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Jalal Toufic, *Radical-Closure Artist with Bandaged Sense Organ (a Tribute to Van Gogh)*, no. 1, 2020

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The book includes four of my conceptual artworks. They are based on Van Gogh's two paintings *Wheatfield with Crows* (1889) and *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear* (1889). The one on the front cover is *Radical-Closure Artist with Bandaged Sense Organ (After Van Gogh's "Wheatfield with Crows" and "Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear")*, 2020; the one that serves as the frontispiece is *Radical-Closure Artist with Bandaged Sense Organ (a Tribute to Van Gogh)*, no. 1, 2020; the one on the last page is *Radical-Closure Artist with Bandaged Sense Organ (a Tribute to Van Gogh)*, no. 2, 2020; and the one on the back cover is *Radical-Closure Artist with Bandaged Sense Organ (After Van Gogh's "Wheatfield with Crows" and "Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear")*, 2018.

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Contents

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Cinema, a centrifugal art according to André Bazin in "Painting and Cinema" ("The outer edges of the screen are not, as the technical jargon would seem to imply, the frame of the film image. They are the edges of a piece of masking that shows only a portion of reality. The picture frame polarizes space inwards. On the contrary, what the screen shows us seems to be part of something prolonged indefinitely into the universe. A frame is centripetal, the screen centrifugal"[1]), an art of the offscreen, has been fascinated by moving beyond a given end of the world, for example, by entering the landscape painted on some backdrop (in dance). But it has also been fascinated by tracing limits where there would not seem to be ones, for example, the *gateless gates*[2] of radical closures (Luis Buñuel's *The Exterminating Angel*, 1962).

A radical closure is disconnected from the environment, but open to the diagram (for example, the Red Room in David Lynch's *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me*, 1992), or to an unworldly elsewhere, or to nothing (the one referred to in the Latin *ex nihilo*, out of nothing).

Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963) gives the following connotation to the expression "it is the end of the world" advanced by a drunkard in response to the report that birds have attacked the town's schoolchildren, and to the expression "it's a small world" jestingly proposed by Mitch in response to Melanie's statement that she's an acquaintance of his friend Annie: the world is radically closed. One should not yield to the temptation to interpret the subsequent very high angle shot of the burning town square, with birds soon appearing in the frame from the sides, as a bird's eye view, i.e., as the visual perception of one of the offscreen birds, but should view it as a *bird's eye view* (the technical term for "a shot from a camera directly overhead at a distance, sometimes taken from a crane or a helicopter"), resisting considering the shot as a humorous reflexive cinematic conflation of the two ways of interpreting a "bird's

eye view." For interpreting the shot in the former manner would imply the existence of an offscreen space behind the camera, from which the birds would be coming and which would be homogeneous with what we see onscreen, when that shot implies rather the absence of offscreen (the border of the radical closure does not reside in the cordon established shortly after by the police around the area afflicted with the attacks of the birds, but is delineated by the frame in the air), marking the limit of the radical closure. In films and paintings regarding a radical closure, because there is sometimes nothing to the other side of such a closure's *gateless gate*, no offscreen/off-frame (the link with the diagram or an unworldly elsewhere happens at the expense of the openness to the environment), there is a corresponding absence of sight; Magritte's closed eyes in *Je ne vois pas la [femme] cachée dans la forêt* (I do not see the [woman] hidden in the forest),[3] as well as the closed eyes or empty eye sockets in his work, for instance in *The Meaning of Night* (1927) and *Les Fleurs du mal* (1946), are a sort of somatic complement to the black denoting an inexistence in such paintings of his as *The Unexpected Answer* (1933). In the case of the sense of hearing, one notes the attempt to stop perceiving the excessive, unworldly or diagrammatic sounds that irrupt in such a closure, thus the severed ear in David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986) and the severed ear of the painter of *Wheatfield with Crows*, Van Gogh. Robert Altman errs at least twice in the first of the only two worthwhile scenes in his *Vincent & Theo* (1990), which both take place in a wheat field: first by relating Van Gogh's severance of his ear to a fight with fellow painter Gauguin instead of to the unworldly caws he hears in the same scene; second by making Van Gogh then paint crows over the field, which would imply that the painter, who was released from the mental hospital of Saint-Paul-de-Mausole a few months earlier, visually hallucinated them—the historical Van Gogh would not have painted crows flying over the wheat field on hearing the unworldly

caws(-over) (were the crows of the historical *Wheatfield with Crows* painted by Van Gogh or did paint birds irrupt in the represented landscape on the canvas once Van Gogh set the radical closure by means of painting?). In a radical closure, one cannot deduce from the presence of certain sounds, for example, the barking in David Lynch's *Lost Highway*, that their supposed bodily sources also exist whether onscreen but hidden or offscreen, and yet these sounds are not extra-diegetic. Such sounds act both as an excess, since they are unworldly; and as a symptom of lacks in the world, though not of the worldly objects that naturally produce them, but, rather, of those objects (and spaces) that the people imprisoned in the radical closure misreckon, at least initially, to exist behind the horizon or a wall or door that coincides with the border of the radical closure, or, in the case of a radical-closure film, that most spectators misreckon to lie offscreen, but that sooner or later prove to be a *missing matter* (and space). Whether they are what we usually associate with such sounds, for example, the crows in the second scene of the wheat field in Altman's *Vincent & Theo*, or something else altogether, the entities that provide the missing matter and fill the gaps revealed by these unworldly sounds still retain, often by their absence of shadows and/or by their artificial colors, the quality of something matted in, hence of something that is conjointly a surplus and the symptom of an absence or lack. The irruption of unworldly/diagrammatic sounds in a radical closure is one of the main modes of the sound-over (for example, many of the sounds in Lynch's *Eraserhead*,[4] and the whistle that wakes Lale from her sleep or day-dreaming on the beach in Alain Robbe-Grillet's *L'Immortelle*); and the irruption of unworldly voices in a radical closure is one of the main modes of the voice-over. This irruption of unworldly voices-over is encountered by schizophrenics, who experience a radical closure in the guise of a temporal end of the world or the imminence of such an end of the world:[5] while these

voices-over are sometimes related to the schizophrenic, for example, commenting on what he is doing or giving him orders, they are at other times not related to his behavior or his emotions or his thoughts, but instead hold conversations among themselves. The voices-over in Duras' *India Song* and *Her Venetian Name in Calcutta Desert* (but not in her film *Agatha et les lectures illimitées*, 1981) are unworldly entities that irrupted in a radical closure in the form of a temporal end of the world. Even when these voices speak in the present tense in relation to the events occurring onscreen, they are doing so from the (temporal) end of the world. Duras' *Her Venetian Name in Calcutta Desert* (1976), which has the same soundtrack of *India Song* (1975), does not revisit the same places now in an exacerbated state of disrepair, no longer habitable; it rather reveals at what end of the world the voices-over were already in the first film. Therefore, although in *India Song* the voices often speak directly about the onscreen events (for instance, when the camera pans over the photograph of Anne-Marie Stretter, one of the voices mentions her name), while in (much of) *Her Venetian Name in Calcutta Desert* their reminiscing and commenting about the story of Anne-Marie Stretter accompanies images of uninhabitable, deserted spaces, in which none of the characters referred to by the voices appears, the connection is more tenuous between the images of *India Song* and its soundtrack than between the same soundtrack and the images of *Her Venetian Name in Calcutta Desert*.

Francis Bacon: "When I made the Pope screaming, I didn't want to do it in the way that I did it—I wanted to make the mouth, with the beauty of its color and everything, look like one of the sunsets or something of Monet, and not just the screaming Pope. If I did it again, which I hope to God I never will, I would make it like a Monet." David Sylvester: "And not the black cavern which in fact …" Bacon: "Yes, not the black cavern."[6] In Francis Bacon's *Study for Portrait* (1949) and *Head VI* (1949), and in the right panel of his *Three Studies for a Crucifixion* (1962), the black inside the wide-open mouth is not a darkness hiding what is there, but an inexistent zone, echoing the inexistence of the upper half of the head in the first two paintings and the inexistence of the arms and hands in the right panel of the third painting. One determinant difference between the corresponding still from Sergei Eisenstein's *The Battleship Potemkin* (1925) and Bacon's *Study for the Nurse in the Film "Battleship Potemkin"* (1957) is that in the former the blackness inside the nurse's wide-open mouth is just a darkness, that is, the inside of her mouth exists, whereas the inside of the mouth doesn't exist in Bacon's painting. "I did hope one day to make the best painting of the human cry. I was not able to do it and it's much better in the Eisenstein and there it is."[7] And yet Francis Bacon, a great radical-closure artist, made the best painting of the unworldly, inhuman cry—is a worldly, human cry better than an unworldly, inhuman one? Notwithstanding Francis Bacon's own assessment, I much prefer the scream of his painting to the one in Sergei Eisenstein's *The Battleship Potemkin*. The sound that may issue from the open mouth with an inexistent inside, for example, the one we see in Bacon's *Study for the Head of a Screaming Pope* (1952), is not a sound the person would utter; it is unworldly, a diagrammatic sound, a diegetic scream-over, the sort of alarming scream we hear in Abel Ferrara's film *Body Snatchers*.[8] Once we heed all the repeated explicit indications in Ferrara's film that the ostensibly extraterrestrial impostors are without tension and emotion, that they are vegetative, placid, mere "cabbage," then the scream is best considered a diegetic unworldly sound-over. Does this mean that there are no figures with worldly human screams in Francis Bacon? No, we can find the worldly human scream in the right panels of *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion* (1944), *Second Version of Triptych 1944* (1988), and *Three Studies for a Crucifixion* (1962); maybe in *Pope III with Fan Canopy* (1951) and

Study of a Baboon (1953), for in all of these the inside of the mouth, including the tongue and the teeth, is visible, sometimes of a red more beautiful than a Monet sunset.

In Hitchcock's *The Birds*, where are the birds, with their artificial, electronic sound, coming from? They are not migrating, moving from one area of the world to another, but, in the shot over the burning town square, are irrupting into the world from the diagram, in this instance from the opening credits sequence[9] showing abstract birds flying in an indeterminate space.[10] Hence the disorientation of these abstract birds as they emerge from the diagram of the credits sequence into the world, at times crashing lethally into windows and walls even on full moon nights (in Van Gogh's *Wheatfield with Crows*, the crows painted on the yellow of the field do not merely seem to be touching the wheat due to a perspectival effect but are, in their disorientation, colliding or on the point of colliding with it); and hence their swaying movement, which is an adjustment not only to the wind but also to a new, worldly medium.

The two best cinematic versions of the birds of Van Gogh's *Wheatfield with Crows* (July 1890) can be seen and heard near the middle of Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963), when the abstract, artificial birds, issuing from the opening credits sequence, irrupt from behind the school building with a sound *out of this world*;[11] and in the section "Crows" of Kurosawa's *Dreams* (1990), when electronic birds fly over the wheat field. These two films confirm that the crows in Van Gogh's painting are unworldly entities that irrupted in a radical closure, rather than worldly birds that either were invisibly resting in the field or flew over it from behind the horizon.

One of the main indications that is to clue us whether the closure of an area is absolute or relative is the kind of entities that appear in it: whether they are from another region of the world that's within the future light cone, or from an unworldly elsewhere. Are the two-dimensional sections that the subtle dancer encounters in dance's realm of altered space, movement, body, and time radical ends, all the more since one also encounters in dance a possible consequence of radical closure, the appearance of such unworldly entities as animation figures or, more interestingly, the diagrammatic electronic dancer of Tharp's *The Catherine Wheel*? No, since the subtle dancer—and not some unworldly look-alike of him or her—can create space by means of dancing and thus penetrate these otherwise two-dimensional sections. In the case of a radical closure, if what irrupts is something we have commerce with and have grown to expect in the world, then this usually mundane entity is experienced as unworldly, and a generalized Capgras syndrome takes place, what we had grown to feel as the most familiar inducing in us then the impression that it hails from a radical elsewhere[12]—in such cases the appearance of the double (of the other) is less a foreshadowing of the end of the individual who is doubled than an indication of the end of the world, whether that end be temporal or spatial. What is homey is no longer homey when it is radically closed. In his film *Dreams*, when Kurosawa decided to make the spectator in a museum enter paintings, why did he choose these to be Van Gogh ones ending with *Wheatfield with Crows*? It is probably because he sensed that the latter painting is open to entities from a radical elsewhere.[13] In *Wheatfield with Crows*—in the center of which the two converging lines of grass, outlining the path through the compact field of wheat and tracing lines of perspective, meet in the middle of the field but not in a point, rather, to further underscore the closure, in a green line parallel to, and thus foreclosing, the horizon—*paint* birds irrupt in the represented landscape, the most familiar in a painting, paint, becoming uncanny. In radical-closure artworks, the entities that irrupt, while unworldly in relation to the diegetic world portrayed by the artwork, are often what the work of art is, paint in a painting, animation figures or color or black and white or sounds in cinema.

In Hitchcock's *The Birds*, while Mitch considers that he has sealed the house by placing boards over all the openings, it turns out that he did not succeed in doing so. What he is oblivious about is that, unless he manages to somehow open the radical closure in which the house is situated by making it a relative closure, whatever he does to seal the house will fail, because the radical closure, whose limit in the sky is indicated by the high-angle shot over the burning town square, is allowing the irruption of unworldly entities in relation to which the house that was relatively closed by Mitch is permeable.[14] In Tarkovsky's *Solaris*, since in the cosmonaut's room, where he alone is present, two heavy trunks block the doorway, and since after Hari's appearance he ascertains that the two trunks have not been displaced, it is manifest that she did not enter through the door—she is an ahistorical, unworldly entity that irrupted fully formed in the room … and in her dress. And in the film's coda, unworldly rain, without entering through any opening, irrupts inside the unworldly duplicate of the family house that irrupted in the ocean of planet Solaris' radical closure.[15] Indeed, most instances of radical closure are in the form of spaces that seem open (since placing walls or other obstacles would close the space merely relatively), for example, the open room in which the guests and their hosts find themselves imprisoned in Buñuel's *The Exterminating Angel,* and the sky over the town in the very high-angle shot of the burning gas station in Hitchcock's *The Birds*. Attempting to prevent the unworldly birds from irrupting in the house by sealing it with boards is equivalent to trying to stop something that moves in a four-dimensional space by closing every opening in a three-dimensional one! One has instead to somehow open the radically-closed space in order for what appears in it to do so from the edge of the frame rather than suddenly from anywhere in the space; and in order for anxiety to be reduced to and replaced by suspense. Thus being inside a house or outside it entails the same risk in relation to this unworldly element: in *The Birds*, while the teacher is killed outside her house, the farmer is killed inside his house, and the four protagonists do not face a heightened danger from the unworldly birds when they leave the ostensibly re-sealed house and walk toward the car amidst them.

