator of Blanchot’s *Death Sentence* writes: ‘I think in saying that, she was announcing that she was going to die. This time I decided to return to Paris. But I gave myself two more days.’ By the time both arrive, the moribund man and woman are already dead. The moribund man and woman are bound to feel consternation that these people who were always there for them, have now, at the hour of greatest need, uncharacteristically deserted them. *Death Sentence*’s narrator must have intuited that he can do nothing to save the dying person, and that he may not recover from his complete helplessness to prevent her death. *Death Sentence*’s narrator arrives only once the doctor, who, at least until now, functions in the timely, and who has center stage as long as the patient is still struggling to maintain her life, now that she was dead, has withdrawn. Jesus Christ and *Death Sentence*’s narrator arrive just in time for the resurrection. Jesus Christ would have been uncaring towards Lazarus and the narrator of *Death Sentence* would have been uncaring towards the dying J— only if, having arrived too late, they did not go on to resurrect them” (223).

65

The author of the Gospel according to John made the mistake of referring to the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha by the name he had while a living mortal, implicitly calling him, when the latter, being solely alive since he was resurrected by the life, had no name. See endnote 67.

66

“With the coming of Jesus Christ, many people became alive. Jesus Christ, ‘the resurrection and the life’ (John 11:25), made of burial alive at the moment of organic demise a fundamental condition. The two earliest examples are: Lazarus, since the latter, through his belief in Jesus, was alive (‘He who believes in me will live, even though he die’ [John 11:25]) when he was buried (‘Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up’ [John 11:11]); and, obviously as well as paradigmatically, Jesus Christ. Jesus said, “This is a wicked generation. It asks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah. For as Jonah was a sign

to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation” (Luke 11:29–30; cf. Matthew 12:40: ‘For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth’)” (Jalal Toufic, “Bury Me Dead,” in *Two or Three Things I’m Dying to Tell You* [Sausalito, CA: Post-Apollo Press, 2005], 83–84; available for download as a PDF file at <http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads.htm>).

67

The Gospel of John refers several times to “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” for example in 21:20–23: “When Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them ... he asked, ‘Lord, what about him?’ Jesus answered, ‘If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? ...’ Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, ‘If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?’” This disciple is not named. Who was a disciple who, properly speaking, could not have been named and about whom rumors could, indeed did spread among the believers that he would not die? A disciple who was resurrected by Jesus Christ, the life (John 11:25), thus who was fully alive, no longer a mortal, that is, no longer dead while alive, therefore no longer subject to over-turns: “It never occurs to those mortals living then to call the resurrected, because, at the most basic level, he no longer needs the call since, as is the case of most animals, he faces himself in the mirror naturally, i.e., since his facing himself in the mirror is not the result of a successful interpellation; and because, at a derivative level, he happens to be facing the mortal whenever the latter needs him to be in that direction. From the time of his resurrection to his subsequent physical death, no one called the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha” (Jalal Toufic, *What Were You Thinking?*, 52–53)—referring in John 12:1–2 to the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha by name, by the name he had while a mortal, was a mistake. The over-turn is both one of the conditions of possibility of the call and one of its conditions of impossibility. If we view the matter through the example of the mirror, then while the over-turn is what introduces the possibility to be called, since only those who are subject to

over-turns do not naturally have their faces to themselves in the mirror (a condition that would do away with the need for the call), it is also what makes us cease calling since, by undoing the addressee's turn to answer the call, it makes the caller come to the conclusion that he is mistaking the one who has his back to him with someone else who happens to have a very similar back. How come the image in the mirror that the dead or the schizophrenic (someone who died before dying) faced did not turn toward him? It was because the turn of the one in the mirror, someone (un)dead, to answer the *sous-entendu* call using his proper name was overturned by an over-turn; or because the one facing the mirror was then assuming other names, if not all the names of history as his name, and so called the one in the mirror by one of these other names, with the infelicitous consequence that the latter had no reason to turn, considered that it was another who was being called. Did Antonin Artaud at some point see himself with his back to himself in the mirror? Was it because he had at that point already died, as indicated in one of the letters of *Nouveaux Écrits de Rodez: Lettres au docteur Ferdière (1943–1946) et autres textes inédits, suivis de Six lettres à Marie Dubuc (1935–1937)*, the one dated February 12, 1943, and signed by Antonin Nalpas: “Antonin Artaud est mort à la peine et de douleur à Ville-Évrard au mois d’Août 1939 et son cadavre a été sorti de Ville-Évrard pendant la durée d’une nuit blanche comme celles dont parle Dostoïevsky et qui occupent l’espace de plusieurs journées intercalaires mais non comprises dans le calendrier de ce monde-ci—quoi[que] vraies comme le jour d’ici” (Antonin Artaud died to trouble and of pain in Ville-Évrard in the month of August 1939 and his cadaver was removed from Ville-Évrard during a sleepless night like those Dostoevsky talks about and that occupy the span of several intercalary days that are not included in the calendar of this world—though they are true as the day from here)? How is it that the publisher, Gallimard, and the editor (“présentation et notes”), Pierre Chaleix, could so casually place as the epistolary book’s sole author Antonin Artaud notwithstanding that some of the letters, those from the period of February 12, 1943, to August 19, 1943, are signed by Antonin Nalpas (while Nalpas is the maiden name of Artaud’s mother, Artaud is clear that this is not why his surname became Nalpas: “Quant au nom de Nalpas, c’est

comme je vous l’ai dit, le nom de jeune fille de ma mère ... Mais ce n’est pas pour cela que j’en ai parlé, et je m’étonne grandement de l’avoir fait. Car ce nom a d’autre part des origines Légendaires, Mystiques et sacrées” [As for the name of Nalpas, it is, as I’ve told you, the maiden name of my mother.... But that’s not why I spoke of it, and I am greatly surprised that I did. Because this name has, on the other hand, Legendary, Mystic and sacred origins])? The book should have been published as coauthored by Antonin Artaud and Antonin Nalpas. The change from the first name to the second followed Antonin Artaud’s death. What happened so that the later letters of the book are signed once again “Antonin Artaud”? Was he resurrected as a mortal by other than the life, and thus could then have a name, his previous one?

68

Notwithstanding Matthew 26:26–27, according to which “while they were eating, Jesus took bread, ... broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, ... gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant,’” Jesus’s words at the Last Supper were addressed mainly—exclusively?—to the disciple to whom he would say on the cross while referring to his own mother, “Here is your mother” (John 19:26–27), and who, also according to the Gospel of John, was present at that supper, indeed “was reclining next to him.”

69

If, as the Qur’ān asserts, “they slew him [the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, Allāh’s messenger] not nor crucified him, but it appeared so unto them” (4:157), then, fatefully, the one who was crucified in Palestine in place of Jesus Christ was someone who tried his utmost not to remain *human*, *all too human*; announced in a 6 December AD 1888 letter to Georg Brandes, “I am readying an event, which it is highly likely will break history in two halves”; and shortly after signed some of his final (known) letters with, “The Crucified,” Friedrich Nietzsche (see section “The Crucified” in this book and footnote 41 in my book ‘*Āshūrā*: This Blood Spilled in My Veins [Forthcoming Books, 2005]; available for download as a PDF file at <http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads.htm>).

70

Rainer Maria Rilke, *Selected Poems*, translated by Susan Ranson and Marielle Sutherland, edited with an introduction and notes by Robert Vilain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 195.

71

“From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life” (Matthew 16:21). While Jesus Christ, the life, cannot be killed by humans, the following can be asserted concerning the ones who crucified him: act as if you killed the life, and you will be treated, punishment-wise, as if you did!

72

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science, with a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, translated, with commentary, by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974; the first German edition was published in 1882), §125, p. 181.

73

The death (on the cross) of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, one of the hypostases of the divine Trinity, could have functioned as a step toward returning to a strict monotheism—did the Holy Spirit also die, and if so in what circumstances?

74

Hegel’s words, “The human being is this Night, this empty nothing which contains everything in its simplicity—a wealth of infinitely many representations, images ... here a bloody head suddenly shoots up and there another white shape, only to disappear as suddenly. We see this Night when we look a human being in the eye, looking into a Night which turns terrifying. [For from his eyes] the night of the world hangs out towards us,” apply to human beings as mortals, thus as dead even while still physically alive. Thus, Hegel’s aforementioned words apply neither to the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha, who was no longer a mortal, nor to Jesus Christ, who was never a mortal. ““And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden [including the tree of life]

thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die’ (Genesis 2:16–17). If the God who gave the command was the Living, then he would have expected that man would either comply with his advice not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil or ... eat of it only after eating from the tree of life. Mortality, not knowledge of good and evil, was the unsuspected temptation, and non-mortal man (the Hebrew *’ādhām*) and woman fell for it! An unexpected, Gnostic disaster happened as Man perversely chose not to eat first from the tree of life before eating from the mortality-causing tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thus introducing and unleashing a mortality that is not based on life, therefore a mortality of which God was unaware. If we can possibly understand that someone may choose mortality as such over life, it is because we are already fallen, mortal.... If Iblīs is a disbeliever, he is so first of all in the incredible perversity of man (and woman)—he incited man to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but did not specify the order in which the latter opted to do so” (Jalal Toufic, *(Vampires): An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, revised and expanded edition, 213–214). The incarnation of the Son of God required that were men to be given the occasion to choose again, and notwithstanding the calamity of Adam and the resultant compulsion to repeat the latter’s choice, some man would opt to partake of the tree of life before or without partaking of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Such a man would not be a mortal, that is, would not be dead even while physically alive. Jesus proved to be that man (does the circumstance that Jesus made a different choice imply that God made him alone of all humans relive that primordial choice before his earthly birth? No; it implies rather that, prior to their earthly birth, all humans, including Lazarus, were given the chance to choose again, but they made the same choice as Adam, to become mortal, to be dead while alive). Even when he miraculously died physically, and even in the tomb, Jesus Christ, the life, was not a mortal and therefore was not open to *jouissance* and did not contain a night of the world in the Hegelian sense. Jesus Christ had no knowledge of good and evil (he had knowledge of good and bad), so when he was questioned about evil, he was reduced to quoting mortals’ words about it in the Old Testament.

75

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Hegel and the Human Spirit: A Translation of the Jena Lectures on the Philosophy of Spirit (1805–6) with Commentary*, translation, with commentary, by Leo Rauch (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1983), 87.

76

A thorough death of the God of Christianity would involve at least three deaths: of the Son, which took place on the cross; of the Holy Spirit; and of the Father.

77

Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, §125, p. 181.

78

Ibid.

79

Given that “Joseph took the body [of the dead Jesus Christ] ... and placed it in his own new tomb” (Matthew 27:59–60), he must have remained himself without burial—did he encounter the resurrected Jesus Christ and the latter resurrected him, i.e., made him, who was, as a mortal, dead while alive, fully alive?

80

We are informed about this twice by the footnotes to John 11:16 and 20:24 in the New International Version translation of the New Testament!

81

Cf. “Martha ... came to him and asked, ‘Lord, don’t you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself?’” (Luke 10:40); “So the sisters sent word to Jesus, ‘Lord, the one you love is sick’” (John 11:3); “‘Lord,’ Martha said to Jesus, ‘if you had been here, my brother would not have died’” (John 11:21); “When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died’” (John 11:32).

82

There is an insistence in Acts (Acts 2:22–24: “Fellow Israelites ... you, with the help of wicked men, put him [Jesus of Nazareth] to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead”; Acts 2:32: “This Jesus hath God raised up, of which we are all witnesses” ...) and in the Epistles of Paul (1 Thessalonians 1:10: “... his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus ...”; Galatians 1:1: “Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— ...”) that God raised His Son from the dead. Given that God the Father did not raise his Son from the dead, at least not directly—the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha did—the author of Acts and Paul “are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead” (1 Corinthians 15:15).

83

Cf. Psalm 104:1: “Give glory to the Lord, and call upon his name.”

84

“Nietzsche wrote, ‘Nothing is less Christian than the *ecclesiastical crudity* ... of a “kingdom of God” that is yet to come, a “kingdom of heaven” in the *beyond* ...’ and, ‘The evangel was precisely the existence, the fulfillment, the *actuality* of this “kingdom.”’ Nietzsche’s words have to be qualified: Jesus Christ, who had a double nature, divine and human, belonged conjointly to an unredeemed world and to a redeemed one. In the unredeemed world, where one could encounter people possessed by demons, he sometimes performed miracles (‘When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word’ [Matthew 8:16]); but in the redeemed world, he did not perform miracles—what most if not all others viewed as miraculous transgressions of natural laws should rather have been viewed by them as a vision of how the redeemed world is. ‘During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake.... Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, “Lord, save me!”’ (Matthew 14:25 and

14:30). For the interlude before seeing the wind and instinctively panicking or becoming apprehensive that he was back in the unredeemed world, Peter was already walking in the redeemed world. 'Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "Why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14:31)—that 'the kingdom of heaven has come near' (Matthew 3:2, 4:17 and 10:7), indeed that you are walking in it?" (footnote 30 in my book *What Were You Thinking?*).

85

Can someone who contributed in no small measure to the death of two people and who condoned their burial by youths who ostensibly were alive through their belief in Jesus Christ, the life ("I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die" [John 11:25]) ("Now a man named Ananias, together with his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of property. With his wife's full knowledge he kept back part of the money for himself, but brought the rest and put it at the apostles' feet. Then Peter said, 'Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit ...' When Ananias heard this, he fell down and died.... Then some young men came forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him out and buried him. About three hours later his wife came in, not knowing what had happened.... Peter said to her, 'How could you conspire to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet of the men who buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out also.' At that moment she fell down at his feet and died. Then the young men came in and, finding her dead, carried her out and buried her beside her husband" [Acts 5:1–10]), be considered a Christian? No; Peter is no Christian, that is, he is not a disciple of the life, who on the three occasions he encountered physically dead people characteristically resurrected them and who taught others to "let the dead bury their own dead" (Matthew 8:22).

86

According to the official US Social Security website, with 534,630 male babies given this name, Adam was the fifty-seventh most popular given name for male babies born during the last hundred years, 1916–2015, <https://www.ssa.gov/OACT/babynames/decades/century.html>.

87

Carl Haub, "How Many People Have Ever Lived on Earth?" *Population Reference Bureau*, October 2011, <http://www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2002/HowManyPeopleHaveEverLivedonEarth.aspx>.

88

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, edited by Aaron Ridley and Judith Norman, translated by Judith Norman (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 133.

89

'Imād al-Dīn Abu'l-Fidā' Ismā'il ibn 'Umar ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373), *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-'azīm*.

90

Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923), *Jāmi' al-bayān 'an ta'wīl āy al-Qur'ān*.

91

Abu'l-Qāsim Maḥmūd ibn 'Umar al-Zamakhsharī (d. 538/1144), *al-Kashshāf 'an ghawāmiḍ ḥaqā'iq al-tanzīl wa 'uyūn al-aqāwīl fī wujūh al-ta'wīl*.

92

The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, editor-in-chief; Caner K. Dagli, Maria Massi Dakake, Joseph E. B. Lumbard, general editors; Mohammed Rustom, assistant editor (New York: HarperOne, 2015), 262–263.

93

Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, 37.

94

Ibid.

95

Ibid., 30.

The Antichrist referred to in the title of Nietzsche's book *The Antichrist* is the figure Jesus's ostensible Jewish disciples (but not his real disciple, the resurrected brother of Mary and Martha) and Saul of Tarsus, aka Paul, made of Jesus.

Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, 32.

"*Ecce homo* ('behold the man,' Ecclesiastical Latin: [ˈɛtʃɛ ˈɔmo], Classical Latin: [ˈɛkɛ ˈhɔmo:]) are the Latin words used by Pontius Pilate in the Vulgate translation of John 19:5, when he presents a scourged Jesus Christ, bound and crowned with thorns, to a hostile crowd shortly before his Crucifixion" (*Wikipedia*, s.v. "Ecce homo," https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecce_homo). Nietzsche's titling of the book he wrote in the autumn of 1888 *Ecce Homo* is fitting not only because he was the one crucified as Jesus on the cross circa 30, but also because having died before dying around the same period he assumed all the names of history, thus could generically be said to be man.

Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, 156.

Joachim Latacz, "On Nietzsche's Philological Beginnings," in *Nietzsche as a Scholar of Antiquity*, ed. Anthony K. Jensen and Helmut Heit (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 6.

Ibid., 9.

Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols; and, The Anti-Christ*, 143.

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo: How to Become What You Are*, translated with an introduction and notes by Duncan Large (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 36. In the Preface to his *The Anti-Christ: A Curse on Christianity*, "some men are born posthumously" refers to the future: "My day won't come until the day after tomorrow. Some men are born posthumously" (*The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, 3).

Fate or destiny only appears to be related to the future but actually has to do with something that happened already. Nietzsche was fated to be crucified, hence this event had already happened, in Palestine circa 30, by the time he was born in 1844.

Duncan Large, the translator of the 2007 Oxford University Press edition of *Ecce Homo* notes that "'bear witness' to myself" is a "further allusion to the Gospel of St John, where this is a frequent motif (cf., e.g., John 5:36–7; 8:18; 10:25; 15:27; 18:37)." Of special interest here is John 18:37, where the one who appears to be Jesus uses this expression in a dialogue with Pilate: "Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should *bear witness* unto the truth" (my italics).

Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, 4—I have substituted "has become" for "became."

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, edited by Rolf-Peter Horstmann and Judith Norman; translated by Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 3.

Matthew 27:19.

109

I would say the same, “What I have written, I have written,” in relation to my already published text “The Resurrected Brother of Mary and Martha: A Human Who Resurrected God!” in which it appears that Jesus was crucified in Palestine circa 30. And so I have not revised in this book that earlier text so there would be no apparent conflict between it and my text “The Crucified,” according to which Jesus was crucified not in Palestine circa 30 but in Baghdad in 922.