An area's radical closure to the surrounding frequently affects it with an *objective* disorientation: in a manner similar to that of the protagonist on the staircase in Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943), a film where we encounter a radical closure of space since the running protagonist never catches up with a mysterious figure but keeps arriving at the same spot and having to go sideways; and to that of the standing figure in Bacon's *Painting* (1978), who extends one of her legs in the direction of the door knob to try to turn the key with her foot, appearing as a result to be standing on the door, thus implying a displacement of the horizontal and vertical directions in the room, *The Birds*'s Melanie slides against the lamp in tilted shots that are symptomatic of an objective tilting of the radically-closed space. During the birds' first attack on the house, had Hitchcock resorted to some tilted shots, including of the hung painted illustration of Mitch's father, then showed the father's painted illustration on the wall to be still tilted in the aftermath of the birds' attack, I would most probably, notwithstanding the commonsensical hypothesis that a bird must have accidentally displaced the painted illustration slightly, have felt anxious on seeing Mitch's mother head towards the hung painted illustration to adjust it, as if by readjusting the position of the titled painted illustration she would be readjusting the position of the radically-closed space, the latter becoming objectively tilted (if on her way to adjust the painted illustration, she would have noticed some broken thing, for example, a vase, and veered toward it to pick up the pieces, this suspenseful delay would have confirmed my suspicion, exacerbating my anxiety).

One of the anomalies that frequently distinguish a radical closure from a relative closure is an acceleration in the rise in entro-

py. In Jack Finney's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1955), the road, which had been in its usual state during the four protagonists' night escape by car from the town packed with doubles, had, following the four protagonists' "decision" the next morning to return (such a "decision" implying a spatial radical closure), "deteriorated … and … was scattered with sharp-edged little chuckholes, and occasional bigger ones"[16]—a state that normally would have come about as a result of an extended period of lack of maintenance. Instead of being struck by the uncanny extensive deterioration in a few hours, in a trance-like absence of registration of the anomaly, they curse those they take to be responsible for such a state: the city council and the county, who must have been remiss in doing the proper maintenance. We observe such an accelerated rise of entropy in a radical closure also in Francis Bacon's paintings, frequently in the form of the scattered letters in newspapers that are otherwise still in mint condition (*Self-Portrait*, 1973; *Studies from the Human Body*, 1975; *Figures in Movement*, 1976; *Figure Writing Reflected in a Mirror*, 1976, where even the letters the human figure has just scribbled on a piece of paper are disintegrating).

Having realized that they are in a radical closure, the pursuer walked at a leisurely pace for he intuited that although the other person would probably manage to evade him for a while, he or she would nonetheless be unable to leave the radical closure and would come to a stop at its border or return. In the case of a film or a novel, once the spectator or reader has discerned a radical closure, it is amusing to wait for, then listen to, the misplaced justifications the protagonists end up coming up with in order not to cross a *gateless gate*. In Buñuel's *The Exterminating Angel*, the guests and their hosts come up with all sorts of pretexts to account for their inability to cross the border of the apparently open room and to avoid acknowledging that the space in which they are is radically closed. In Finney's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, the four main characters come up with moral justifications and pretexts for going back to the town they have done their utmost to evade: for example, Becky informs the three others that she cannot abandon her father, who is still in the town, when she knows and had already informed the others that he had been irreversibly replaced by an alien imposter; and Jack suggests that they must go back to continue the fight, but then, once there, tries, this time unsuccessfully, to flee the town again. The point at which the four fugitives make their "decision" to interrupt their flight and return to the town is the border of the radical closure; when they once again try desperately to flee the town, they somehow know that they won't succeed: "We had no chance" and "We weren't going to get out; that was certain."[17] This sudden knowledge is not necessarily the outcome of a process of thinking, but may be an extraneous thought inserted fully formed in their minds in the radically-closed space;[18] indeed, thought-insertion, and not some process of thinking and experience, is most probably the manner in which the fully formed entities who irrupted in the radically-closed space of the town have ideas and memories. In many instances, the irruption in one's mind of thoughts and words that have something material about them and that are experienced as thought insertions implies a radical closure and thus a *gateless gate* irrespective of what may look like a seamless indefinite extension of the landscape. Were the *gateless gate* to be nonetheless crossed, the spectator has to feel either that the protagonists were suffering from a delusion or illusion and have finally overcome it; or that the radical closure has disappeared as suddenly and unexplainably as it appeared; or else, because of the objective status of the *gateless gate*, that it is the characters' ahistorical, unworldly doubles that are appearing to the other side. Thus by means of inducing the impression of a radically-closed space whose *gateless gate* is crossed, one can make a film about doubles where nowhere is doubling mentioned.[19] "They are exactly the same"—except that unlike the ones to whom they are otherwise identical, they have not developed into this sameness. In the case of a radically-closed space in

film, the keenest aptitude is to be able to delimit the radical closure in the offscreen rather than somewhere onscreen or at the screen frame, to have the offscreen close radically in the offscreen, for instance, by making the offscreen walls of a building trace the border of the radically-closed space. The right and left panels of Bacon's *Triptych—Studies of the Human Body* (1970) present a female figure on a thick rope high above ground. Can the figure, going through contortions seemingly to maintain its balance, fall from the rope? It cannot, since the thick rope's width delimits horizontally the radically-closed world (a feeling reinforced by having the figure's head in the left panel raised just high enough above the rope for the dangling hair to reach the rope but not fall below it). Place a body on a rope, make it look like it is trying not to fall, but then make the spectator feel that the rope's boundaries are the ends of the world, so that he or she is led to view the contortions not in relation to falling, as an attempt to maintain one's balance, but to both fitting in a constricted space and adjusting oneself to the alien radical closure in which one suddenly irrupted.

If radical, the closure of a space presents an occasion for the irruption of ahistorical fully formed entities, ones that did not develop into what they are then, therefore somewhat essentialized (but who can become part of history, aging whether at the normal pace or an accelerated one); or, on the contrary, as in Buñuel's *The Exterminating Angel*, for a study in entropy, albeit of an accelerated kind, the enclosed system no longer able to maintain, let alone add to its level of order and complexity at the expense of the surrounding space: thus, in *The Exterminating Angel*, the accelerated dissolution of the distinctions of class, manners, etc. Why can't the guests in *The Exterminating Angel* leave the ostensibly open room in their hosts' house notwithstanding their intense embarrassment at their breach of good manners and their projected remissness in fulfilling their various work responsibilities or social engagements the following day? Their and the hosts' ostensible lack of will to

leave the apparently open room is a symptom of the latter's objective radical closure. While decrying their lack of volition to leave the room, they unawares go through all the permutations of gestures, postures, manners of speaking, etc.—a far more drastic exemplification of the irrelevance and desuetude of the (selective) will. For example, the toast the host makes is received positively by the dinner guests; a little later, he makes the same toast, with identical gestures and wording, but this time it is inconsiderately disregarded by his guests. In principle, concerning a radical closure, if there is sufficient time for all the permutations to occur, including ones that are performed by unworldly duplicates of some of those within the radical closure, then it will become possible for those inside the radical closure to leave it or to reappear outside of it once the exhaustive exploration has come to an end. It is therefore not only (Hawking) radiation that can evade a very massive black hole; were the object that falls to the other side of the event horizon of a very massive black hole to go (before the black hole explodes) through all the permutations that at the macroscopic level would have produced the same mass, electric charge, and angular momentum, it can escape or reappear to the other side of the event horizon. It is because three of the guests die in the radically-closed room of Buñuel's film and are not coincidently replaced by their unworldly duplicates[20] that all the permutations cannot be accomplished, with the consequence that the ostensible exit of those who were confined merely indicates the widening of the radical closure. They, as well as many others, are soon imprisoned in the church, where they had gathered for thanksgiving.

In both relative closure in mainstream films and literature and radical closure we have the impression of foreshadowing. In the case of relative closure in mainstream films and literature, this is because no accidents or arbitrary objects are allowed to draw attention away from the progression toward the temporary resolution, the momentary end; for example, the knife that the film

spectator saw gleaming on the kitchen table will be used later, for instance, in a murder. In the case of radical closure, for instance, in Robbe-Grillet's work, it is because the same elements, for example, a high-heeled shoe or an apple, will be encountered again and again, in different assemblages (indeed, the recurrence of accidental, arbitrary elements often implies that we are in a radical closure); once I recognize that I am in a radical closure, then whatever object I encounter accidentally, I can be sure that I will encounter it again, once more as accidental. Foreshadowing in mainstream relative-closure films and novels presupposes not only the intent to replace surprises by suspense, but also, since such films and novels, notwithstanding their occasional intertextuality, are, within their respective genres, largely self-enclosed, a minimal echoing and apprehension of the recurrent encounter with the same elements in radical closures.

While most people would find the concept of a radical closure in which unworldly, ahistorical fully formed entities irrupt incredible, many of the same people would announce an end of the world were an entity external to the world to incarnate, irrupt in it, whether the latter be the unworldly/diagrammatic birds that irrupt over the school from the opening credits sequence in Hitchcock's *The Birds*; the previously-transcendent God incarnating as Christ; or the unworldly voices and figures the schizophrenic encounters in the world, for example, the voices and "fleeting-improvised-men" (this is the English translation of the term used by the voices to describe such men) that Daniel Paul Schreber encountered while interned at a mental hospital. Indeed, in most cultures, prodigies are an omen announcing the end of the world. If there is a temporal and/or spatial end of the world, then we may witness unworldly entities. Can we definitively deduce from the absence of unworldly entities that the world has no spatial or temporal end? No, because there is at least one mechanism by which the world can have an end and yet hide these marvels: by localizing them in another radical closure, one that is "in" the world. In the case of the physical universe, which has an end in the singularity of the Big Bang, black holes provide that additional radical closure. Black holes shield us from at least one of the consequences of the original singularity of the Big Bang: irruptions of unworldly, ahistorical entities.

Were the event horizon a two-way radical limit rather than a one-way radical one, that is, were it not that the rest of the universe continues to lose objects to the black hole, this precluding the event horizon from being also the radical limit of the rest of the universe, and hence from making the rest of the universe itself radically closed, there would ensue a contagion between two radically-closed spaces, the black hole and the rest of the universe, by means of entities that are other than the ones imprisoned within the event horizon, entities that belong to neither (thus this contagion would be other than that through wormholes).

Sometimes the radical closure cannot be apprehended directly but is revealed in a work of art. Sometimes it is no longer determinable whether the unworldly entities that irrupted in the world did so because the work of art itself now radically frames the world rather than merely reveals a radical closure in the world. Those who criticize the filmmaker or painter of the former kind of radical closure for being indifferent to the audience's response must presume that the influence of the work of art on the world is limited to the indirect one through an audience, and consequently must be unaware that in the case of certain radical-closure artworks and films, those that do not represent a radical closure but actualize one, there may be an enigmatic *direct* influence of the artwork on the world. In the case of a film or novel or painting that does not merely represent a radical closure but is itself a radical closure, painterly or cinematic or literary elements may irrupt initially in its diegetic world; then they may irrupt in the world in the filmmaker's, novelist's, or painter's autobiography, thus still in a text;[21] then they, as well as unworldly versions of worldly entities, and fictional char-

acters may infiltrate what is considered actual life, the writer or filmmaker imperceptibly drifting away from writing or filmmaking into messianism, or undergoing psychotic episodes, or altogether going mad.

The applicability of the concept of radical closure across a number of fields and disciplines, for example, painting (Magritte's *The Unexpected Answer*, etc.), film (Robbe-Grillet's *L'Immortelle*, Buñuel's *The Exterminating Angel*, etc.),[22] psychiatry (schizophrenia or psychosis with their motif of the end of the world and the irruption of unworldly entities, for example, the voices and the "fleeting-improvised-men" [Daniel Paul Schreber]), and physics (black holes),[23] is echoed by the frequent irruption of other media in the medium dealing with the radical closure, for example, the irruption of photography (the photograph of the woman in the hotel in Alain Resnais and Alain Robbe-Grillet's *Last Year at Marienbad*) and TV (the TV noise/"snow" in the sky in Lynch's *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*)[24] in film. This irruption is the effect not of the opening of one medium onto others as in multimedia, but rather of its radical closing on itself (whether this radical closure be the usually spatial one in painting; or the usually temporal one in film, for example, in *Last Year at Marienbad*, where the duration of the diegetic world is that of the film's projection). The seemingly year-old photograph of the female protagonist in *Last Year at Marienbad* and the photograph seemingly showing future events in Robbe-Grillet's *The Man Who Lies* (1968) induce the same impression of unworldliness as the TV snow in the sky in *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*. Such photographs are not totally included in the film but have the quality of something between a photograph we see in a film and one we see in a mixed-media work next to the film or video, therefore are objects with a fractional dimension, between 2 and 3.

The frame of a painting or photograph or film shot does not always function as just an inherent feature of the medium or a compositional device but in some cases signals the radical end(s) of the world represented or presented in the photograph or the painting or the film. Indeed, it sometimes functions as a radical border of the world. In Lynch's *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*, the frame of the photograph on the wall is the joint border of the space of the Red Room and the (diegetic) world. In those cases where the painting's frame radically borders the world, the painting does not hide a reality behind it since it is not in the world but abuts it, the frame delineating their common border. Notwithstanding Magritte's reading of *The Human Condition* (1934), "I placed in front of a window, seen from inside a room, a painting representing exactly that part of the landscape that was hidden from view by the painting. Therefore, the tree represented in the painting hid from view the tree situated behind it, outside the room,"[25] were we to remove the depicted painting in his *The Fair Captive* (1948), *The Human Condition* (1933 and 1945), *The Promenades of Euclid* (1955) and *The Call of the Peaks* (1942), we would most probably encounter the black zone of inexistence of his paintings *The Spy* (1927), *The Voice of Silence* (1928), *The Unexpected Answer* (1933) and *La Lunette d'approche* (*The Telescope*, 1963).[26]

In Tarkovsky's *Nostalgia* (1983), Domenico shut himself and his family in his house for seven years in the expectation of the end of the world. The coda of *Nostalgia*, following the death of the nostalgic Russian poet during a research trip to Italy, and showing the irruption in an Italian cathedral of an unworldly version of the Russian poet, his dog, and his Russian house, instead of confirming the film title's motif of nostalgia, on the contrary confirms Domenico's impression of a temporal end of the world, thus of a radical closure, in which *ahistorical*, unworldly entities can irrupt. The credits sequence, where the camera pans over what seems to be a continuous landscape, passing the Russian poet's wife, then his daughter, then his mother, all standing motionless, then the wife again now with her son, induces the sensation that while the first wife may be the historical figure, the second one is an ahistorical,

unworldly entity that irrupted in the radical closure. If this panning shot is to be considered a memory, then it can only be an ahistorical memory that irrupted fully formed in the mind of the unworldly poet who, as a result of the temporal radical closure apprehended by Alexander, irrupted posthumously in the cathedral in the film's coda. In Tarkovsky's films, the nostalgic urge to enclose what is dearest to one in some receptacle and carry it with one when one has to travel away from home or homeland is radicalized, with the result that not infrequently the closure mysteriously becomes a radical one, with for consequence the repeated irruption in his universe of nostalgia and memory of unworldly, ahistorical fully formed entities, ones possibly without memory, for example, the consecutive look-alikes of the cosmonaut's dead wife, Hari, in *Solaris*. In Tarkovsky's films, we see subjective flashbacks, denoting nostalgic memory; instances of indiscernibility of what seems to be a subjective memory and what seems to be an objective ahistorical, unworldly entity that irrupted in the radical closure, as when the poet's dog, left behind in Russia, appears in his hotel room in Italy while he is reminiscing or dreaming about his wife and his life in Russia; and the irruption of ahistorical, unworldly entities, for example, in *Solaris*, the consecutive Haris that appear in the space station orbiting Solaris. Those who reappear after their deaths in a radical closure, for example, the Russian poet in the coda of *Nostalgia* or the consecutive Haris in the space station in *Solaris*, should not be mistaken for revenants; they are *ahistorical* entities that irrupted fully formed. A radical closure is a haunted space, yet those who appear in it are not revenants. The widespread replication in Tarkovsky's work takes three different modes, which can be exemplified with regard to three houses: nostalgic reproduction, for example, in *Solaris*, the house Kris' father rebuilt to be just like his grandfather's house; resurrection of what was withdrawn by a surpassing disaster, for example, in *The Sacrifice*, the house of the film's protagonist, which was withdrawn by such a disaster (a

withdrawal that was confirmed by an extra-diegetic parapraxis: the malfunctioning of the camera operated by none other than Sven Nykvist during the filming of its burning), and which Tarkovsky had to resurrect in order to film its burning; (recurrent) irruption of an unworldly, ahistorical fully formed version in a radical closure, for example, the ahistorical, unworldly version of the Russian house along with its vicinity in the extraterrestrial ocean in the coda of *Solaris*[27] or in the Italian cathedral in the coda of *Nostalgia*.[28] In *Solaris*, a panning shot begins on Kris standing motionless and ends on him at the other side of the room: such a shot can imply the coexistence of the past and the present (*within the unit of the shot*), that the past does not vanish but is still there;[29] but it can also imply that the second Kris is an unworldly entity that irrupted in a radical closure.[30] The French female protagonist of Alain Resnais and Marguerite Duras' *Hiroshima mon amour*, who lost her lover and beloved, a German soldier who was killed in the final days of the German occupation of France, laments years later to the Japanese man she met in Hiroshima and who himself lost his parents when the atomic bomb was dropped on the city: "Like you, I too have struggled with all my might not to forget. Like you, I forgot. Like you, I longed for a memory beyond consolation.... I struggled every day with all my might against the horror of no longer understanding the reason to remember. Like you, I forgot"; unlike in Duras, in Tarkovsky memory is not threatened by forgetfulness, but like in Duras, in Tarkovsky memory coexists with amnesia: in her film *India Song*, while the voices-over do the remembering, the characters onscreen are "uninhabited" ("In *India Song* the actors proposed characters but didn't embody them. Delphine Seyrig's fantastic performance ... came about because she never presents herself as someone named Ann-Marie Stretter but as her far-off, contestable double, as if uninhabited, and as if she never regarded this role as an emptiness to be enacted"[31]), and in his film *Solaris*, the patchy, disconnected memories of the ahistorical, unworldly Hari

who irrupts repeatedly on the space station are themselves ahistorical, unworldly phenomena that irrupted in a radical closure.[32]

Why do the characters in radical-closure novels and films often fail to notice the contradictions between a present happening and a previous one? It is possibly because what we take to be the same man or woman as the one we saw previously is actually an ahistorical, unworldly entity that irrupted in the radical closure, hence ignorant of what happened earlier.

Color, as well as black and white, is one of the phenomena that may irrupt in a radical closure. In Tarkovsky's *Solaris*, Kris' first meeting with Snaut is in color, but as he moves to his room the scene becomes a black-and-white one: a change that cannot be reduced to the more or less conventional one denoting a difference between past and present or between reality and dream/hallucination, but is to be viewed as an irruption of black and white. In another sequence, we first see a color scene of Kris in the room of Gibarian as he watches a black-and-white video, then a little later a black-and-white scene of Kris in his own room watching the continuation of the black-and-white video—another irruption of black and white. Later, in an initially black-and-white scene, having not only locked his room's door but also blocked it with two heavy trunks, he falls asleep, then, on waking up, sees a seated Hari in the sealed room notwithstanding that the trunks have not been displaced: the irruption of an unworldly Hari is accompanied by the irruption of color. The second time she irrupts, it is at the end of a scene in color, and this time her irruption is accompanied by that of black and white. In *Stalker*, following the sepia sections in the bar and at the Stalker's house, we witness the irruption of color in the Zone (to enhance the effect, Tarkovsky had the grass painted).[33] The alternation we see through the wide windows of the space station orbiting Solaris is not between brilliant daylight and nocturnal darkness, but between black and white, which hide nothing but rather instance an inexistence of the offscreen, thus are ends of

the world, the limits of a radical closure, allowing the irruption of unworldly, ahistorical entities. In Duras' ostensibly color film *Le Camion*, a film that's also about the end of the world ("elle dit: 'regarder la fin du monde, tout le temps, à chaque seconde, partout'" [she says: "Look at the end of the world, all the time, at every second, everywhere"]), the performative *il [le film] nous ait apparut en noir et blanc* (it [the film] appeared to us in black and white) implements an irruption of black and white.

While in the case of the astronomical black hole, it is because of the extreme gravitational warpage of spacetime that light cannot go beyond the event horizon and be lost to the black hole, in the case of other radical closures, it is because the unworldly objects that irrupt in them often have their own light, do not receive it from some external light source, that they do not lose it—to some external object. In Magritte's *Attempting the Impossible* (1928), where a paint-woman with no arm but with a shadow has irrupted fully formed in the world and is standing with the painter in the room, I would have expected to see the latter finishing adding to her not an arm but a shadow, since what irrupts in a radical closure usually has no shadow (appropriately, although he used the services of Industrial Light & Magic's postproduction visual effects to create his electronic birds, Kurosawa did not add shadows to the latter). Objects land not only by making physical contact, but also, visually, by having a shadow or a reflection, without which they give the impression of floating or pass through barriers, whether mirrors or walls. But while what irrupts in a radical closure usually has no shadow, an unworldly shadow may irrupt in a radical closure.

While Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948), which achieves an equality of the time of the story and the time of the narrative through eschewing and circumventing any cuts, still presupposes that the characters existed before they appeared in the film, in the case of Alain Robbe-Grillet's *Last Year at Marienbad*, the protagonists in a temporal radical closure are ahistorical beings who irrupt fully formed at

the beginning of a scene and disappear at its end, again and again, since the diegetic world has the duration of the projection of the film: "The entire story of Marienbad happens neither in two years nor in three days, but exactly in one hour and a half," that is, the existence of the man and the woman in Marienbad "lasts only as long as the film lasts."[34]

Magritte's *The Perfect Image* (1928), which shows a radical frame enclosing black, presents the potentiality of the irruption of the paint image or the unworldly thing in a constructed radical closure. Looking at Magritte's *The Perfect Image*, it is as if we arrived just before an unworldly entity is to appear in the frame, or just after it disappeared from it. We see such a disappearance in Magritte's *Man Reading a Newspaper* (1928), where the man reading his newspaper in the first frame has vanished in the three others showing the same location; and in Francis Bacon's *Second Version of "Study for Bullfight No. 1"* (1969), where the curved panel next to the matador and the bull, which was full of spectators in *Study for Bullfight No. 1* (1969), is empty, the spectators having suddenly disappeared, or else not having yet irrupted in the radically-closed space. In cases where the painter set a radical-closure structure through painting, at least some of the figures, objects, and elements in the painting would not have been gradually painted by him or her but would have irrupted fully formed, as is clear in the 1948-version of Magritte's *The Fair Captive*, where the outlines of the waves in the depicted painting within the painting continue seamlessly in the adjoining landscape, which would imply that the painting within the painting happened instantly, took no time at all to be made, for otherwise by the time the painter would have finished even a small part of it, the wave outside the painting within the painting would have changed position. Did Magritte spend time painting not only the landscape but also the depicted painting in *The Fair Captive*? It is possible he did, but at the level of the production process *implied by the painting*, the painting in *The Fair Captive* irrupted instantly. In Magritte's *Attempting the Impossible,* which shows the painter laying one more brushstroke on the existent part of one of the arms of a paint woman, it is not the irruption of the paint-woman in the room in some radical closure that is impossible but her gradual appearance. When Francis Bacon says that in *Painting* (1946) he was "attempting to make a bird alighting on a field" but instead the painting developed into a man standing in front of a hung carcass and under an umbrella, this alerts us less to the influence of pictorial suggestiveness and the unconscious than to the circumstance that we are dealing with figures that irrupt in a radically-closed structure, and therefore that what is going to appear cannot be willed by the painter, who never knows what is going to irrupt. "In a painting I'm trying to do of a beach and wave breaking on it … I have been trying to make the structure and then hope chance will throw down the beach and the wave for me"[35]—yet what appeared, what chance threw down to him, could be taken in the direction of a jet of water rather than a wave, resulting in *Jet of Water* (1979). In Magritte's *La Clairvoyance (Autoportrait)* (aka *Clairvoyance (Self-Portrait)*), 1936, the painter's hand holding the paintbrush is suspended in front of a canvas on which we can see the image of a bird, while he faces an egg, placed on a table. Should we be guided by its title in viewing the painting, in which case it would be showing a painter who is clairvoyant, hence has and exhibits "an ability to *perceive* events in the future," so that when he is presented with an egg, he already sees and paints the future bird into which it will grow? No, since the suspension of the hand of the image maker should not be viewed as temporary, the gesture supposed to resume shortly, the brush adding one more touch of color to the image of the bird in the painting; it should rather be viewed as an effect of the irruption of the painted image, fully formed, on the canvas: the painter's hand is not touching the canvas because the image irrupted there fully formed, was not gradually painted by him. When he or she does his or her self-por-

trait, the radical-closure painter paints himself or herself either as someone painting the radical-closure structure, or, in case the latter is already fully visible in the painting, as someone who doesn't paint, whose hand is suspended in front of the painting depicted within the painting, where an entity irrupted or might irrupt fully formed.[36] Making use of both the original subtitle or alternate title of the painting and its English translation, one can advance that when the entity that irrupted in the painted radical closure he or she set is a figure that appears to be the painter, then the self-portrait of the radical-closure painter proves to be an *auto*portrait, an automatic portrait, one he or she did not paint but that irrupted fully formed. Were one to do a filmic adaptation of *La Clairvoyance*, the painter's hand would remain suspended, forming a tableaux vivant (a double bill of such a film with Henri-Georges Clouzot's *The Mystery of Picasso*, 1956, where we follow Picasso's hand tracing in a somewhat speeded manner the process, replete with erasure and accretion, by which he paints, would bring forth clearly the contrast between irruption in a radical closure and gradual production in most other cases). In a sort of inversion of the usual contention that when writing a novel or making a film or a painting, a genuine writer, filmmaker or painter is not really interested in the plot and/or in the representational content, but in the writerly, filmic, painterly elements and structures, what is painted and constructed by the radical-closure writer, painter, or filmmaker is the radical closure itself, rather than what is painterly, cinematic, or writerly. Is a radical-closure painter someone who constructs a radical closure by means of painting? Or is he or she someone in whose radical closure painterly entities irrupt? Or is he or she both? He or she is either, but preferably both. Similarly, a radical-closure filmmaker is someone who constructs a radical closure by means of film and/or someone in whose radical closure filmic elements (animation figures, reappearance of the same shot, etc.) irrupt. A video maker who was originally a painter or writer or photographer before switching to video may be interested not so much in making videos about painting or writing or photography, or influenced by these, but in producing a radical framing of the video or of its diegetic world, thus making possible for, among other things, painterly effects (for example, the green paint that appears on my thumb after I touch a leaf in my *Credits Included: A Video in Red and Green*, 1995), or material words, or photographs to irrupt in it. The photograph in Robbe-Grillet's *Last Year at Marienbad* showing the female protagonist in her hotel room and seemingly taken by the male protagonist the previous year at Marienbad, as well as the photographs that the protagonist of Robbe-Grillet's *The Man Who Lies* discovers in the codex in the pharmacy and that show events that ostensibly already occurred or will occur later, as well as the photograph of the middle-aged Jack Torrance of Kubrick's *The Shining*—who comes to the Overlook hotel as a middle-aged man sometime in the 1970s—among the other hotel guests in the ball that took place at the hotel in 1921 do not refer to a past or a future of the world, but are ahistorical, unworldly entities that irrupted in the respective radical closures of these films.