110

Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, §276, p. 223.

111

Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, 35.

112

Ibid., 10.

113

Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, 36.

114

“Journées intercalaires ... non comprises dans le calendrier de ce monde-ci—quoi[que] vraies comme le jour d’ici,” Antonin Artaud (et Antonin Nalpas), *Nouveaux Écrits de Rodez: Lettres au docteur Ferdière (1943–1946) et autres textes inédits, suivis de Six lettres à Marie Dubuc (1935–1937)*, préface du docteur Gaston Ferdière; présentation et notes de Pierre Chaleix (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), 28.

115

Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, 36.

116

I first advanced that Nietzsche died on the cross in place of and in the guise of Jesus in my book ‘*Āshūrā*’: *This Blood Spilled in My Veins* (2005).

117

Akhbar al Hallaj: texte ancien relatif à la prédication et au supplice du mystique musulman Al-Ḥosayn B. Manṣour Al-Ḥallāj, published, annotated and translated by Louis Massignon and Paul Kraus (Paris: Éditions Larose/Imprimerie au Calame, 1936), §52, p. 82.

118

Karl W. Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1985), 69.

119

Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols; and, The Anti-Christ*, 143.

120

Akhbar al Hallaj, §41, p. 63.

121

Yet again, *anā al-haqq* assumed another form, written by the blood that had fallen on the ground from the body of the crucified, and now it manifested to the perceptive onlookers that every entity at every moment is one of the infinite self-disclosures of God—those whose sight was piercing (*ḥadīd* [“We have removed from thee thy covering, and piercing is thy sight this day” (Qur’ān 50:22)]) would have been aware that the blood falling from the crucified is at every moment one of the infinite self-disclosures of God without the blood tracing the words *anā al-haqq*.

122

“Moses ... said: My Lord! Show me (Thy Self), that I may gaze upon Thee. He said: Thou wilt not see Me, but gaze upon the mountain! If it stand still in its place, then thou wilt see Me. And when his Lord revealed (His) glory to the mountain He sent it crashing down. And Moses fell down senseless. And when he woke he said: Glory unto Thee!” (Qur’ān 7:143, trans. Pickthall).

123

“And when We said unto the angels: Prostrate yourselves before Adam, they fell prostrate, all save Iblis” (Qur’ān 2:34, trans. Pickthall).

124

Quoted in Louis Massignon, *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj: Mystic and Martyr of Islam*, vol. 3, trans. Herbert Mason (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 309–311.

125

Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism*, 72.

126

Quoted in Massignon, *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj*, vol. 1, 569. Zanjī volunteered the following rationalization for the commissioner’s odd assertion: “afraid of being killed [or: lest someone kill Ḥallāj].”

127

Quoted *ibid.*, 594–595.

128

Quoted *ibid.*, 571.

129

Louis Gardet and Louis Massignon, “al-Ḥallāj,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., edited by P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, and W. P. Heinrichs, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/al-halladj-COM_0256.

130

ibid.

131

Quoted in Massignon, *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj*, vol. 1, 569–570.

132

Gardet and Massignon, “al-Ḥallāj,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed.

133

Massignon, *The Passion of al-Ḥallāj*, vol. 1, 570. Massignon: “This detailed account by an eyewitness directly involved in the incidents has some more or less unintentional omissions

and even some deliberate misrepresentations. Why does Zanjī insist that the thousand lashes were indeed administered, when two other independent sources deny it? Why does he say nothing about the time, perhaps two hours, perhaps twelve hours, elapsed between the intercision and the decapitation, when the punished victim had to be hoisted, in full view of everyone, according to the Qur’ānic rule, onto a gibbet, which was more or less in the form of a cross?” (*ibid.*)

134

The Study Quran, 262.

135

Hence one of the miracles of Jesus at the level of chronology was that he was resurrected (circa 30 in Palestine) before he was crucified (in 922 in Baghdad).

136

Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche, ed. and trans. Christopher Middleton (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1996), 346.

137

Freud traces back the origin of monotheism not to Iraq but to Egypt, mainly to Pharaoh Akhenaten, and asserts that “Moses, an Egyptian,” “really did himself give the monotheist idea to the Jews”: “As a result of the conquests of the Eighteenth Dynasty, Egypt became a world-empire.... The idea arose of a universal god Aten to whom restriction to a single country and a single people no longer applied.... This is the first ... monotheist religion in human history.... Already under Akhenaten’s feeble successors all that he had created collapsed.... Among those in Akhenaten’s *entourage* there was a man who was perhaps called Tuthmosis.... Perhaps as a governor of the frontier province he had come in contact with a Semitic tribe which had immigrated into it a few generations earlier.... He chose them as his people ... and introduced them into the doctrines of the Aten religion, which the Egyptians had just thrown off ..., and he may, too, have given up dependence on the sun-god of On, to which Akhenaten had continued to adhere” (Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund*

Freud, vol. 23, *Moses and Monotheism, and Outline of Psycho-Analysis and Other Works (1937–1939)*, translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson [London: Vintage, 2001], 7, 59–60, and 66).

138

Encyclopædia Britannica Online, s.v. “Babylonian Exile,” <https://www.britannica.com/event/Babylonian-Exile>.

139

Ibid.

140

Encyclopædia Britannica Online, s.v. “Bavli,” <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Bavli>.

141

See the section “Labyrinth” in this book.

142

Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Great Short Works of Fyodor Dostoyevsky*, introduction by Ronald Hingley (New York: Perennial, 2004), 61.

143

Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988), 17.

144

The subtle dancer is not a projection of the mind; he or she is a subtle body—that has a mind.

145

If the Christian marriage is a *sirr min asrār al kanīsa* (one of the secrets of the Church), a sacred mystery, it is so not only in terms of how it can effectively constitute one body out of two, but also because such an operation is invisible to the mundane body of the believer. This preliminary primal scene during the Christian marriage ceremony, in which the bodies of the husband and the wife actually rather than seemingly become one flesh, does not take place in this world, where it

would be unbearable to see, but in the Imaginal World (*‘ālam al-khayāl*), where it is bearable to see by those present there as subtle bodies.

146

Wikipedia, s.v. “Double-Slit Experiment,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Double-slit_experiment.

147

David Deutsch, *The Fabric of Reality: The Science of Parallel Universes—and Its Implications* (New York: Allen Lane, 1997), 46 and 49.

148

Ibid., 195.

149

The Tragedies of Sophocles, translated into English prose by Sir Richard C. Jebb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1927), 6–7.

150

In all the summaries I’ve come across of Sophocles’s *Oedipus the King*, the author begins with Oedipus’s childhood and then moves on to his adult life, in some cases all in the present tense, that is, he or she treats the order of succession we have in the play as related to the narrative but not to the story, when this is, strictly speaking, not the case with oracles. It is not the case that Oedipus is told in some present an oracle that portends that he will father children with his mother and kill his father; rather, and despite the fact that the oracle has the form of something announcing one or more future events, Oedipus has *always already* been told the oracle and actualized it according to some manner of interpreting it, in other words, the oracle’s official enunciation and its actualization are *always* in Oedipus’s past. Since one cannot counter the oracle, given that it has already happened, one’s effort has to be to give it, including through one’s actions, the most felicitous, advantageous, and affirmative interpretation in actuality. In terms of narration, events can be relayed in the present only once what the oracle announced has taken place.

151

Jean-Joseph Goux, *Oedipus, Philosopher* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993), 61–63.

152

If the king of France had two bodies, then his enemies could have fully succeeded in executing him only by killing his two bodies. That would have required on their part the production of another body, the one with which they could have executed his second body.

153

The Tragedies of Sophocles, translated into English prose by Sir Richard C. Jebb, 22.

154

Goux, *Oedipus, Philosopher*, 74: “In the standard myth ... the protagonist ... needs the help of Gods or wise men in order to succeed.”

155

“When I insist to one of my patients on the frequency of Oedipus dreams, in which the dreamer has sexual intercourse with his own mother, he often replies: ‘I have no recollection of having had any such dream.’ Immediately afterwards, however, a memory will emerge of some other inconspicuous and indifferent dream, which the patient has dreamt repeatedly. Analysis then shows that this is in fact a dream with the same content—once more an Oedipus dream. I can say with certainty that *disguised* dreams of sexual intercourse with the dreamer’s mother are many times more frequent than straightforward ones” (Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, translated from the German and edited by James Strachey [New York: Basic Books, 2010], 408).

156

Oedipus, who had ostensibly answered, “Man,” as the solution to the riddle of the tripartite Sphinx, proved himself again human, all too human by (unconsciously) taking revenge on those who tried to have him killed, his biological parents (Nietzsche: “A little revenge is more human than no revenge at all” [“Of the Adder’s Bite,” *Thus Spoke*

Zarathustra]), killing his father and leading his mother to commit suicide on becoming aware of her disgraceful situation of having had four children with her own son.

157

Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–1960: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII*, edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, translated with notes by Dennis Porter (London: Routledge, 2008), 392. Elsewhere in the same seminar, Lacan asserted: “A form of ethical judgment is possible, of a kind that gives this question the force of a Last Judgment: Have you acted in conformity with the desire that is in you?” (ibid., 386).

158

J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, with an introduction by Daniel Lagache (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974), 283.

159

Pierre Abi Saab, “Jīlbīr al-Ḥāj ... Shi’riyyat al-kharāb,” *Al-Akhbar*, September 13, 2010, <https://www.al-akhbar.com/sites/default/files/pdfs/20100923/alakhbar20100923.pdf>.

160

How can a translation, for example of an aphorism from my book *Distracted*, not be a paraphrase? Ideally, the translation of an aphorism should itself be received at the end of a perforation of a “Wall”—the original aphorism itself functioning as the “Wall”?

161

The aim of translation is not to paraphrase a text in another language but to find words in various other languages that convey better what the author, at a loss for (the exact) words in his or her language of writing, felt to be no better than a paraphrase; for example, in relation to one’s basic position of having, as someone who can undergo over-turns, one’s back to oneself outside the mirror, the French *sous-entendu* as a descriptor of the call that one, unawares

and without uttering it, addresses to oneself in the mirror and that, as long as one has not already died, leads to one's facing oneself.

162

A paraphrase of "Hell is other people" from Sartre's play *No Exit*.

163

The other way of leaving a radical closure is to go through all the permutations (Luis Buñuel's *The Exterminating Angel*, 1962).

164

Lynch on Lynch, ed. Chris Rodley (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), 223.

165

"Heath Ledger's January 2008 death came in the middle of the actor's filming Terry Gilliam's *The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*. The movie suspended production temporarily. Ultimately, Johnny Depp, Jude Law and Colin Farrell played various versions of Ledger's character." *Hollywood Reporter*, "Actors Who Died During Filming," February 12, 2013, <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/gallery/philip-seymour-hoffman-actors-who-660897/10-heath-ledger-and-the-imaginarium-of-doctor-parnassus>.

166

Vera Miles was supposed to play the female lead in Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958), but, as Hitchcock indicates, "she became pregnant just before the part that was going to turn her into a star. After that, I lost interest. I couldn't get the rhythm going with her again" (François Truffaut, *Hitchcock*, with the collaboration of Helen G. Scott [New York: Simon & Schuster, 1984], 247). Hitchcock then cast Kim Novak instead in the roles of Madeleine and Judy.

167

As one can see in Michal Leszczyłowski's documentary *Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky*, 1988, the camera jammed during the filming of the shot of Alexander's burning down of his

house; Tarkovsky insisted that the house be rebuilt and the long shot be taken again; and the house was rebuilt and the shot was done again, successfully. It lasts six and a half minutes in *The Sacrifice*.

168

The great difficulty of rendering a dream in a film does not simply have to do with not forgetting it in the first place, whether outright or in the more subtle, insidious manner of its secondary revision, "the elimination of the dream's apparent absurdity and incoherence, the filling-in of its gaps, the partial or total reorganisation of its elements by means of selection and addition," (Laplanche and Pontalis, "Secondary Revision (or Elaboration)," in *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, 412) which "is an effect of censorship" (ibid.) (the less the dream images have been subjected to secondary revision, the more difficult it is to remember them). Insofar as a filmmaker actually manages to produce dream images not altered by secondary revision he or she would have gotten up dreaming—at least in relation to these images—driving his or her car to work while dreaming; arriving to his or her appointments on time while dreaming; conferring with the producer while dreaming; giving directions to the actors while dreaming; supervising the editor while dreaming. To ask a filmmaker what a certain dreamlike shot or sequence in his film means is equivalent to asking him to interpret it within the dream.

169

While the primary responsibility of filmmakers and thinkers who receive their ideas and images, for example, David Lynch, a radical-closure filmmaker, and myself, an aphoristic thinker, is to render the idea or image they received exactly as they received it, their attendant responsibility is to forewarn the reader or spectator in some manner if these ideas or images are likely to damage and debase him or her.

170

"PilotMovie," in <http://www.mulholland-drive.net/studies/pilot.htm>.

171

An aphoristic writer, “if I sometimes quote myself, it is because I have a loathing of paraphrasing—even myself” (*Distracted*, 2nd ed. [Berkeley, CA: Tuumba Press, 2003], 129). As an aphoristic writer, I feel an affinity with the phrase “This is the girl” of Lynch’s *Mulholland Drive*, which is received and which has to be repeated verbatim to function properly.

172

“According to *Toy Story 3* director Lee Unkrich ..., ‘Kubrick filmed a number of different language versions of the “All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy” insert shot as Wendy leafs through Jack’s work.’ Kubrick ... didn’t just translate the original phrase however, but came up with different stacks of repeated sentences, many of which can be seen in the Stanley Kubrick Archive: Italian: *Il mattino ha l’oro in bocca* ... [the early bird catches the worm (*Collins Italian to English Dictionary*)]; German: *Was du heute kannst besorgen, das verschiebe nicht auf morgen* ... [never put off until tomorrow what you can do today (*Collins German to English Dictionary*)]; Spanish: *No por mucho madrugar amanece más temprano* ... [time will take its course (*Collins Spanish to English Dictionary*)]; French: *Un tiens vaut mieux que deux tu l’auras* ... [a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush (<http://dictionary.reverso.net>)]” (Christopher Hooton, “Read the alternative phrases to ‘All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy’ Stanley Kubrick considered for *The Shining*,” *Independent*, June 11, 2015, <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/read-the-alternative-phrases-to-all-work-and-no-play-makes-jack-a-dull-boy-stanley-kubrick-10312563.html>). Fortunately, Kubrick did not end up using these other versions of the repeated sentence in the foreign language versions of his film. Fortunately also, “during the scenes in which we can hear Jack typing but cannot see what it is he is committing to paper, Kubrick reportedly recorded the sound of a typist actually typing the words ‘All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy’ due to the fact that each key on a typewriter sounds slightly different and he wanted to ensure authenticity” (ibid.)—such a variation of the sentence through the *sounds* of the typing, while it would have been missed by most empirical spectators (me included), if not all of them, would have been registered by the Lacanian big Other.

173

To be sure that such a line was willed by this character we would have to wait until all the possible permutations (of names, etc.) have occurred without his or her undergoing them.

174

Philippe Arnaud, *Robert Bresson* (Paris: Cahiers du Cinéma, 1986), 147.

175

Encyclopædia Britannica Online, s.v. “Labyrinth (Architecture),” <https://www.britannica.com/technology/labyrinth-architecture>.

176

Wikipedia, s.v. “Labyrinth,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labyrinth#cite_note-5.

177

John-Dylan Haynes and Geraint Rees, “Recent advances in human neuroimaging have shown that it is possible to accurately decode a person’s conscious experience based only on non-invasive measurements of their brain activity. Such ‘brain reading’ has mostly been studied in the domain of visual perception, where it helps reveal the way in which individual experiences are encoded in the human brain. The same approach can also be extended to other types of mental state, such as covert attitudes and lie detection,” *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, no. 7 (July 2006): 523–534, <http://www.nature.com/nrn/journal/v7/n7/full/nrn1931.html>.

178

E. M. Cioran, *Anathemas and Admirations*, translated from the French by Richard Howard (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1991), 82.

179

All figurative expressions prove to be literal in one realm or another (death, dance, etc.). It is crucial though, *as long as one is aware that they are borrowings from the literal sense*, to liberate them as figurative expressions.

180

Jalal Toufic, (*Vampires*): *An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, revised and expanded edition, 86.

181

“Death and the Labyrinth” is the title of Michel Foucault’s book on Raymond Roussel.

182

Jalal Toufic, (*Vampires*): *An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, revised and expanded edition, 18.

183

“The living person is a composite that dissociates in death-as-undeath or during some states of altered consciousness first into separate subunits that are themselves composites, most of them uglier than the original one, then into elements, becoming alien. Each of us is common, not alien, both because each of us is a composite of all the others, even of those who lived erstwhile and who are long dead, and because each of us is part of the composite that constitutes the others. That is why we do not find others or for that matter ourselves alien, and that is why they too do not find us alien. In certain states of altered consciousness, though, we see the dead, people who have become not merely uglier, but alien, and that is because they are no longer composites (the withdrawal of the cathexis of the world). What is extremely discomposing about the double is that in a twisted, too logical way, he is more me than myself: while I include all the others, he includes only ‘me,’ and therefore he is not really me, since I am never purely myself. The double is unrecognizable because he is the Same. The double is not the other, but I divested of all others. That is why whenever I encounter him, even in a crowded public place, I feel I am alone with him, *alone with the alone*; he embodies the divestment of the world. That is why encountering the double is such a desolate experience, and is a premonition of death with its loss of others and the rest of the world” (Jalal Toufic, (*Vampires*): *An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, revised and expanded edition, 173–174; “Alone with the Alone” is the English title of Henry Corbin’s book on the Sufism of Ibn ‘Arabī—in Corbin’s title the second *Alone* refers to God).