In radical-closure paintings, the mirror is not used to give the painting a homogeneous off-frame (unlike in Jan van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Couple*, 1434), since the radical closure does not have such an off-frame, but as the site of the irruption of an unworldly entity; the man talking on the phone in Francis Bacon's *Triptych Inspired by T. S. Eliot's Poem "Sweeney Agonistes"* (1967) appears in the mirror but not in front of it, which implies that he is an unworldly irruption.

What irrupted in a radical-closure painting is not necessarily only the obviously unworldly entity in it, for instance, the Erinys appearing *out of the blue* window-like frame in Francis Bacon's *Seated Figure* (1974) as well as in the left panel of *Triptych Inspired by the Oresteia of Aeschylus* (1981); grass (*Sand Dune*, 1983) and a jet of water (*Jet of Water*, 1988) can also be unworldly entities that irrupted in a radical closure.

The story done away with in Francis Bacon's paintings is not only the one that may insinuate itself were he to place several figures within the same frame,[37] but also the one that in a relative closure leads to the figure we see. While some of Bacon's coupled bodies are based on Muybridge's series of photographs "Wrestling, Graeco-Roman" from *Human and Animal Locomotion*, they belong to a different logic. The coupled identical figures in *Two Figures* (1953), or *Two Figures in the Grass* (1954), where the curtains in the background and the black of the lower third of the painting mark the radical closure's limits; or in the side panels of *Triptych Inspired by T. S. Eliot's Poem "Sweeney Agonistes,"* where the radical closure is implied by the irruption in the left panel's mirror of an ahistorical, unworldly figure talking on the phone;[38] or in the central panel of *Two Figures Lying on a Bed with Attendants* (1968) are not necessarily to be viewed as two different persons engaging in sexual intercourse or wrestling, since most probably one of the two figures is an unworldly look-alike of the other, one that irrupted in the radical closure. Francis Bacon: "I think I even might make a film ...";[39] I will extrapolate what kind of film or scene he might have wanted to make: a new adaptation of Finney's *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, or at least a remake of the scene in Abel Ferrara's film *Body Snatchers* (1994) in which the impostor, beginning to take on the features of the young woman, has just fallen from the attic on her dozing in the bathtub, waking her, the two identical-looking bodies now together in the bathtub.[40] The Bacon figures with inexistent parts, whether leg, arm, or one side of the head, are fully formed, complete: in the left and right panels of Francis Bacon's *Three Studies for Self Portrait* (1979), although half of the head is absent, the figure is fully formed, not a freak. Nonetheless, these figures that irrupt fully formed in a radically-closed space sometimes do so in a blank state (with no fingerprints yet, etc.), like those in Finney's *The Invasion of the Body Snatchers*. Bacon's blurred faces in the side panels show the gaining of precision and individuating markers by

what irrupted as a blank mold. From this perspective, it is bizarre that Bacon did manage to paint self-portraits at all, to watch his own replacement by an unworldly figure that irrupted in the radical closure he painted. In part, Bacon's painting follows the production of resemblance in the referent: often the side panels of the triptychs of portraits are illustrations, but not of the model, rather of the unworldly figure that irrupts in the radical closure he set through painting and that tries to illustrate, to resemble, to achieve the likeness of the model. It is an attempt to catch this latter illustration before it has been accomplished, before it has become *both real and artificial* (Sylvester: "You're wanting it to look both real and artificial?" Bacon: "Yes")[41]—an exquisite description of the imposter as encountered in Capgras Syndrome. Francis Bacon: "The more artificial you can make it, the greater chance you've got of its looking real": because it/"the paint comes across directly onto the nervous system" instead of telling "you the story in a long diatribe through the brain" (Francis Bacon)—or because its model itself is artificial, an ahistorical, unworldly look-alike or imposter. In Bacon's work, we have then a superimposition of two interpretations of *both real and artificial*: often in the central panel, through the detour of an artificiality that undoes illustration, the portrait has been distilled to what comes across directly onto the nervous system; often in the side panels, the portrait illustrates an unworldly, hence artificial, figure that is itself moving toward mere illustration, toward seeming real. We are dealing in such triptychs with two sorts of "essences": in the middle panel, as a result of the distillation of the figure to what "comes across directly onto the nervous system"; in the side panels, because often the entity was not produced gradually by the painter, but irrupted fully formed without genesis and development in the radical closure he or she set. When looking at Bacon's paintings one has to decide whether the absent organs and/or wiped parts of the body are psychosomatic hysterical symptoms (indeed, as is usual in hysteria, they do not coincide

with their anatomical definitions); or indicative of an objective inexistence of parts of the fully formed figure that irrupted in a radical closure. The paintings where the hysterical mode is paramount are those in which, following the lead of Gilles Deleuze's *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*,[42] the figure seems to be attempting to disappear gradually (albeit spasmodically) through the tip of an umbrella (*Triptych*, May–June 1974, *Painting*, 1946) or in the drain of a washbasin (*Figure Standing at a Washbasin*, 1976) or through a syringe (*Lying Figure with Hypodermic Syringe*, 1963), or those in which we encounter the Cheshire-like smile that persists after the figure has gradually managed to disappear. In instances where the hysterical mode is paramount, the impression of inordinate proximity is due to the excessive presence in such a state; in instances of radical closure and irruption of diagrammatic or unworldly entities, the impression of unnatural proximity is due to the intermingling of media and world such a closure makes possible. Both the turned-on light bulb and what seems to be the shadow of the figure are to the left of the figure in the left panel of *Three Portraits: Posthumous Portrait of George Dyer, Self Portrait, Portrait of Lucien Freud* (1973), and to the right of the figure in the right panel of the same painting: the shadow on the floor in the side panels can be viewed as having irrupted from beyond the depicted space or as the result of the blocking by the seated human figure of the light coming from the space *inside* the pictures hung on the wall on the right of the figure in the left panel and on the left of the figure in the right panel.

A radical closure is a *trap* (Bacon's term: "As an artist [I would specify, a radical-closure one] you have to, in a sense, set a trap by which you hope to trap the living fact alive"[43]), in the sense that it makes possible for, if not lures, something unworldly or diagrammatic to suddenly appear there, but not in the sense that it imprisons the figure, since being an unworldly entity, that is, an entity that does not belong to the world, the figure that irrupted there can suddenly disappear: the spectators in the curved panel at the bullfight have disappeared in *Second Version of "Study for Bullfight No. 1"* (1969), leaving the panel empty.

In Robbe-Grillet's *L'Immortelle*, while we can understand that the two Western protagonists in Turkey are suspicious of the antique dealer's assertion that the terra-cotta statuette he is presenting to them is very old, indeed Byzantine, it is difficult to accept the woman's assertion that the graves and other funerary monuments in a Muslim cemetery attached to a mosque mentioned in tourist guides for its old age are neither very old nor for that matter real graves—unless one views these graves and other funerary structures as ahistorical, unworldly entities that irrupted in a radical closure, with the consequence that in this film set in a country with a relatively ancient culture, indeed where this ancientness is repeatedly asserted by all sorts of people, for example, by the old man selling postcards on the steps of the mosque and by the antique dealer, the ancient walls of Constantinople, the crumbling towers and the dilapidated battlements that we see may have irrupted already dilapidated, rather than becoming so naturally and therefore gradually. The woman's insistence that these seemingly very old structures are not actually old is both a factual statement, since indeed these structures are ahistorical, unworldly entities that irrupted in a radical closure; and a manner of entrancing her interlocutor: one of Milton Erickson's induction methods, the *confusion technique*, which he used when faced with the conscious interference or resistance of the subject, entails confusing the latter so much[44] that he or she ends up complying with any leading statement ("Drop into trance") that would extricate him or her from the confusion. What enhances the confusion and makes the woman so seductive is the disjunction between the truth of her assertion, paradoxical as it may seem, and the unconvincing and easily refutable reasons she advances for it: to buttress her statement that the fortress they are visiting is not ancient but recently built, she points

to both the scaffolding surrounding its tower and the construction workers seen working with chisels and hammers in the adjoining stone-cutting yard—to which he certainly can and indeed does reasonably object that they are restoring, while feeling the futility of his objection since he can sense that she is right in denying the ancientness of the fortress. Does the circumstance that her existence is limited to her meetings with him indicate that she is a figment of his imagination? It rather indicates that "she" exists intermittently; although she yields to his insistent request and clearly writes her address on a piece of paper, he is later surprised to see that the paper is blank. What he takes to be the same woman are actually numerous ahistorical, unworldly entities that irrupted in the radical closure. Thus, as in *Last Year at Marienbad*, "she" exists only for the time during which she is onscreen (like *Last Year at Marienbad*, *L'Immortelle* [the immortal] is therefore a misleading Robbe-Grillet title—do the titles of at least some of his films and novels irrupt fully formed irrespective of Robbe-Grillet's intention once he has set the radical closure?). Since she is at each of her appearances an ahistorical, unworldly figure who irrupted in the radical closure, she may disappear indefinitely; the male protagonist searches for her in vain for most of the second part of the film. Since "she" does not exist continuously but intermittently, the next time "she" irrupts in the radical closure, "she" can be either the same, as with the Hari of Tarkovsky's *Solaris*; or each time a different person, thus becoming "a thousand women in one"[45]: the remarkable differences between the descriptions that the various persons interviewed by the protagonist give of the woman who has disappeared are not to be ascribed to mere subjective variations in perception; nor do they disclose a misunderstanding on the part of his interlocutors as to the specific woman to whom he is referring; nor are they the intentional misleading statements of people belonging to some secret organization, for instance, one that traffics in slaves and that may have kidnapped the said woman. They rather imply

this appearance, disappearance, then appearance again but in a different guise and with a different name in a radical closure. Thus in one of her irruptions, her first name is Eliane … or Liane … or something similar. In another of her irruptions, her first name is Lucile, and she is French, fair-haired, and has a white car. In a third, her first name is Lale, and she is very dark. In yet another, she isn't French, and is neither as old nor as young as the protagonist says, who must be describing the woman in question in yet another one of "her" irruptions.... Thus the felicity of having instances in *L'Immortelle* where the male protagonist mistakes for Lale another woman who is dressed in the same way and who from the back looks exactly like her, since this presents us with a situation where the woman who looks the same is not Lale, whereas the one who doesn't look like her and who has a different name (for instance, Eliane) is the "same."

"Say that you will love me until the end of the world." "But then give me the feeling, even if it is not actually the case, that you appeared just before I met you, and that you disappear at least for part of the time when we are not together—instead of frequently reminiscing about your life before we met without my ever having the feeling that you are lying or being inventive. When on rare occasions—having many times been criticized by you for not talking—I make an effort to ask you, 'How was your day?' or 'What did you do this morning?' manage to say, 'Nothing really,' without this making me feel that, were I to press you, you would be able to elaborate on that." "What has this to do with loving me until the end of the world?"

The writer or artist who works with radical closure is threatened by the possibility that what will irrupt in it irrespective of his or her intention would turn out to be identical again and again:[46] one of the most riveting examples of the latter is the sentence "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" in Kubrick's *The Shining*, which irrupts fully formed again and again, until Torrance's whole

manuscript is formed of myriad recurrences of "it." Having set the radical closure through writing, Robbe-Grillet, like (his) Henri de Corinthe, and like the painter of *La Clairvoyance*, whose hand is suspended in front of the canvas, remains "*tout ce temps-là—près d'un an—la plume relevée, en attente d'on ne sait quelle apparition* …"[47] (all this time—nearly a year—the quill raised, awaiting God knows what apparition …). Lo and behold, Section V of Fifth Space in his *Topologie d'une cité fantôme* (*Topology of a Phantom City*) (1976) irrupts verbatim as the first chapter of *La Belle Captive* (1976), and the last three chapters from *La Belle Captive* irrupt verbatim in his *Souvenirs du triangle d'or* (*Recollections of the Golden Triangle*) (1978)[48].[49] Robbe-Grillet's *La Belle Captive* was translated by Ben Stoltzfus and published by the University of California Press in 1995. The fact that Robbe-Grillet's *La Belle Captive* was translated by a different translator than the one who did *Topology of a Phantom City* (Grove Press, 1977) and *Recollections of the Golden Triangle* (John Calder, 1984), J. A. Underwood, raises outstanding questions for translation, especially if Stoltzfus does not go on to translate the other two books (Stoltzfus mentions in a footnote in his introduction to his translation that the four chapters of the book appear as sections in the other two books).[50] Robbe-Grillet should have insisted that these three books be translated as a unit by the same translator. For in the case we are addressing, the translation has to maintain the impression in the original that the text has irrupted fully formed from an earlier book. At the level of the logic and problematic of the structure of radical closure and the irruptions it allows, Ben Stoltzfus' translation of *La Belle Captive* is faulty since he should have, as a prerequisite for it, (re)translated first *Topology of a Phantom City*. While when we read on page 41 of *Recollections of the Golden Triangle*, "I am able at first glance to verify three of my former hypotheses: the absence of any underwear or lingerie apart from the briefs already mentioned …",[51] it is true that the briefs had already been mentioned, for example, on page 36 ("revealing a pair of apricot-coloured briefs"), when we read on page 15, "all is silent, discounting the tiny, bell-like sound of the drops of water falling one after another into a pool, as already mentioned," no such mention had been made earlier in the novel. One can view the latter "already mentioned" as one of the symptoms of the irruption of the text fully formed from the earlier book, *La Belle Captive*. While usually, in cases of relative closure, repetition can be attributed to a compulsion (the compulsion to repeat), the return of the repressed, or an obsession, in cases of radical closure it is often the result of the objective irruption again and again of ostensibly the same unworldly entity. These different modes of recurrence are sometimes mixed. It is possible to view the series of eight Popes in the paintings titled *Study for Portrait* (1953) and numbered I to VIII as resulting concurrently from Francis Bacon's worldly obsession with Diego Velázquez's *Portrait of Pope Innocent X* (ca. 1650) (David Sylvester: "Why was it you chose the *Pope*?" Francis Bacon: "Because I think it is one of the greatest portraits that have ever been made, and I became obsessed by it. I buy book after book with this illustration in it of the Velázquez *Pope*, because it just haunts me, and it opens up all sorts of feelings and areas of—I was going to say—imagination")[52] and from unworldly irruptions in the radical closures he set in these paintings. The question regarding the ontological status of the figures in Kubrick's *The Shining* that appear in the Overlook Hotel besides its three registered occupants is less whether they are real or imaginary, as whether they are revenants or ahistorical, unworldly entities that irrupted in a radical closure. Torrance encounters ahistorical, unworldly entities that irrupted in a radical closure, while his wife and son are haunted by revenants, for example, by the murdered twin Grady girls, hence by the symptoms of a particular traumatic history: the hotel is supposed to be located on an Indian burial ground, and a winter caretaker of the hotel, named Charles Grady, had run amok and killed his family with an axe.