184

The moment I, exasperated, end up responding with a slap to the repeated unprovoked slaps of the double, I feel the pain of having slapped myself, so that ready to slap him following further provocations, I have the expression less of anger as of apprehension and fear.

185

David Deutsch, *The Beginning of Infinity: Explanations That Transform the World* (London: Allen Lane, 2011), 353.

186

http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads/Jalal_Toufic,_Jouissance_in_Postwar_Beirut.pdf.

187

See endnote 183 of this book.

188

Jalal Toufic, (*Vampires*): *An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, revised and expanded edition, 86.

189

One of the reasons I chose to term *the false threshold* for the actual, as opposed to the apparent, threshold of the labyrinth is that “*past* it one has always been ‘in’ the labyrinth.”

190

Jalal Toufic, (*Vampires*): *An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, revised and expanded edition, 76.

191

“Nostalgia is basically less a yearning for the repetition of an event than an indication that one did not will the event, that is, did not ‘will’ its eternal recurrence. Nostalgia reveals not only what I feel now about a past event, but also how I ‘willed’ that event when it happened in the past: I did not ‘will’ its eternal recurrence. When it is not merely psychological, nostalgia is basically a facet of the present event; with regard to any event toward which I feel nostalgic, I know that I did not ‘will’ its eternal recurrence when it happened. We are nostalgic beings less—if at all—because we are creatures who

remember in an ostensibly transient present than because we do not will events. I really will an event only if I will its eternal recurrence, thus making it recur eternally (Nietzsche's philosophy could be a philosophy of the will only insofar as it was also one of eternal recurrence). Until someone experiences countless recurrence and ends up willing, beneath 'willing' some event what we, nostalgic beings, 'will' is nostalgia, rather than the event itself. But can't this basic nostalgia itself be genuinely willed? No; only the psychological nostalgia can be 'willed'" (Jalal Toufic, *Forthcoming*, 2nd ed. [Berlin: e-flux journal-Sternberg Press, 2014], 86–87).

192

Jalal Toufic, (*Vampires*): *An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, revised and expanded edition, 27.

193

Al-qiyāma al-kubrā, aka *qiyāmat-i qiyāmāt*.

194

Jalal Toufic, (*Vampires*): *An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, revised and expanded edition, 199.

195

Ibid., 198–200.

196

See endnote 79.

197

A God of creation, a God who creates the world *ex nihilo*, would not do it only once but would be a God of renewed creation (and of occasionalism), one who recreates the world anew, again and again.

198

These words do not include the ones that Jesus quotes from the Old Testament.

199

Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, 105.

200

The film can be viewed at: <https://vimeo.com/jalaltoufic>.

201

The unconscious is not limited to unavowed and repressed wishes but encompasses also those expressed (gestures, words, etc.) that have an affinity with a different context than the actual state of things in which they insist.

202

Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Shell and the Kernel: Renewals of Psychoanalysis*, vol. 1, 173.

203

Anne Ancelin Schützenberger, *The Ancestor Syndrome: Transgenerational Psychotherapy and the Hidden Links in the Family Tree*, trans. Anne Trager (London: Routledge, 1998), 48.

204

Later in the film, he is shot at close range by the spy ring-leader; appears, by the expression on his face, to have been hit; and falls to the floor. Then there is a fade to black. Only then is it revealed in a somewhat unconvincing manner that he was saved by the copy of the Church Hymnary that was in the coat of the husband of the woman who gave him refuge the night before. He had to appear to die for appearing to have killed his guest "Annabella." Is it accidental that he who had ostensibly died then speaks in the name of another (in the same letter in which Nietzsche wrote, "This autumn ... I twice attended my funeral," he asserted, "Every name in history is I"), a parliamentary candidate, thus someone who himself intends to speak in the name of many others, those he aims to represent?

205

"*I'djaz*, literally 'the rendering incapable, powerless,' since the second half of the 3rd/9th century [the] technical term for the inimitability or uniqueness of the *Ḳur'ān* in content and form.... Based essentially on *Ḳur'ān* XVII, 90 and X, 90, where it is declared that men and *djinn*, even were they to combine their efforts, are incapable of producing anything equaling as much as a single *sūra* of the Book" (G. E. von Grunebaum,

“I’djāz,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/idjaz-SIM_3484. “From early on, the road bifurcated into two main sets of ideas: there were those who located the miracle *in the Qur’an itself*, and there were those who located it in something *outside it*. The latter approach was represented by the theory of the so-called ‘*ṣarfa*.’ First propounded by the Mu’tazilite Nazzām (d. 835–45), its main thrust was that it was not the construction of the Qur’an itself that was the miracle, but rather God’s deflection (*ṣarf*) of people from imitation, depriving them of both motivation and ability. Nazzām thus believed that ‘if the Arabs were left alone they would have been able to compose pieces like those of the Qur’an.’ He also, however, partly located the miracle in the Qur’an itself insofar as it contained knowledge of ‘*ghuyūb*’—information which it would not have been humanly possible to come by, prophetic material being a prime example. Thus, to support the theory of *ṣarfa* was not incompatible with simultaneously supporting other elements of *i’jāz*, and this holds true of other supporters of the theory apart from Nazzām.... This theory was not embraced by all Mu’tazilites; apart from Nazzām, Hishām al-Fuwaṭī (d. before 833), ‘Abbād ibn Sulaymān (d. 864) and Abū Mūsā al-Murdār (d. 840) are said to have taken it up, while the Imāmī Shī‘ī Mu’tazilī al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā (d. 1044) was perhaps the last to do so ...” (Sophia Vasalou, “The Miraculous Eloquence of the Qur’an: General Trajectories and Individual Approaches,” *Journal of Qur’anic Studies* 4, no. 2 [2002]: 30).

206

Merriam-Webster Online, s.v. “contain,” <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/contain>.

207

The adherents of the self-proclaimed Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) are doubly related to thoughtlessness: they do not think and what they do would stain thought with *ressentiment* and/or *jouissance* and so should not be thought but merely suffered.

208

If there is to be a fight within Islam, it should certainly not be between Shi‘ism and Sunnism, for then it would be between the worst, most exoteric and shallow in both. It should rather be within each of these two branches, between its simplifying, exoteric tendencies and its spiritual and esoteric tendencies. Moreover, the spiritual, esoteric tendencies in Sunnism (primarily Sufism) and Shi‘ism should be allies in the fight against the exclusively exoteric tendencies in both.

209

David Deutsch: “Past-directed time travel would inevitably be a process set in several interacting and interconnected universes. In that process, the participants would in general travel from one universe to another whenever they traveled in time.... So, for time travel to be physically possible it is necessary for there to be a multiverse.... In the multiverse view, the time traveller who visits Shakespeare has not come from the future of that copy of Shakespeare.... He can never visit the copy who existed in the universe he started from” (*The Fabric of Reality*, 310 and 316).

210

Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 137–139 and 169. I respect the profoundly bored Heidegger, but also the Sufi Ibn al-‘Arabī, who ostensibly was never bored since he was aware of the ever-renewed creation of himself and the world (the Sufi is basically always thrilled since everything in the world is a self-disclosure of God that is recurrently created anew in no time). I would like to think that when Ibn al-‘Arabī criticized those who get bored his critique would not have included profound boredom but a form of boredom in which “what is boring is evidently *this or that*, this railway station, the street, ... a determinate ‘boring’ thing” (ibid., 114; I placed *boring* in quotation marks).

211

ibid., 284.

212

Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson, foreword by Taylor Carman (New York: Harper Perennial Modern Thought, 2008), 230–232.

213

“I did not invent the expression ‘forecourts of heaven,’ but like all other expressions which are in inverted commas in this essay (for instance ‘fleeting-improvised-men,’ ‘dream life,’ etc.), it only repeats the words which the voices that speak to me always applied to the processes concerned. These are expressions which would never have occurred to me, which I have never heard from human beings” (Daniel Paul Schreber, *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, introduction by Rosemary Dinnage, translated and edited by Ida Macalpine and Richard A. Hunter [New York: New York Review of Books Classics, 2000], 25).

214

When a miracle happens and the world does not fall apart, we should deduce that we are no longer in the same world, that we imperceptibly slid into another world, another kind of world.

215

Schreber, *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, 18.

216

See Unica Zürn’s *The Man of Jasmine*, translated and introduced by Malcolm Green (London: Atlas, 1994).

217

The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke, translated and edited by Stephen Mitchell, with an introduction by Robert Hass (New York: Vintage International, 1989), 195.

218

As a participating artist in the 9th Shanghai Biennale, I had the displeasure, on entering the Power Station of Art in order to install my mixed media, of seeing Huang Yong Ping’s *Thousand Hands Guanyin* (aka *Bodhisattva with a Thousand*

Hands, 1997–2012), which seemed to rival in height the museum and consisted of metal humanoid arms holding various objects on a metal structure that appeared to be somewhat modeled on Marcel Duchamp’s 1914 readymade *Bottle Rack*. How pretentious and puny is this work compared to many other art objects that are much smaller physically, for, while it remained exclusively a part of the universe or of this branch of the multiverse, many an art object enfolds or shows another universe or branch of the multiverse (that does not fall apart “two days” later).

219

It is mentioned earlier in the interpolated title of Genesis 6:1: “Wickedness in the World.”

220

Marcus Chown, “Top 4 Bonkers Things about the Universe,” <http://www.physics.org/featuredetail.asp?id=41>.

221

Leonard Susskind, *The Black Hole War: My Battle with Stephen Hawking to Make the World Safe for Quantum Mechanics* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008), 433–435.

222

Wikipedia, s.v. “Double-Slit Experiment,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Double-slit_experiment.

223

Wikipedia, s.v. “Bell Test Experiments,” http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bell_test_experiments.

224

David Deutsch, *The Fabric of Reality*, 313. Deutsch continues: “Once we have built one, but not before, we may expect visitors, or at least messages, from the future to emerge from it.”

225

Ibid.

264
226

David Deutsch, *The Beginning of Infinity*, 299–300. How come then the vast majority of scientists, including the author of the quote, David Deutsch, do not, as scientists, read or watch much more fiction that doesn't fall apart "two days" later?

227

ibid.

228

Wikipedia, s.v. "Speed of Light," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speed_of_light.

229

During an interview he did with me in Vienna on June 12, 2010, Walid Raad exclaimed: "It would have been nice had we not met!" What a compliment (that complements his "I also realize that I read about all this somewhere else, most likely in one of Jalal Toufic's books. I mentioned in our earlier conversation that I am likely to quote Jalal quite a bit in any exchange we have simply because I am not able these days to find my thoughts without passing through his words, books, and concepts" [Silvia Kolbowski and Walid Raad, *Between Artists* (New York: A.R.T. Press, 2006)])! Is nice ("from Latin *nescius* 'ignorant,' from *nescire* 'not know'" [*Oxford Dictionary of English*, 3rd edition, 2016]) what allows one to remain ignorant or oblivious of what is too big for one, thus to miss joy or *jouissance*—I am for Nietzschean wisdom ("I want, once and for all, not to know many things. Wisdom requires moderation in knowledge as in other things") when it comes to *jouissance* but not to joy. It would have been nice had I not died before dying, in 1989, and had I not written (*Vampires: An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film* (1993; revised and expanded edition, 2003)).

230

As in Exodus 3:2-6: "The angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush.... Moses thought, 'I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up.' When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, ... 'Do not come any

closer.... I am the God of your father....' At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God."

231

Mayo Clinic, "Diseases and Conditions: Plague," <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/plague/basics/symptoms/con-20021610?p=1>. Cf. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Plague: Symptoms," <http://www.cdc.gov/plague/symptoms>.

232

Pierre-André Boutang, *L'Abécédaire de Gilles Deleuze* (with Claire Parnet), 1997.

233

Edward William Lane, "*ayn dhāl bā*," in *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 5 (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1980).

234

In other words, *jouissance* is the "best worst." Is it also, at its purest, the least? Where do we encounter *jouissance* at its purest? In death as undeath and in hell, which actualize its tendency to exclude everything other than the object and activity that induce it. Of whom or what can we assert that he or she or it has reached the least? "The soul of the damned ... filled with the hatred of God in the present," especially if it is a monad ("This is the smallest amplitude of the soul. Why? Because God, by definition, is the supreme being, the infinite being. The soul penetrated by the hatred of God vomits everything ... except this hatred.... The only predicate of the damned soul is: I hate God.... Every monad expresses the world, ... the infinite world, but it clearly expresses a small part of the world, its own neighborhood ... its own department.... So the damned soul? Okay, it is a monad, it expresses the world, but its department became reduced almost to zero" [Gilles Deleuze, from the 24 February 1987 session of his seminar on Leibniz, Vincennes-Saint-Denis, <http://www.webdeleuze.com/textes/139>]); and the undead, who lost the world and is driven to repeatedly bring about *jouissance* amid the phantasmagoria of his unleashed unconscious. And so I would say that the following Beckett words from his book *Worstward* fit *jouissance* in the undeath realm and in hell perfectly: "Least never

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264

What Was I Thinking? (notes)

Jalal Toufic

to be naught. Never to naught be brought. Never by naught be nullified. Unnullable least. Say that best worst. With leastening words say least best worse. For want of worser worse. Unlessenable least best worse.” The mortal who is increasingly preoccupied with *jouissance*, be it the one undergone by him in the undead realm, should, before it is too late, “with leastening words say least best worse” to the voices(-over), then, if unable to wrap it in (Hölderlinian) song or (Rilkean) angelic, awesome beauty (including through subjecting it at some stage to a cut-up), scribble it on a piece of paper and “tear [the latter] into very small pieces and [given that as dead even while still physically alive he or she assumes every name in history] throw it into somebody else’s garbage can” (William S. Burroughs, “William S. Burroughs Workshop, Jack Kerouac Conference,” Naropa University, July 23, 1982, as transcribed from the original audio recording by Marcus D. Niski, http://archive.org/stream/WilliamS.BurroughsOnWriting/BurroughsJackKerouaf63e9_djvu.txt; my insert).

235

Jorge Luis Borges, *Seven Nights*, translated by Eliot Weinberger, introduction by Alastair Reid (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), 45.

236

Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004), 17.

237

Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale; *Ecce Homo*, translated and edited, with commentary, by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 57–62.

238

Jacques Lacan: “Love is giving what one does not have” (*Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan [London: Routledge Classics, 2001], 194).

239

Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche, 323.

240

That the mad and the dead can assert, “Every name in history is I,” implicates all of us in madness and death. Were it not the case that each one of us is at some level mad or dead even while still consciously sane and physically alive, the mad and the dead could not possibly assert at some point, “Every name in history is I”; in other words, the condition of possibility for a madman or a dead human to assert, “Every name in history is I,” is that there be madness and death in every sane living person, be it his or her madness when he or she dreams (often unbeknownst to the dreamer [but not to the psychoanalyst], “every name” in the dream is the dreamer: “Whenever my own ego does not appear, but only some extraneous person, I may safely assume that my own ego lies concealed, by identification, behind this other person” [Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 338]), or the death he or she, as mortal, undergoes even while still physically alive. Thus that Nietzsche, having died before dying physically, could assert, “Every name in history is I,” is an indication that we’re all mortals, dead while alive. Ethics is responsibility for the other—when the other is experienced as other not only by myself but also by himself or herself.

241

While my mother corroborates that I was born in Lebanon, she affirms that it was in Beirut rather than in Sidon.

242

From Friedrich Nietzsche’s 5 January 1889 letter to Jakob Burckhardt, in *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 347.

243

“Charles Albert, Italian Carlo Alberto (born Oct. 2, 1798, Turin, Piedmont, French Republic—died July 28, 1849, Oporto, Portugal), king of Sardinia-Piedmont (1831–49) during the turbulent period of the Risorgimento, the movement for the unification of Italy” (*Encyclopædia Britannica Online*, s.v. “Charles Albert,” <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Charles-Albert>).

244

Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche, 348n246.

268
245

“Ferdinand de Lesseps (1805–94) was the French diplomat responsible for building the Suez Canal and who initiated the earlier stages of the building of the Panama Canal” (*Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, editor’s note, 329n210).

246

“Prado was tried in Paris on November 5, 1888; on November 14 he was condemned to death. The story had been reported in the *Gazette des Tribunaux*, 1888, on the following dates: June 29; July 4, 22, 23; August 5; September 10, 11; October 10, 18; November 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 (and December 29 was to follow). Prado was a Spanish subject who claimed that his real name was Linska de Castilon.... Heavily in debt, he came to France and lived with a girl named Eugénie Forestier; the couple had been without means since 1886. On November 28, 1887, Prado was arrested for theft in Paris.... During cross-examination, Eugénie asserted that Prado was the murderer of a prostitute named Marie Agriétant, who had been killed during the night of January 14, 1886.... This assertion proved to be true” (*Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, editor’s note, 329n210).

247

“Henri Chambige ... murdered the English wife of a Frenchman living near Constantine in Algeria. He was tried in Constantine on November 8, 1888, and was condemned to seven years of hard labor (it was a *crime passionnel*)” (*Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, editor’s note, 329n210).

248

No religion could have had the presumption to tell us about the posthumous state were it not that in certain conditions a human can wonder, “Am I dead?” or “Did I die?” This ostensible question is not derivative of religion; rather, it precedes any religion of the afterlife and is a condition for it.

249

Only when what is going on cannot otherwise become part of experience, has one, through writing or art, to convey it.

250

Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 32. The Spinoza quote is from *Ethics*, IV, 39.

251

I do not agree that physical death is necessary; as I wrote to Walid Raad on 26 June 2012 concerning his father’s recent physical death: “I particularly remember these two lines from Darren Aronofsky’s film *The Fountain* (2006), which I saw a few months ago: ‘Death is a disease; it is like any other, and there is a cure’ and ‘Death is the road to awe.’ One should not confuse these two radically different kinds of death. Perhaps what is dissuading humans from investing much more of if not almost all their resources into curing the disease of death is the *mistaken*, largely unconscious apprehension that by doing so they would forfeit death as the road to awe. Unlike earlier, when, as a mortal, therefore as dead while alive, he did so only in half measure, your father embarked fully on this road to awe a few days ago by our reckoning of time.”