One possible reason why sometimes two or more different paintings are given the same title in Magritte's work, for example, *La Belle Captive*,[53] would be that in a radical closure the painting may irrupt fully formed with its title.

We should differentiate the following modes ostensible repetition in Robbe-Grillet's novels: the recurrence of his characteristic motifs and elements from book to book: structure of radical closure, diegetic silence-over, immobilizations, contradictory versions of events; the usual intertexuality (we read in *Recollections of the Golden Triangle*: "the figure 8 … is represented by the bit of perished rope, attributed to 'the voyeur' [in reference to his earlier novel *The Voyeur*[54]] in the report"); the irruptions of ahistorical, but otherwise identical, versions of sections of one his books in the following one. Those who wish to criticize Robbe-Grillet for repeating himself from one book to the next may be able to legitimately do so not in relation to the irruption of the same paragraph from an earlier novel in a later novel, but in relation to his repeated setting of a structure of radical closure.

While Robbe-Grillet may have planned to resort to a number of Magritte paintings as generative quasi-referents in his novel *La Belle Captive* (1976), once he, a radical-closure novelist and filmmaker, set a radical closure structure through his writing, he no longer had any control on what textual description would irrupt. The youth is wearing neither gloves nor a hat in Magritte's painting *L'Assassin menacé* but has both on in the narrative; the blank oval frame, which is described in the novel as hung on the wall to the right of the youth, does not appear in the painting; etc. What surprises me in the descriptions in Robbe-Grillet's novel *La Belle Captive* is not the occasional dissimilarities they evince in relation to the illustrations of the Magritte paintings, but, on the contrary, that they are often so similar to them. It would have been as surprising had Francis Bacon set out to make a painting of a bird alighting in a field (*Painting*) and a bird alighting in a field appeared: "You simply can't bring off a portrait today. You're asking chance to fall your way all the time. The paint has to slide into appearance at every level, the accidents have to be all in your favour."[55] The juxtaposition of the Magritte illustration and the slightly different description in the narrative is quite similar in principle though not in degree (it is less extreme) to the discrepancy we see in Magritte's *La Clairvoyance*.[56] Basing oneself on *La Clairvoyance*, one can imagine the following possibility: by surrealistic *objective chance*, what was in front of Magritte but irrupted differently on his canvas is what is described in Robbe-Grillet's text.

One could assume that Robert Rauschenberg, an artist who once erased a de Kooning drawing and signed it with his name (*Erased de Kooning Drawing*, 1953), accepted in *Traces suspectes en surface* (1978), his ostensible collaboration with Robbe-Grillet, that his lithographs be structurally erased as Rauschenbergs, becoming Robbe-Grillet lithographs since the latter set a radical closure in which "they" could irrupt fully formed. The Robbe-Grillet text for that collaboration itself irrupts as an *external* element in *Topology of a Phantom City* (is the "Coda," the only part of *Topology of a Phantom City* unpublished previously, what acts as the radical limit of the book?), one that Robbe-Grillet integrates into his novel as he integrated preexistent paintings (Magritte, Jasper Johns) and photographs (Irina Ionesco, David Hamilton) in some of his other texts. The artist may have then to re-appropriate what seems to be identical to one of his or her works but is now legitimately someone else's, the radical closure artist or writer in whose painting or novel a duplicate of it irrupted fully formed.[57] It would have been interesting had Sherrie Levine collaborated with Robbe-Grillet (1922–2008), for in a Robbe-Grillet structure of radical closure a photograph such as "After Edward Weston" may not be a Sherrie Levine one, not because it would be a Weston, but because it may now be a Robbe-Grillet one since he meticulously set the structure of radical closure that makes possible its unworldly irruption there.

Levine might then have ended up reshooting this photograph as "After Robbe-Grillet."

In Robbe-Grillet's film *L'Immortelle*, the woman tells her French companion that he cannot leave Turkey since the boats they see from the ferry are *unreal boats*. They cannot escape by boat because they are in a radical closure, which itself allows the irruption of unreal boats, which anyway one cannot use to escape.

While an extreme relative closure, for instance, a well-guarded prison, may practically preclude any exit from it, particularly in the case of someone sentenced to life-imprisonment; a radical closure may apparently allow a person to leave—actually it is an unworldly version of him or her that appears to the other side of the radical closure's *gateless gate*.

In David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986), as the protagonist kneels down, holds the severed ear lying on the grass and places it in a bag—blathering later about a "strange world" (but is the world of Lynch's films itself strange, or is it rather the case that what is strange in it, for example, some of the sounds, are *unworldly* entities that irrupted in it as a radical closure?)—the camera sidesteps him and descends into the grass. Does it then reach the diagram? It is indiscernible whether the insects and the grass we encounter there are worldly or diagrammatic.

My *Credits Included: A Video in Red and Green* (1995), which takes place in Lebanon in 1992, begins with a voice-over reading from a "U.S. Passport Restrictions to Lebanon" notice posted at the American Embassy in Nicosia, Cyprus (since only part of the form is visible onscreen while the voice-over reads both the visible and invisible sections, the audience's attention is drawn to the offscreen, while the content of what is read is already contributing to a possible radical closure and therefore to an offscreen that is inhomogeneous with the onscreen or altogether inexistent). The tightening of the relative closure of civil-war Lebanon, which resulted from this prohibition and other similar prohibitions on travel to Lebanon of other foreign nationals; the prohibition of any direct flights between the USA, as well as other countries, and Lebanon; the restrictions on granting visas to Lebanese citizens, who were suspected of possible terrorist intentions; and the extreme difficulty for many Lebanese to travel abroad due to the steep devaluation of the Lebanese pound, may have been so exacerbated during West Beirut's siege by Israel at the time of the latter's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, it may have changed into a radical closure. The green paint (the *green* of the subtitle) that appears on the thumb with which I touch a leaf in a garden seems to have been interpreted in a psychotic way by me as one of the video's protagonists, and probably by me as the video's maker since the next scene starts in a mental hospital; yet it could also be viewed as an unworldly or diagrammatic color that irrupted in a radical closure, the one into which Beirut may have turned at some point during Lebanon's protracted civil war (1975–1991) and West Beirut's siege by Israel during the latter's invasion of Lebanon in 1982—are the following words that I wrote in my book *Distracted*, "Lebanon. Nothing left, not even leaving,"[58] indicative of such a radical closure? The possibility of recognizing the irruption of the diagram in the world was missed, and resort to writing, indicated by the red ink traces (the *red* of the subtitle) next to the leaf's green paint on my thumb, in order to maintain a modicum of detachment in relation to this psychotic moment became critical; the next section of the video takes place in a mental hospital, apparently showing the likely outcome were recourse to writing to be inhibited or unavailable. Inappropriately, my video was premiered with Jayce Salloum's video *This Is Not Beirut* (1994) in a program at the San Francisco Cinematheque on March 9, 1995. Yet, while the program itself was inappropriate, its title, "(Not) Beirut," was most appropriate! If it is most appropriate to title a program of videos regarding Beirut in the aftermath of the Lebanese civil war and the intervening invasion of the country by Israel in 1982 "(Not) Beirut," this would not be because

such a title implies or indicates that one or more of the videos (for example, Salloum's) are instances of (what was even then) a (redundant, frequently tasteless) problematization of representation, specifically orientalist representation, but rather because Beirut may by then have been at some point a radical closure, with the consequence that what irrupted in one or more of the videos was (possibly an unworldly Beirut, thus) (not) Beirut. Despite the reference to Magritte (*The Treachery of Images (This Is Not a Pipe)*, 1929), a radical closure artist, in the title of his video, Salloum has no inkling that the frame can function as a radical closure, allowing the ostensible intermingling of media and world through the irruption of (unworldly versions of) worldly entities in media and/or the irruption of painterly, televisual, or filmic entities or of entities of the diegesis presented by the artwork in the world, as shown in Magritte's *The Master of the Revels* (1928), where a cable appears to go all the way from a pole *in* the framed painting on the wall to an object *outside* the latter painting within the painting.

Radical-Closure Artist with Bandaged Sense Organ

An ostensibly finished radical-closure painting may undergo sudden changes, since entities may later irrupt in it, and since what had already irrupted in it may suddenly disappear from it.[59] I would feel no surprise—but apprehension at the confirmation of my wild concepts—were I to read the following headline: "No crows in Van Gogh's ultra-expensive *Wheatfield with Crows*!" Isn't the present owner of that costly painting, the Van Gogh Museum/Vincent van Gogh Foundation, apprehensive about the eventuality of the disappearance of the paint birds from it? I suggest that the owner take out insurance against this eventuality.[60] Moreover, isn't the present owner of the painting apprehensive about the eventuality of the crows irrupting outside the painting? Wouldn't prudence command that the museum and owner of the painting demand from the museum's visitors that they sign a legal release releasing the museum and owner of the painting from any claim or liability for the damage and injury sustained by the undersigned were the crows to suddenly irrupt outside the painting, or were he or she to end up cutting off his or her ear in an attempt to stop experiencing the sounds he or she starts to hear on looking at that painting?

In Kurosawa's *Dreams* (1990), standing in a wheat field before his canvas, Van Gogh describes his painter's life as constant slaving and prods his interlocutor into doing the same: work, work. Van Gogh wrote in a September 26, 1888 letter to his brother, Theo: "Today again from seven o'clock in the morning till six in the evening I worked without stirring except to take some food a step or two away.... I have no thought of fatigue, I shall do another picture this very night, and I shall bring it off." It turned out that for *Wheatfield with Crows*, where the two converging lines of grass, which outline the path through the compact field of wheat and trace lines of perspective, meet in the middle of the field not in a point but rather in a green line parallel to the horizon, Van Gogh worked hard to construct a radical closure. In the same *Dreams* scene, Van Gogh says that while painting he gets in a state of trance (from a September 5–6, 1889 letter to his brother: "I am ploughing on like a man possessed" [*je laboure comme un vrai possédé*]) and "the scene paints itself for me." The artist of a radical closure, in which fully formed entities may irrupt sooner or later, is indolent in some measure; Van Gogh, who, in a decade, produced around eight hundred paintings and a thousand drawings as well as a voluminous correspondence, was manifestly a hardworking artist, but he was also, in relation to his painting *Wheatfield with Crows*, in which he constructed a radical closure, to some extent an indolent artist, as indolent as Marcel Duchamp (the artist of, among other things, ready-mades), since part of that radical-closure painting "paint[ed] itself" for him. Obvi-

ously, the indolence of artists of radical closures is not necessarily a psychological character trait (although it can be that too); it is basically a consequence of the circumstance that part of the painting, for example, the black paint birds of *Wheatfield with Crows*, "paints itself" for the artist, more precisely, irrupts fully formed in the radical closure he or she produced. Thus Kurosawa's casting of Martin Scorsese in the role of Van Gogh is infelicitous, since while Scorsese gives the impression of someone who is hardworking, he does not at all give the sense of indolence; David Lynch would have been a far more appropriate choice for that role. "A third line of thought argues that only the present self-portrait [*Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear and Pipe*] was ever done by Van Gogh, the other one [*Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear*] being a pastiche by another hand" (Ronald Pickvance, *Van Gogh in Arles* [The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1984], 245); if the radical closure that Van Gogh constructed in *Wheatfield with Crows* rendered an actual radical closure in the field itself, I would add a fourth line of thought that emends the third one mentioned in the quote: *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear* possibly irrupted fully formed. I can quite easily envision this situation: after the death of a radical-closure writer, an incredibly large number of manuscripts are discovered in his house, and years later the editors of his oeuvre preface their introduction to his in-progress collected works with: "We simply note this eerie fact: although all the found manuscripts are in his handwriting, it is *physically impossible* for him to have written them during his life even were he to have stayed awake day and night transcribing in shorthand under continuous dictation."

Van Gogh, who on an outing in Arles from the hospital to his studio in the company of Paul Signac in March 1889 suddenly "tried to gulp down a liter of turpentine that was on his bedroom table"[61] (which made Signac conclude that "it was time to go back to the hospital"); whose brother advised him in a January 3, 1890 letter, "If you know that it is dangerous for you to have colors [oil paint] near you why don't you clear them away for a time and make drawings?"; and who, according to an entry added by Dr. Théophile Peyron when Van Gogh left the St Rémy asylum (May 16, 1890), "had several attacks lasting for between two weeks and a month … [during which he] is subject to terrifying terrors, and on several occasions he has attempted to poison himself, either by swallowing colors that he used for painting, or by ingesting paraffin, which he had taken from the boy while he was filling his lamps,"[62] ended up producing a radical-closure painting in which *paint birds* irrupted in the represented landscape, did not appear in it from behind the horizon or from amidst the wheat stalks.[63] Duchamp: "Since Courbet, it's been believed that painting is addressed to the retina. That was everyone's error. The retinal shudder! Before, painting had other functions: it could be religious, philosophical, moral…. Our whole century is completely retinal, except for the Surrealists, who tried to go outside it a little";[64] would Duchamp have criticized the black birds that appear over the field in Van Gogh's *Wheatfield with Crows* as retinal? I very much doubt it. The rest of the painting, with its thick brushstrokes of paint, is retinal, but the *paint birds* aren't; they *come across directly onto the nervous system*.