252

Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 32–33 and 42.

253

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 59.

254

From Friedrich Nietzsche’s 5 January 1889 letter to Jakob Burckhardt, in *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 347.

255

Encyclopædia Britannica Online, s.v. “Antonin Artaud,” <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/36724/Antonin-Artaud>. I would recommend that the beginning of the entry for Antonin Artaud in *Encyclopædia Britannica* be emended from “Antonin Artaud, original name in full Antoine-Marie-Joseph Artaud (born Sept. 4, 1896, Marseille, France—died March 4, 1948, Ivry-sur-Seine),” to “Antonin Artaud, original name in full Antoine-Marie-Joseph Artaud, alias Antonin Nalpas (born Sept. 4, 1896, Marseille, France—died before physically dying August 1939, Ville-Évrard—died physically March 4, 1948, Ivry-sur-Seine).”

256

“Antonin Artaud est mort à la peine et de douleur à Ville-Évrard au mois d’Août 1939 et son cadavre a été sorti de Ville-Évrard pendant la durée d’une nuit blanche comme celles dont parle Dostoïevsky et qui occupent l’espace de plusieurs journées intercalaires mais non comprises dans le calendrier de ce monde-ci—quoi[que] vraies comme le jour d’ici (Antonin Artaud died to trouble and of pain in Ville-Évrard in the month of August 1939 and his cadaver was removed from Ville-Évrard during a sleepless night like those Dostoevsky talks about and that occupy the span of several intercalary days that are not included in the calendar of this world—though they are true as the day from here)” (Antonin Artaud [and Antonin Nalpas], *Nouveaux Écrits de Rodez: Lettres au docteur Ferdière (1943–1946) et autres textes inédits, suivis de Six lettres à Marie Dubuc (1935–1937)*, 28).

257

Harker tries to reassure Mina with the following words before he leaves to Count Dracula’s castle in Transylvania in Murnau’s *Nosferatu*: “Nothing will happen to me.” Little did he know consciously that to meet (“in” the labyrinth) the undead Dracula (without meeting him, as becomes clear in the mirror, where the latter does not appear), he would have to die before physically dying, and that as dead he would at various points undergo silence-over and consequently immobilization, a condition in which nothing can happen to him, thus an “event horizon.”

258

“Sophisticated as they are, artists and writers should try to ‘build a universe that doesn’t fall apart two days later’ (Philip K. Dick; cf. Nietzsche: ‘I teach you ... the creating friend, who hath always a complete world to bestow’) and then try to avoid credulously becoming sucked totally in it (Nietzsche again: ‘It is necessary to disperse the universe, to lose respect for the whole’)” (Jalal Toufic, *Vampires: An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, revised and expanded edition, 98).

259

See <http://www.webdeleuze.com/textes/50>.

260

“Leibniz said ... ‘every true proposition is necessarily analytical.’ He will give to it a very beautiful name: the principle of sufficient reason [“The principle of sufficient reason, namely, that nothing happens without a reason” (Leibniz-Clark Correspondence, L 2, AG 321)].... Why does he believe himself fully immersed in his very own scream? Everything must surely have a reason” (ibid.).

261

“Crossing the Rubicon belongs to the notion of Caesar. I would say that, here, Leibniz proposes one of his greatest concepts, the concept of inherence.... When we say that, we can no longer stop.... In the domain of screams, there is a famous scream from Aristotle. The great Aristotle ... at one point proposed in the *Metaphysics* a very beautiful formula: it is indeed necessary to stop (*anankstenai*) [“Therefore there must be a stop” (Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, Book XII)]. This is a great scream. This is the philosopher in front of the chasm of the interconnection of concepts. Leibniz ... does not stop.... It is sufficient for you to attribute to it [any subject whatsoever in the world] a single thing with truth in order for you to notice with fright that, from that moment on, you are forced to cram into the notion of the subject not only the thing that you attribute to it with truth, but the totality of the world. Why? By virtue of ... the simple principle of causality. For in the end, the causality principle stretches to infinity, that’s its very characteristic” (Deleuze, lecture of April 15, 1980; the original recording in French is available at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k128272n.r>).

262

In Nietzsche’s condition, “every name in history is I” is not asserted simply as a rational generalization from the indefinite enumeration of the specific names he had assumed (indeed it does not follow immediately the summary enumeration but occurs elsewhere in the letter), but must have been felt specifically at one or more points; thus I very well imagine that Nietzsche could have written, “I am Prado, I am also Prado’s father ... every name in history is I ... I am also Lesseps ... I am also Chambige ...”

263

How odd that the one who wrote this letter signed it “Nietzsche,” since one cannot *rigorously* sign a letter in which one asserts, “I am Prado, I am also Prado’s father, I venture to say that I am also Lesseps.... I am also Chambige.... every name in history is I,” with any one specific name that would lay claim to its sole, definite authorship.

264

Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 297.

265

“As [Béla] Balázs has already accurately demonstrated, the close-up ... *abstracts it [its object] from all spatiotemporal coordinates....* The close-up is not an enlargement” (Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, 98).

266

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and No One*, translated with an introduction by R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 114.

267

Hans Moravec, *Robot: Mere Machine to Transcendent Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 199–200.

268

One could have said at the time of feudalism: “It is easy for us to imagine the end of the world—see apocalyptic religious literature and paintings—but not the end of feudalism.”

269

Daniel Paul Schreber: “Very early on there predominated in recurrent nightly visions the notion of an approaching end of the world, as a consequence of the indissoluble connection between God and myself. Bad news came in from all sides that even this or that star or this or that group of stars had to be ‘given up’; at one time it was said that even Venus had to be ‘flooded,’ at another that the whole solar system would now have to be ‘disconnected,’ that the Cassiopeia (the whole group of stars) had had to be drawn together into a single sun,

that perhaps only the Pleiades could still be saved, etc., etc.” (*Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, 84).

270

Salvador Dalí, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí*, trans. Haakon M. Chevalier (London: Aldin Books, 1993), 360.

271

http://www.skatepress.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Skates_Art_Investment_Report_2015.pdf.

272

Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, translated and with an introduction by Daniel W. Smith, afterword by Tom Conley (London: Continuum, 2003), 89–90.

273

Bergson: “Our representation of matter is the measure of our possible action upon bodies: it results from the discarding of what has no interest for our needs, or more generally, for our functions. In one sense we might say that the perception of any unconscious material point whatever, in its instantaneousness, is infinitely greater and more complete than ours, since this point gathers and transmits the influences of all the points of the material universe, whereas our consciousness only attains to certain parts and to certain aspects of those parts” (*Matter and Memory*, 38).

274

Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 316.

275

The portrait of the little girl is a rite of non-passage, but she herself is a rite of passage for some others to some “wonderland” or other (Alice Liddell was a rite of passage for Charles Dodgson, the author, under the pseudonym Lewis Carroll, of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*).

276

World Bank, “Life Expectancy at Birth, Total (Years),” <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN>.

277

Nick Bostrom, "Do We Live in a Computer Simulation?" *New Scientist*, no. 2579 (2006): 38–39.

278

Ibid., 38.

279

Our inherent habitation is time not space; we are and always will be in every moment in which we've been.

280

According to the conventional view, bodies are *in* time; according to Zen master Dōgen, they *are* time; and according to relativity, they, as mass, slow down time.

281

An affined question: would detachment be required if time passes and by passing separates itself from one? No. Detachment is required because "time is not separate from you" since, as we are informed by Zen master Dōgen, "time itself is being, and all being is time."

282

See "Counterfeiting" in the revised and expanded edition of my book (*Vampires*): *An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*.

283

See my book *Undying Love, or Love Dies*.

284

See my book *The Withdrawal of Tradition Past a Surpassing Disaster*.

285

Jalal Toufic, *What Were You Thinking?*, 40–41.

286

Ibid., 38–39.

287

"Einstein ... famously derided entanglement as 'spukhafte Fernwirkung' or 'spooky action at a distance'" (*Wikipedia*, s.v. "Quantum Entanglement," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quantum_entanglement).

288

"Quantum entanglement is a physical phenomenon that occurs when pairs or groups of particles are generated or interact in ways such that the quantum state of each particle cannot be described independently—instead, a quantum state may be given for the system as a whole. Measurements of physical properties such as position, momentum, spin, polarization, etc., performed on entangled particles are found to be appropriately correlated" (ibid.).

289

Immobilization can be undergone or witnessed only in the death and dance realms, not in the natural world, not even at the event horizon of a black hole. Strictly speaking, from an outside reference frame, no one can reach a black hole's event horizon, and thus become immobilized: one can only become ever more motionless (a qualitatively different state from immobilization), i.e., move less and less in a given interval of time, as one approaches the event horizon.

290

John Cage, *Silence: Lectures and Writings* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 109. Notwithstanding Cage, that is not necessarily poetry.

291

Jalal Toufic, *The Dancer's Two Bodies*, 5.

292

Jesus Christ does not promise ("This is a misunderstanding ... : the 'kingdom of God' as a closing ceremony, as a promise!" [Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, 37]), he is the actualization of the promise. God, who talked with Abraham and Moses, stops talking with the coming of Jesus, having given his Word ("The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have

seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father” [John 1:14]).

293

Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 148.

294

Ibid., 149.

295

Ibid., 151–152.

296

According to the great Sufi Ibn Al-‘Arabī, in the imagination, more specifically the Imaginal World, “spiritual beings are corporealized ... and ... corporeal beings are spiritualized”; and not all imagination is dependent on an imagining “subject”—the Imaginal World exists irrespective of the latter’s presence or absence.

297

Beauty is affined to the Imaginal World and so when we encounter it we unconsciously expect to find also the other characteristics of the Imaginal World, for example, music that is played by no one!

298

“*Compromise formation*: a psychic product, symptom, symbol, or dream form that expresses simultaneously and partially satisfies both the unconscious impulse and the defense against it” (*Merriam-Webster Unabridged Dictionary*, s.v. “compromise formation,” <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/compromise%20formation>). It is not only dreams that are compromise formations; the world too is a compromise formation. Thus, oftentimes, what is factual is interesting only if one takes into consideration that, for the most part, it is the resultant of a compromise, a compromise formation, hence requires interpretation.

299

Cinema has produced its own bestiary, one that cannot be reduced to sundry representations of animals in the world: the various rabbits of David Lynch’s *Rabbits* (2002), Gore Verbinski’s *The Lone Ranger* (2013), and Stanley Kubrick’s *The Shining* (1980); the room-sized spider of Denis Villeneuve’s *Enemy* (2013; I recommend the following Arabic title for this film: *istrātījyyat al-‘ankabūt* [*The Spider’s Stratagem*, the title of a 1970 film by Bernardo Bertolucci]); the frogs of Paul Thomas Anderson’s *Magnolia* (1999); the birds of Alfred Hitchcock’s *The Birds* (1963). A disturbance in the symbolic order or the establishment of a radical closure does not so much produce these as make it possible for them to appear.

300

Lawrence M. Krauss, *A Universe from Nothing: Why There Is Something Rather Than Nothing*, with an afterword by Richard Dawkins (London: Simon & Schuster, 2012), 106–108.

301

Max Tegmark, “The Multiverse Strikes Back,” *Scientific American*, July 19, 2011, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/multiverse-the-case-for-parallel-universe/?print=true>.

302

Ibid.

303

Paul Davies, “How to Build a Time Machine,” *A Matter of Time*, *Scientific American* special edition 16, no. 1 (2006):16.

304

Susskind, *The Black Hole War*, 410.

305

Ibid., 294–298.

306

Jalal Toufic, (*Vampires*): *An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, revised and expanded edition, 79–80. In other words, since no one can leave a labyrinth (or a radical closure), if

someone appears to leave it, others will sooner or later feel that he or she is not actually the same person but an imposter or a double.

307

Kip S. Thorne, *Black Holes and Time Warps: Einstein's Outrageous Legacy* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994), 255: "The word 'singularity' conjured up an image of a region where gravity becomes infinitely strong, causing the laws of physics as we know them to break down—an image that we now understand is correct for the object at the center of a black hole." Thorne is more circumspect in the book's "Glossary": "Singularity: A region of spacetime where spacetime curvature becomes so strong that the general relativistic laws break down and the laws of quantum gravity take over" (ibid. 557).

308

Carlo Rovelli, *Seven Brief Lessons on Physics*, translated by Simon Carnell and Erica Segre (London: Penguin Books, 2016), 38.

309

Ibid. Here's the longer quote from Rovelli: "A university student attending lectures on general relativity in the morning and others on quantum mechanics in the afternoon might be forgiven for concluding that his professors are fools, or have neglected to communicate with each other for at least a century. In the morning the world is curved space where everything is continuous; in the afternoon it is a flat space where quanta of energy leap."

310

"Tradition is not merely what materially and ostensibly survived 'the test' of time: in normal times a nebulous entity despite the somewhat artificial process of canon-formation, tradition becomes delineated and specified by the surpassing disaster. Tradition is what conjointly materially survived the surpassing disaster, was immaterially withdrawn by it, and had the fortune of being subsequently resurrected by artists, writers, and thinkers. Many works one had thought part of tradition are revealed by their availability past a

surpassing disaster as not really part of tradition; contrariwise, many modernist works of art that vehemently attacked 'tradition' are, prior to any reluctant gradual canonization, revealed by their withdrawal to be part of that tradition" (Jalal Toufic, *The Withdrawal of Tradition Past a Surpassing Disaster*, 63–64).

311

With his peculiar antinomianism, did Jesus Christ treat the Law as an artist would the world: produce in relation to it what an artist produces in relation to the world, an exception that confirms it ("Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them" [Matthew 5:17])? For him to have successfully done so the Law had to be exceptional.

312

"I do not seek," said Picasso, "I find." Quoted in <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/articles/i-do-not-see-picasso-i-find>.

313

Alain Robbe-Grillet, *For a New Novel: Essays on Fiction*, trans. Richard Howard (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1989), 152–153.

314

See the abstract of Michael Lesk's "How Much Information Is There in the World?" <http://www.lesk.com/mlesk/ksg97/ksg.html>.

315

It may very well be that we feel nostalgia because, according to relativity, the past is preserved in four-dimensional space-time and one event that is in the past of another from a certain reference frame is simultaneous with it from other reference frames; if we feel nostalgic it is that we are, from other reference frames, simultaneous with something that in our local reference frame is no longer present.

316

Frank J. Tipler, *The Physics of Immortality: Modern Cosmology, God and the Resurrection of the Dead* (New York: Anchor Books, 1995), 227.

317

Quoted in Ibn al'Arabi, *The Bezels of Wisdom*, translation and introduction by R. W. J. Austin, preface by Titus Burckhardt (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 17.

318

If a reader considers that a certain book is rigorous, then he or she has to abstain from correcting even what seems a glaring mistake. This implies that whereas an author can be viewed as a reader, indeed the first reader, of his or her completed if not published book, he or she can no longer be considered one of its readers while revising it for a second edition.

319

Cathy Jordan: "The Earth, Sun and all the planets are orbiting around the center of mass of the solar system ... [which is] very close to the Sun itself, but not exactly at the Sun's center (it is actually a little bit outside the radius of the Sun). However, since almost all of the mass within the solar system is contained in the Sun ... assuming that the Sun is stationary and the planets revolve around its center is a good enough approximation for most purposes," <http://curious.astro.cornell.edu/about-us/41-our-solar-system/the-earth/orbit/90-does-the-sun-orbit-the-earth-as-well-as-the-earth-orbiting-the-sun-beginner>.

Jalal Toufic is a thinker and a mortal to death. He was born in 1962 in Beirut or Baghdad and died before dying in 1989 in Evanston, Illinois. His books, a number of which were published by Forthcoming Books, are available for download at his website: <http://www.jalaltoufic.com>. And his videos are available for viewing at: <https://vimeo.com/jalaltoufic>. He, along with artists and pretend artists, was a participant in the Sharjah Biennials 6, 10, and 11, the 9th Shanghai Biennale, documenta 13, the 3rd Athens Biennale, and “A History: Art, Architecture, and Design, from the 1980s until Today” (Centre Pompidou). In 2011, he was a guest of the Artists-in-Berlin Program of the DAAD; and in 2013–2014, he and Anton Vidokle led Ashkal Alwan’s third edition of Home Workspace Program, based in Beirut. He has been the director of the School of Visual Arts at the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts (ALBA) since September 2015.

Jalal Toufic
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What Was I Thinking? is an initiation into thinking. With a mind that is extremely analytical and yet extremely capable of rendering all kinds of knowledge and experiences permeable to each other, Jalal Toufic creates here a “summa,” but an open-ended one. He looks into the arts as if they were the privileged site of thinking, even when they inevitably fail, and still confronts his insights/ thoughts with texts taken from the traditional religions and mystics of the past. He has reached in this work an Olympian attitude—tuned to his basically Dionysian temperament—that announces the beginning of a detachment, of a remarkable serenity (a joy in thinking that Nietzsche had already understood). Jalal Toufic is today, and has been for some time, the most original thinker on the planet. He assumes the challenge stated by Heidegger in *What Is Called Thinking?* by his own thinking (by writing this book). To imagine the best possible worlds, to go into uncharted territory; these worlds are eminently those of the arts (as he practices them, as he delves into their layers, their paradoxes, their darings, ever admitting their maddening inbuilt inaccessibility). His kind of an endeavor takes a tremendous courage. And a unique freedom: letting his mind go into unpredicted ascertainments, so that his writing “does not fall apart two days later.” Situated somewhere close to the spirit of Einstein’s General Theory of Relativity and Nietzsche’s breakthroughs, we can say that Jalal Toufic is indeed a “destiny.”

—Etel Adnan

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