"On Sunday last, at 11:30 p.m., one Vincent Vangogh, a painter, born in Holland, arrived at House of Tolerance [brothel] No. I, asked for one Rachel, and handed her—his ear, saying 'keep this and treasure it.' Then he disappeared. Informed of this action, which could only be that of a poor lunatic, the police went to the man's address the next morning and found him lying in bed and giving almost no sign of life. The unfortunate was admitted to hospital as an emergency case" (*Le Forum républicain* [Arles], December 30, 1888). What kind of treasure was implied when Van Gogh handed a prostitute his severed ear and said: "Keep this and treasure it"? Did his gesture of amputation imply auto-castration, the treasure uncovered to be the phallus? The cutting off of a sense organ by a radical-closure artist has nothing or very little to do with

the standard psychoanalytical notion of castration. In Lynch's universe, where characters, as is revealed in his *The Grandmother* (1970), are not sexually conceived, one encounters, rather than castration anxiety, an anxiety induced by the unstoppable irruption of unworldly fully formed ahistorical entities (among them one or more penises?), sounds, and images, sometimes in the sense organs. A person encountering irrupting unworldly sounds in a radical closure or unworldly voices in the falling apart world of psychosis and death may cut off his ear because he still holds the illusory hope that he can stop hearing these sounds or voices by getting rid of the corresponding sense organ: "I the undersigned, Doctor of medicine, Director of the St Rémy mental home, certify that the man named Vincent van Gogh, aged 36, a native of Holland and at present domiciled in Arles (Bouches du Rhône), under treatment at this city's infirmary, suffered an attack of acute mania with visual and auditory hallucinations that led him to mutilate himself by cutting off his ear"[65] (from the transcript of the twenty-four-hour certificate issued by Théophile Peyron, the asylum's doctor, on May 9, 1889). A doctor encouraged his patient, who was a music student, to render through musical compositions the sourceless, obtrusive sounds from which he was suffering. Unfortunately, the student was not a good enough musician to recreate them. In a moment of desperation, he severed his ear—to stop the sounds. On coming close to his severed ear to throw it away, he heard diagrammatic or unworldly sounds in it. He realized that he had cut off his ear also to make it easier for others to hear these sounds that were at times a torment to him. Having been told so many times that he was hallucinating them, he now answered the first person who again affirmed that they were only in his head: "Yes, these sounds are nowhere else; they are only in my ear." "So, at long last, you do acknowledge that they are hallucinations." "Not at all. They are '*in*' my severed ear on the floor. Get closer to the ear and listen." "*That's fucking crazy, man!*" Many of those to whom he subsequently told the same thing did not give him the benefit of the doubt; but those few who did go close enough to the ear in spite of the revulsion induced in them by that detached, putrefying organ did, to their horrified amazement, hear in the ear the unworldly sounds he had described to them to the best of his ability. They perceived that in certain circumstances (radical closure), the ear, in addition to allowing one to locate more or less approximately the source of a worldly sound, is sometimes the whereabouts of an unworldly sound. If these sounds were not only in his mind, but were objectively present—as was evident from the fact that others too could hear them—couldn't they be heard in … ? One day, while in a perverse mood, he told one of his incredulous acquaintances: "Come and listen to the sounds in my remaining ear; put your ear next to mine and listen!" "This provocative manner of talking is bound to lead to a quarrel. I don't think we should have a shouting match over these anomalous sounds you hear sometimes, for basically, except for them, we see eye to eye." "I don't care about seeing eye to eye; what would be beneficial to our relationship at this point is to hear ear to ear. Place your ear next to mine!" That there are two Van Gogh self-portraits with bandaged ear could indicate that one of the two was actually painted by Van Gogh while the other, unworldly, irrupted fully formed in relation to some radical closure in the world, or that one, *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear and Pipe*, refers to the anecdotal, extrinsic cause of the cutting off of the ear (a fight with the painter Gauguin, who had informed him shortly before that he planned to leave him, thus impairing, indeed aborting his wish to establish a painters' cooperative in Arles? Auditory "hallucinations"?) while the other, *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear*, implies, through the empty canvas visible in the background to the left of the painter, that what led to his amputation of his ear had to do with a painting. I would think that it is on the referent of the represented empty canvas in *Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear* that Van Gogh later painted *Wheatfield with Crows*, a painting that

evinces a radical closure, the condition of possibility of at least some of the unworldly sounds he was hearing (in Robert Altman's *Vincent & Theo*, having painted the field, the sky, and the two radically-closed paths, Van Gogh hears caws without seeing any crows) but also of the unworldly paint crows that irrupted in the painting. In this case, the relation of music and sound in general to painting is not that of finding equivalents in paint for sounds, but of constructing the condition of possibility—a radical closure—of the irruption of sounds *in* the painting. Whether a critic or not, don't you, the reader, at times hear sounds in Van Gogh's *Wheatfield with Crows*? I do. Van Gogh reached sounds through painting more surely—though in a different manner—in *Wheatfield with Crows* than in *La Berceuse*, which he painted shortly after cutting off his ear and regarding which he wrote in a letter to A. H. Koning, "I call it 'La Berceuse,' or, as we say in … Van Eeden's Dutch, quite simply 'our lullaby or the woman rocking the cradle.' … Whether I really sang a lullaby in colors is something I leave to the critics."[66] Who would be the best present-day sound designer for a film concerning Van Gogh in the period in which he severed one of his ears and painted much of *Wheatfield with Crows*? Most probably David Lynch. David Lynch said about one of his early paintings: "I'm looking at this figure in this painting, and I hear like a little wind, and I see a little movement."[67] This movement and sound induced him to change media: from painting to film.[68] In Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986), standing with the detective in the coroner's office, Jeffrey, who discovered the severed ear in the field, asks the coroner: "What can you tell about the person from the ear?" "Sex, blood type, whether or not the ear came off a dead person…. It looks like the ear was cut off with scissors." Unlike in Lynch's film, Jeffrey could have responded, to the consternation of the detective, "What about the source of the sounds one can hear in it?"[69] The coroner would have responded: "We are unable to determine it, owing to these areas of total black." In my thought experiment, at first neither Jeffrey nor the detective made out what the corner was referring to: they both persisted in assuming that their eyes would grow adapted to the dim areas in the ear and begin to discern some outlines. But their eyes did not grow adapted to anything, for there was nothing to get adapted to. Thus it no longer occurred to Jeffrey or to the detective to direct a light at these areas of black. Nonetheless, to shed more light on what he had said, the coroner aimed a spotlight at the ear. While the regions of light and darkness in the other sections of the ear shifted with the variations in the intensity of the illumination directed at them, the totally black regions remained unchanged. How can light not affect the black areas? This can happen if the black is not the circumstantial absence of light, but a zone of inexistence.

In the scene of the crows in Vincente Minnelli's film on Van Gogh, *Lust for Life* (1956), the painting *Wheatfield with Crows* reveals the field in front of the canvas mounted on an easel as radically closed. Although the crows appear from amidst the wheat stalks and are seemingly enduring entities, the shots themselves are then no longer continuous. Minnelli, who in the ballets of his musicals can connect non-contiguous spaces-times seamlessly, felicitously manages in *Lust for Life* to give, through jump cuts, the impression that the crows suddenly appear and disappear, to be replaced by others, which could imply that they are unworldly, ahistorical entities irrupting in a radical closure. Having all of a sudden been assaulted by crows and seeing a peasant in a horse-drawn cart on the point of going beyond the point where the path in the wheat field becomes radically closed, Minnelli's Van Gogh exclaims, "It's impossible!" and, minutes later, shoots himself. In this scene, what is impossible? Is it for Van Gogh to continue living despite his anxiety about both the recurrence of hallucinations and his precarious livelihood? Or is it the ostensible progress of the peasant and his horse-drawn cart beyond the point where the path in the wheat field becomes radically closed? When soon after uttering, "It's im-

possible," Minnelli's Van Gogh takes out a piece of paper from his pocket and scribbles on it, "No way out," does this portend his suicide? Or does it rather refer to a radical closure? Is death a "way out" of a radical closure? A radical-closure writer, artist, or filmmaker knows or at least intuits that death is not a way out of such a closure (Robbe-Grillet's *L'Immortelle* and *The House of Assignation*). One may intuit that death is not a way out of a radical closure but nonetheless be "suicided by society,"[70] by all those who, like that peasant, would have ostensibly progressed impossibly beyond the point where the path in the wheat field becomes radically closed and later deplored the supposedly arbitrary distortions of the field and its paths in *Wheatfield with Crows*.[71] Was the suicide of Minnelli's Van Gogh a last-ditch attempt to avert the impossibility by providing the imperceptive peasant, who, witless, was not going to supply the comic relief of a makeshift excuse for not crossing the radically-closed *gateless gate*, with a justification to stop and turn back, toward the gravely wounded painter, before he incredibly transgresses the radical closure's border?

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In the case of a radical closure, the presence in a text of specifications of camera placement and movement does not necessarily indicate that the text is a script; such specifications probably signal the irruption of the cinematic in it or in its diegetic world.

The camera tracks up the windows of consecutive stories and stops on a young woman as she finishes closing the entrance door and moves into the apartment advertised for rent. She removes her hat, revealing beautiful blue short hair. She inspects the bedroom and kitchen, then goes back to the living room and looks straight ahead—into the camera, which pans 180 degrees to show what faces her: a bricked-up window. She begins blabbering to herself about Melville's Bartleby. While she likes that the apartment is spacious, she dislikes that it gives onto a building and that the rent is exorbitant. The reason she finally decides to rent it is the bricked-up window facing it. One night, suffering from insomnia, she heads to the kitchen for sleeping pills. On her way there, she glances in the direction of the bricked up window and sees a painting. The next morning, she manages to dismiss what she saw as caused by her lack of sleep. When, some time later, she witnesses another irruption of a painting in the bricked-up window, she, alarmed, phones her friend Jalal Toufic. They decide to meet the following morning. During their meeting, he asks her whether she could recognize the paintings. "One of the two paintings happened to be one with which I am quite familiar: Andrew Wyeth's *Farm Road*." "You may be dealing with a radical closure." "A what?" It is his turn to exclaim: "Why are *you* the one making coffee?" "I happen to make excellent coffee." Shortly, sitting around the kitchen table, she, bemused, remarks: "Your kitchen looks exactly like mine!"[72]

First Aid, Second Growth, Third Degree, Fourth World, Fifth Amendment, Sixth Sense

During the Israeli army's 1982 siege of West Beirut, the Palestinians faced a double bind: the siege and their desertion by the rest of the world—orchestrated by Israel's main ally, the USA, a UN Security Council permanent, thus veto-wielding, member—may have changed their enclave into a radical closure, yet they were being violently pressured to leave that enclosure. The Palestinian combatants' delay in coming to a decision may not have been caused only by the reluctance to decamp from what had become to many of them a surrogate homeland and to relinquish the elaborate politi-

cal and administrative apparatus they had established in Lebanon; and by their mistrust of the guarantees they were being offered for the safety of the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian civilians who would be left behind—a mistrust that proved justified by the subsequent massacres in the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian refugee camps. A feeling of radical closure might have contributed to the delay in deciding to leave: "Where should we go after the last frontier? Where should the birds fly after the last sky?" (Mahmoud Darwish, "The Earth Is Closing on Us," *Ward Aqal*, 1986). Ghosts may appear in a quarantined region, not to complete an unfinished business but to intimate to the quarantined living people that the dead are not party to their desertion by the rest of the world. These posthumous entities may appear in time, before the quarantine turns into a radical closure, where apparitions are experienced as impostors not because of the doubling that is a characteristic of the undeath realm from which they apparently issue, but because they are ahistorical, unworldly entities that irrupted fully formed in such a closure. They may appear there although the quarantined living people were, and possibly continue to be, despite the quasi-spontaneous Buddhist-like meditations on their bodies hallucinated as chopped, buried under rubble, or burned to ashes, themselves party to the modern world's desertion and exclusion of the dead.[73] The dead appear there also to maintain the possibility of their continuing remembrance by the living, since were the quarantine to turn into a radical closure, those in it would become disconnected from history. Despite the fact that I had not been in Beirut for the previous four years, the curator Jayce Salloum placed me as residing in Los Angeles and Beirut in his catalogue for the exhibition "East of Here.... (Re)Imagining the 'Orient,'" which took place at YYZ Artists' Outlet, Toronto, in November–December 1996. His reason for doing this was probably to stress the connection of the included artists to the Middle East. I think such a description of my geographical coordinates was then and continues to be quite accurate only from the perspective of radical closure. Haven't I written: "He left (did he leave?) Beirut—a city where 'nothing [is] left, not even leaving'—to New York in 1984"? Even if I never go back to Beirut, my coordinates are conjointly the city in which I happen to reside and Beirut.

Postwar Lebanese Photography Between Radical Closure and Surpassing Disaster

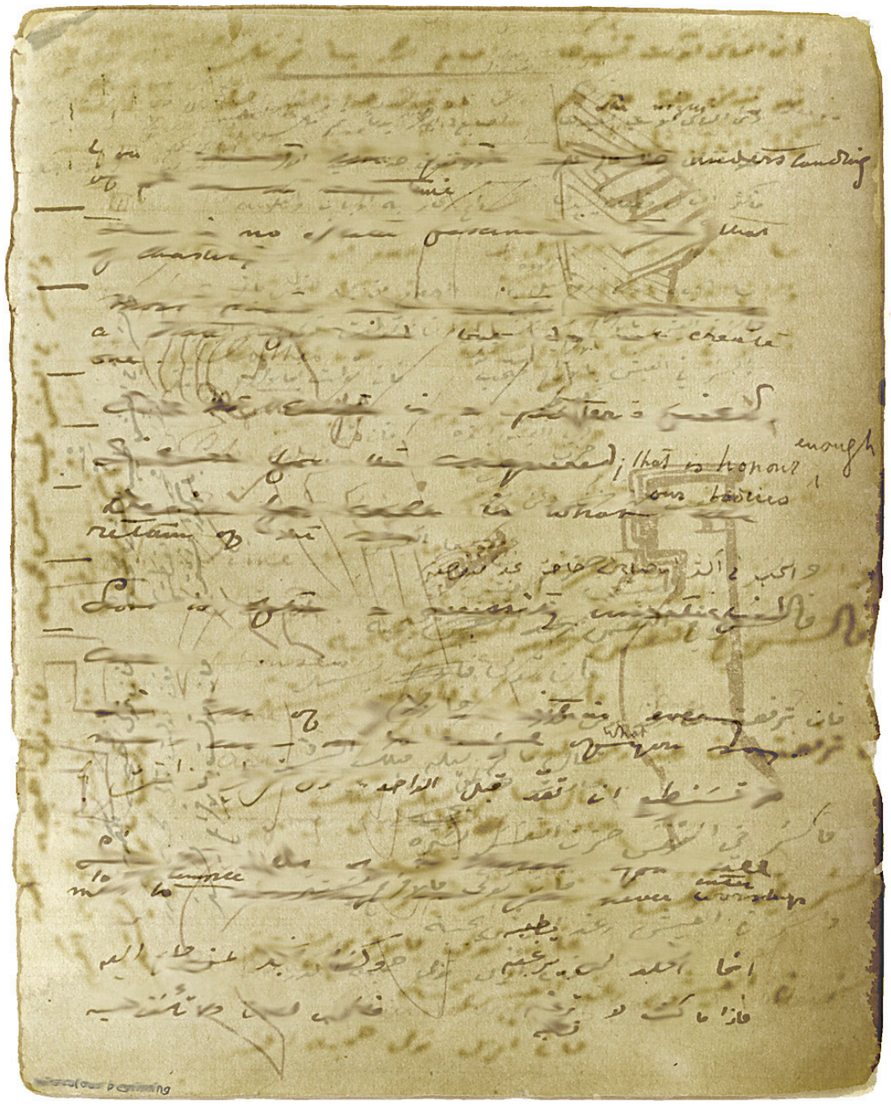
The title of a May 2001 workshop organized by Lebanese video makers Mahmoud Hojeij and Akram Zaatari, for which they invited seven persons from four Middle Eastern countries and from various fields (cinema, video, graphic design, etc.) to come to Lebanon, join two Lebanese, and make, along with these latter, each a one-minute video by the end of the workshop, was *Transit Visa*. Can one have a transit visa to a radical closure? Doesn't the very notion of having a transit visa to Lebanon imply that notwithstanding the siege of West Beirut by Israel during the latter's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, it is not a radical closure?

In addition to so much Lebanese photography that remained at the level of artistic documentation, for instance the work of Samer Mohdad (*Les Enfants de la guerre: Liban 1985-1992* [1993]; *Mes Arabies* [1999]) and Fouad Elkoury, who were treating and continued to treat the civil war and the war as a disaster and the closure that affected Lebanon as relative albeit extreme, we encounter two kinds of works that are symptomatic and emblematic of a Lebanon that was during part of the war years a radical closure and/or a surpassing disaster[74].

Where is the rest of the world? What is the world doing? How is the world allowing such atrocities not only to happen but also to go on being perpetuated for months and years? The incredible de-

sertion of the world is the leitmotiv of the indignant exclamations one hears in zones under siege: the Palestinians and the Lebanese in West Beirut during the Israeli siege of that city in 1982; the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip during their closures then sieges by the Israelis; the inhabitants of Sarajevo during its siege by Bosnian Serbs; the Tutsi minority during the Rwandan genocide of 1994; the Iraqis during the sanctions imposed on their country. Is it strange that some feel or make artworks that imply that these places became radical closures? Can we detect in such places one of the consequences of radical closures: unworldly, fully formed ahistorical irruptions? As usual, it is most appropriate to look for that in artworks. The "document" attributed by Walid Raad to Kahlil Gibran and projected as a slide for the duration of Raad's talk "Miraculous Beginnings" at Musée Sursock in Beirut on January 27, 2000;[75] and the eight small black-and-white photographs of group portraits of men and women that were published in Raad's photo-essay "Miraculous Beginnings," and that—the reader is told—are part of twenty-nine large photographic prints and fifty-two documents (handwritten notebook entries, letters, typed memoranda, and minutes) unearthed in 1991 during the demolition of Beirut's civil war-devastated Central District, processed by laboratories in France and the USA,[76] and handed to the Arab Research Institute, can be legitimately viewed as unworldly ahistorical entities that irrupted in the radical closure that Beirut may have become at one point.[77]

We live in a block universe of spacetime, where nothing physically passes and vanishes, but where occasionally things withdraw due to surpassing disasters. Palestinians, Kurds, and Bosnians have to deal with not only the concerted erasure by their enemies of much of their tradition: the erasure by the Israelis of hundreds of Palestinian villages in 1948 and their renaming with Jewish names,[78] and the erasure of hundreds of Kurdish villages during the *Anfāl* operation



Atlas Group, document TR680.5 W 23, anonymous donor.

in Iraq, etc.; but also the additional, more insidious withdrawal of some of what survived the physical destruction. The exhibition *Wonder Beirut* by Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige (Janine Rubeiz Gallery, Beirut, July 1998) revolves around a photographer who, along with his father, was commissioned by the Lebanese State in 1969 to make postcards, and who four years into the civil war and while shutting himself off in his studio removes all these postcards, "which no longer referred to anything" since what they showed—Martyrs' Square, the souks, etc.—either was destroyed or no longer existed, and "burns them patiently, aiming at them his proper bombs and his own shells … thus making them conform better to his reality. When all was burned, it was peace." Thus the following model sequence: photographs of burned buildings and scorched walls taken by him from the window of his studio a couple of years into the conflict; then, four years into the war, burned photographs that are later exhibited (this indicating that the war was then not yet a surpassing disaster, but just a localizable catastrophe); then, in 1999, undeveloped photographs, a symptom of the withdrawal past the surpassing disaster that Beirut must have become: "Today, this photographer no longer develops his photographs. It is enough for him to take them. At the end of the exhibition [*Wonder Beirut*], 6452 rolls of film were laid on the floor: rolls containing photos taken by the photographer but left undeveloped"[79] (Hadjithomas and Joreige). Hadjithomas and Joreige are currently preparing a show titled *Latent Image* in which they will frame and mount on the gallery's walls textual descriptions of photographs taken but left unprocessed. Here are six examples from film roll no. PE 136 GPH 160:

— Master shot of the dead end from the window of the room. It is raining.
— Close shot of the seepage under the living room's windows.
— The water enters into the kitchen.
— Close shot of the floorcloth in front of the living room's windows.
— The rain on the room's pane (the camera focus is on the drops).
— Close shot of the spots of humidity on the wall and the ceiling.

While their work in *Wonder Beirut* and their forthcoming *Latent Image* brings to my mind two parts of Hollis Frampton's *Hapax Legomena*, *Nostalgia* (1971) and *Poetic Justice* (1972), in the first of which Frampton placed one at a time photographs on a hotplate, the latter's coil shortly tracing its shape on the photograph before the latter's full burning; and in the second of which he placed on a table, in between a small cactus and a cup of coffee, a stack of papers with descriptions of two hundred and forty different shots, which descriptions we read one at a time for the span of the film (for instance, "#4. [close-up] A small table below a window. A potted cactus, a coffee cup"), I am aware that the burning of the photographs in *Wonder Beirut* not only has to do with matters relating to the medium as such, as in Frampton's *Nostalgia* (Hadjithomas and Joreige: "We wanted to return to an ontological definition of these images: the inscription of light by burning"[80]), but is also a reaction to the incendiary wars that were going on in Lebanon; and that the substitution of textual descriptions for the photographs is related not only to the problematic relation of words to images in audio-visual works, but also to the withdrawal of some images past a surpassing disaster. I had not expected the intermediary step of *Latent Image* between exhibiting rolls of undeveloped films in *Wonder Beirut* and a possible future exhibition of developed photographs. This intermediary step can be considered a contribution to the resurrection of what has been withdrawn by the surpassing disaster. The intended effect of the work of the one trying to resurrect tradition past a surpassing disaster is fundamentally not on the audience, except indirectly; it is on the work of art—to resurrect it. Such resurrecting works are thus referential. It is interesting to see when—if at all—Hadjithomas and Joreige will feel the impulse to develop those photographs, this signaling the resurrection of tradition.

Felicitous photographs of Lebanon many years into the civil war and the war and then a number of years following them: photographs taken by nobody—unworldly entities that irrupted in a radical closure—but developed (*Miraculous Beginnings*); and photographs taken by someone but left undeveloped because of their withdrawal due to the surpassing disaster that was Beirut then (*Wonder Beirut*, 1999).[81]

It is one thing for an academic scholar like the Palestinian Walid Khalidi to do archival work (he is the editor of *Kay lā nansá: qurá Filasṭīn al-latī dammarathā Isrā'īl sanat 1948 wa-asmā' shuhadā'ihā* [*All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948*]); it is, or at least it should be, another matter were Walid Raad and Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige to do so. Walid Raad is already a member of the Arab Image Foundation (AIF), and Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige would, in my opinion, be fine candidates for membership in the same foundation, which was established in Lebanon in 1996, and whose aim is "to promote photography in the Middle East and North Africa by locating, collecting, and preserving the region's photographic heritage.... Material in the collections will date from the early nineteenth century to the present." Raad is also implicated through his artistic practice in both the Arab Research Institute's archival collection *Miraculous Beginnings: The Complete Archive*, which as of 1994 comprised, we are told, forty-six hundred documents; and the Atlas Group's growing collection. While for now the artistic practices and issues at stake in these latter two archives have not affected or interfered with the collection of the AIF, it is quite conceivable that they will, through Raad, do so, problematizing the historical authenticity of its photographs, with the probable consequence that we will learn about new Muḥammad 'Abdallāh, Kamīl al-Qāriḥ, or Alban photographs. I envision, as a first stage, the archival collections of both the Arab Research Institute and the Atlas Group equaling the collection of the AIF, presently around 30,000 photographs;

then the AIF archive becoming just an appendage of Raad's (largely virtual) archive, the latter occasionally referring to the former as holding a small number of photographs that it does not have: "For an additional 23 photographs of the work of Kamīl al-Qāriḥ, as well as for an additional 20 photographs by Muḥammad 'Abdallāh, we refer you to the Arab Image Foundation's collection." What would happen to the AIF's "long-term goal of ... the creation of a center in Beirut for the preservation and exhibition of its photographic collections" were Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige to end up becoming members of the foundation? How would the AIF's goal of preservation be affected by the presence of two artists who have burnt some of their photographs then exhibited them? How would the Foundation's goal of exhibition be affected by the presence of two artists who have included in one of their exhibitions myriad rolls of unprocessed photographs, therefore of unexhibited photographs? How would the Foundation's goal of archiving and therefore also dating be affected by the presence of two artists who assigned two different dates to what seems to be the same postcard of pre-civil-war Beirut's Central District, and wrote through the mouth of their fictional interviewer, the twentieth-century Pierre Menard of Borges' "Pierre Menard, Author of *Don Quixote*": "I have here two images, one taken by the photographer in 1969, the other a 1998 photograph of this same preexisting postcard.... By simply photographing these images you invent a new path, that of the deliberate anachronism and the erroneous attribution"?

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 Kesher (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.[82] 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 Kesher, 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 Kesher 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 Kesher, 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 closure[83] (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 multiverse] in which director Adam Kesher 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 ex-

ample, 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![84]

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"[85]—notwithstanding this process' vicissitudes (an actor who gets gravely sick or dies during the shooting of the film,[86] or an actress who gets pregnant just before filming is to begin or during it,[87] 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,[88] 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[89].[90] 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)."[91] While not an aphorism, "This is the girl" is, like it, not paraphrasable, therefore not common since it cannot be said in other words[92]—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')."[93] 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 countlessly, 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 "pllay," "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)?[94] 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."[95] 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).

Thinking about Radical Closure across Lapses of Consciousness If Not of Being

In a radical closure, one is going to be subject to the permutation in inverse proportion to how intensely one "willed" an event, i.e., to whether one "willed" it to recur twice, ten times, or a thousand times—or be altogether immune to it if one willed the event, i.e., willed it to recur eternally. In a radical closure, only those gestures, responses, and behavior whose eternal recurrence was willed would be repeated again and again amidst the surrounding permutations and attributed to the same person. Place such a character who wills in a space that is merely relatively closed and he is not going to repeat any event, for he wills its eternal recurrence once and for all; but place him in a spatial radical closure and he is going to be the only one who does not go through the permutations affecting even published books and released films.

If the radical-closure work presents only one, exclusive frame of reference, a first person one, then the crossing into such a closure happens in a lapse of consciousness, in other words, is missed, one finding "oneself" to the other side without having been introduced there; but if two reference frames are provided, then the crossing both does not happen and is continuous!

From the reference frame of an outside observer, those at the black hole's event horizon are flattened and frozen, turning into quasi photographs; but from their local reference frame they

have gradually crossed that boundary as three-dimensional persons. In Robbe-Grillet's universe, from one perspective, exterior to the radical closure, the protagonists and the objects are frozen and flat; but from another perspective, interior to the radical closure, they are three-dimensional and undergo events ("I am closing the door behind me, a heavy wooden door with a tiny narrow oblong window near the top, its pane protected by a cast-iron grille.... The wood around the window is coated with a brownish varnish in which ... I have discerned human figures for a long time: a young woman lying on her left side and facing me, apparently naked.... From the left part of the frame spreads a cone of harsh light ...: the shaft of light has been carefully directed, as though for an interrogation.... Yet it cannot be an interrogation; the mouth, which has been wide open too long, must be distended by some kind of gag.... Besides, a scream, if the girl were screaming, would be audible through the thick pane of the oblong window with its cast-iron grille. But now a silver-haired man in a white doctor's coat appears in the foreground from the right.... He walks toward the bound girl"[96]). If, in the narrative, there is a subsequent freezing that is again accompanied by a flattening, the reader would be once again looking from outside the radical closure. This would indicate that the fiction writer has not relinquished the ubiquity and omniscience of the traditional novelist, but truly accomplished it: what could be a clearer sign of an omniscience of the narrator than to be able to report on what is happening to either side of the event horizon?

There is a sort of photograph that is specific to a radical closure: the photograph that irrupts in it without being shot by anyone within it[97].[98] Were one to want to list David Lynch's photographs, one should include not only those that were shown in exhibitions and/or published,[99] but also *Lost Highway*'s photograph of the two look-alike women, and *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*'s photograph handed by the old woman and the child, who suddenly appear on the sidewalk, to Laura Palmer, and in which she later appears. Similarly, in order to complement one's view of Robbe-Grillet the writer and filmmaker by Robbe-Grillet the painter and photographer, one has to include as part of his oeuvre the paintings, ostensibly by others (Magritte ...), that irrupted in his novels (*La Belle Captive* ...),[100] and the photographs that resulted from the immobilization and flattening of various characters at the *gateless gates* of radical closures in his novels as well as those that irrupted in his films, for example, the photograph that the woman's suitor hands her to convince her they met the previous year at Marienbad and that was taken by no one, not even "the third who walks always beside you" (T. S. Eliot)—her husband? While made possible by the radical closure presented by the film, these photographs do not fit fully in the film in which they irrupted, making the latter a mixed media work. The absence of any mention of, let alone a separate section on, the photographs in Robbe-Grillet's *Last Year at Marienbad*, *L'Immortelle*, and *The Man Who Lies*; the photographs in Lynch's *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* and *Lost Highway*; and the photograph of Jack Torrance among the other guests at the July 4th ball that took place in 1921 at the Overlook Hotel, where he apparently first arrived as a middle-aged man sometime in the 1970s, in Kubrick's *The Shining* is a regrettable omission in historical surveys of photography. Francis Bacon frequently painted not directly from models but from photographs of them taken by other, camera-wielding humans ("I've had photographs taken for portraits because I very much prefer working from the photographs than from models"), in the process allowing, from a reference frame external to the radical closure, the change, through flattening and motionlessness, of the figure into a photograph at that radical closure's border, as in *Study for Self Portrait 1982* (1984), *Study from the Human Body after Muybridge* (1988), and *Triptych* (1991), where the figure is three-dimensional in the middle panel, but two-dimensional in the side panels (what is presented consecutively in Robbe-Grillet's novelistic radical closures is presented simultaneously in Bacon's artis-

tic radical closures);[101] or the irruption in the radical closure of a photograph not taken by anyone,[102] often in the form of a portrait hung on the wall (*Three Portraits: Posthumous Portrait of George Dyer, Self-Portrait, Portrait of Lucian Freud*, 1973, and *Three Studies of Isabel Rawsthorne*, 1966).

Is the sentence or phrase being received or inserted in one's mind in the radical closure something that was willed to recur eternally? Is one well advised to wait to see whether it will be affected by the variations that take place in such a closure? But what if one undergoes these variations before one can ascertain whether the sentence in question will vary and thus prove to have been simply a run-of-the-mill fully-formed entity that irrupted in the radical closure and that is then open to variation, or whether it is immune to such variation since willed (to recur eternally), hence one that has to be espoused, indeed cannot but be espoused. There are two types of sentences that are intrinsic to David Lynch's universe, the one willed to recur eternally, for example, "This is the girl" in *Mulholland Drive* (2001), and the one that is repeated again and again, in an incantation, precisely because it is a sort of counterfeit of the other by some imposter of the overman, for example, "This is the water. And this is the well. Drink full and descend. The horse is the white of the eyes and dark within" in episode 8 of *Twin Peaks: The Return* (2017). The first type of sentence is addressed to consciousness, while the other is addressed to the unconscious, indeed once it has been heard it undergoes a period of latency, until, like an(y) agent, it awakens again, *après coup*. The first kind of sentence is told to or heard by someone who has then to repeat it once and for all; while the other kind of sentence is heard by various people who, if they go on listening to it the requisite number of times for it to function as a spell sooner or later, suffer its magical effects. These two kinds of sentences have not yet appeared together; I await their confrontation in some future David Lynch film or TV episode.

When reading Deleuze's book *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* (*Cinéma I: l'Image-mouvement*, 1983), I agree with him that "the whole is not a closed set, but on the contrary that by virtue of which the set is never absolutely closed, … that which keeps it open somewhere as if by the finest thread which attaches it to the rest of the universe,"[103] but I no longer do so when I look at the paintings of Francis Bacon, read the novels of Alain Robbe-Grillet, watch the films of David Lynch, or reread my texts on radical closure—Deleuze, who had written on the painter Francis Bacon (*Francis Bacon: Logic of Sensation* [*Francis Bacon: Logique de la sensation*, 1981])—and would later write on Robbe-Grillet (in his book *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* [*Cinéma 2: l'Image-temps*, 1985])—should have known better.

The labyrinth often functions as a radical closure, allowing the irruption of unworldly, ahistorical fully-formed entities. Is the labyrinth that special kind of radical closure where the permutations of actions, names, positions, roles, etc., cannot be exhausted?

By exhausting all the permutations that are possible within a space that is radically closed, I can now leave it, indeed *I can no longer stay in it however much I wish to*—unless some additional people and/or things enter it right then and thus add supplementary possible permutations. Those within a radical closure usually intuitively do not wish for anyone or anything to enter it, not necessarily empathically so that the newcomers would not be stuck there, but so as not to add new possible permutations that have to be actualized before they can at long last leave.

At what level does the permutation in a radical closure happen? Fundamentally, it happens at the level at which entanglement breaks down, since entanglement prevents a space from being radically disconnected from other spaces.[104]

You cannot force people to leave a radical closure—even by threatening them with a firing squad (the end of Buñuel's *The Exterminating Angel*), indeed even by killing them.

In a radical closure the inability of an actress to differentiate between her film role and her life (as in the case of the female protagonist of Lynch's *Inland Empire*) is not to be ascribed to some kind of psychological trouble, but is a consequence of the intermingling of media (TV, cinema, painting, etc.) and world in such a closure.

Different radical-closure artists, writers, and filmmakers tend to be affined for the most part to different characteristics of this kind of closure, for example, Francis Bacon is more affined to the unworldly ahistorical entities that irrupt fully-formed in such a closure, while Robbe-Grillet is more affined to the exhaustive permutations that take place in such a closure.[105]

As a filmmaker or painter, your main interest may not be radical closure itself but the entities that can irrupt in it, for example, a videotape that was not filmed by anyone, or music that was emitted by no band, or paint birds in a landscape (someone walking in the landscape would see in the sky not flesh and blood birds but birds made of paint), and yet you have to construct the radical closure as the condition of possibility of the irruption of these entities. It would seem that you are trying to accomplish an impossibility, for example, a videotape that was not filmed by anyone, music that was emitted by no band, or paint birds in a landscape, not directly but by doing another impossible thing, since ostensibly "the whole is not a closed set, but on the contrary that by virtue of which the set is never absolutely closed, … that which keeps it open somewhere as if by the finest thread which attaches it to the rest of the universe" (Deleuze);[106] and/or since ostensibly any space is connected to the surrounding, in other words, to the rest of the universe within its corresponding light cone, including through tunneling subatomic particles or entangled particles. David Lynch managed in *Lost Highway* (1997) to construct a radical closure and consequently included in his film barking without the presence of a dog, *even off-screen*. Regrettably, like the protagonist of the film, who asks, "Who the hell owns that dog?" and like his wife, who states, "That dog woke me," the film's spectators have, with one exception, myself, misperceived and thus misreckoned what was happening, and the vast majority of them would have wondered had they seen how thrilled I am by the barking in the film, "Why all the fuss and excitement about the barking of a dog?"—but it is not the barking of a dog but barking *tout court*, one not emitted by a dog. Given the lack of awareness of this thrilling oddity, I have repeatedly engaged in the following dialogue while discussing *Lost Highway*: "Is there any other point to which you would wish to draw my attention?" "To the curious incident of the barking in the morning." "There was no dog around at that time." "That was the curious incident" (a paraphrase of the exchange between a Scotland Yard detective and Sherlock Holmes in Arthur Conan Doyle's "The Adventure of Silver Blaze": "'Is there any other point to which you would wish to draw my attention?' 'To the curious incident of the dog in the night-time.' 'The dog did nothing in the night-time.' 'That was the curious incident'").

One of the differences between the radical-closure artist Francis Bacon and the radical-closure filmmaker David Lynch is that the idea that irrupts in Lynch's mind, in other words, the idea he receives, does so prior to his engaging in the filming process through which he is to render it cinematically without any modifications, while the fundamentally unforeseeable entities that irrupted in Francis Bacon's paintings did so during the painting process, once Bacon constructed through his painting the structure of radical closure ("In a painting I'm trying to do of a beach and wave breaking on it … I have been trying to make the structure and then hope

chance will throw down the beach and the wave for me"[107]). In this respect, episode 1 of Lynch's *Twin Peaks: The Return*, in which a man is employed to watch for hours on end an empty large glass box at which various recording cameras are pointed, replace from time to time the SD cards in the various cameras with blank ones, and confirm whether anything appeared inside the box, is the closest in Lynch's work to Bacon.

Is it fortuitous that the male protagonist of Lynch's film *Mulholland Drive*, who receives a sentence, "This is the girl," that he has to repeat verbatim so as not to be subjected to the permutations in a radical closure, is a filmmaker? I would like to think that it is not, that *Mulholland Drive* is self-reflexive in the strongest sense, that Lynch, too, received not only the idea for the film but also the sentence "This is the girl" and had to render cinematically the first in a faithful way and include the latter in his film unaltered despite all the vicissitudes of the filming process, and despite the suggestions and recommendations of his co-screenwriter and some of his crew members (here's Lynch's response to a recommendation by the cinematographer Peter Deming during the shooting of *Lost Highway*: "When it [one of the shots] came up in dailies I thought it was underexposed.... I said to David, 'We need to do that mirror shot again.' He looked at me as if I were crazy and replied, 'No way ...'"[108]). Is David Lynch himself then in a radical closure, or does he at least somewhat feel he is in one, and thus has a hunch that he has, like the male protagonists of his films *Mullholland Drive* and *Lost Highway*, who each receive a sentence, "This is the girl" and "Dick Laurent is dead," respectively, to convey what he received without any modification, intuiting that that would be his way of leaving this sort of closure without having to go through all the possible permutations of gestures, lines of dialogue, social roles, etc.? In that case, we would be dealing not simply with the artistic duty within an aesthetic of reception, whether aphoristic (Jalal Toufic) or dictational (mostly in the case of poets: Jack Spicer, the Orpheus of Cocteau's film *Orpheus*, etc.), of maintaining what was received unaltered (even when it does not appear to be "poetic" or laconic or thought-provoking), but also with the necessity for the one within a radical closure who receives a willed sentence to repeat it unaltered if he or she wishes to be spared the exhaustive permutations in such a space. So this could be an additional reason why Lynch insists on propagating these images irrespective of the damage they can produce in the spectators of his films: not only that he works within a problematic of reception in which the task of the filmmaker and the ethics of filmmaking is not to alter what they received, but also that he dreads that were he not to convey what he received unaltered he himself would be subject to the permutations in a radical closure.

Some painters paint, and some filmmakers produce, a representation of both a radical closure and what appears to be entities that irrupted in it (see, for example, the representational unworldly crows over the representational radically-closed landscape in Kurosawa's *Dreams*)—while the latter should not give the impression that they are really part of where they irrupted, whether they do so symptomatically, for example, by suddenly appearing and disappearing, or not, nonetheless they should belong completely to the painter's or filmmaker's artistic universe, to which the representational radical closure belongs. In very rare cases, the painter constructs through painting and the filmmaker produces through film not a representation of a radical closure but a radical closure, hence a painting or film in which some entities may irrupt without being painted or filmed by him or her.

With regard to radical closures, there are two main manners of failing for a painter: he or she simply fails to construct the structure of radical closure, or he or she manages to do so but then yields

to the temptation to tamper with the entity that appears there, whether because it does not coincide with what he or she planned originally, or to make it look more harmonious with the rest of the painting, in color or otherwise. An accomplished artist of radical closure constructs the structure of radical closure but then does not tamper with what irrupts in it; he knows that if he wants something else to appear, he has to paint a new radical-closure structure and wait to see whether this time what he intended and hoped for would appear in it actually ends up doing so.

While, like so many others, I've written on some films after their release, I have also written on others before they were made! For instance, the following words regarding *Lost Highway* (1997) in the first edition of *Forthcoming* (2000) turned out to be a description of Lynch's subsequent film, *Mulholland Dr.* (2001): "The two versions of the woman in David Lynch's *Lost Highway* are not to be reduced to reflections of the desire of the male character: to fantasies. Those who find themselves in a radically-closed space are going to undergo myriad changes in mannerisms, hairstyles, and dress designs; and, in case they happen to be ahistorical unworldly entities that irrupted in the space—appearing then disappearing then appearing again—also through the spectrum of physical characteristics and identities. Moreover, the phrases said by the different protagonists are going to be permuted among them and uttered in different intonations and given different interpretations."

Endnotes

1 André Bazin, *What Is Cinema?*, vol. 1, foreword by Jean Renoir; new foreword by Dudley Andrew; essays selected and translated by Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 166.

2 "*Gateless Gate* (Chin., *Wu-men kuan*; Jap., *Mu-monkan*): a collection of kōans compiled by the Chinese Ch'an master Wu-men Hui-k'ai (1183–1260) and published in 1229" (Damien Keown, *A Dictionary of Buddhism* [Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003], 100). I find this term quite appropriate to describe the borders of a radical closure and therefore borrow it for my own, different use.

3 *La Révolution Surréaliste*, no. 12 (1929). What are the different specific reasons for the closure of the eyes of the fifteen other surrealists in the same photomontage?

4 A filmmaker's sensitivity to diagrammatic sound, an unworldly sound, should not make us hurriedly deduce that he is sensitive to sounds in general. Indeed, when the diagrammatic sounds disappear in Lynch's work, the soundtrack becomes too rarefied, almost artificial, as in the two-hour pilot of *Twin Peaks*—the character Lynch plays in both the TV series *Twin Peaks* and the film *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me* is symptomatically hard of hearing and has consequently to resort to hearing aids.

5 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*, trans. and ed. Ida Macalpine and Richard A. Hunter, with a new introduction by Samuel M. Weber [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988], 84).

6 David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon*, third, enlarged edition (New York, NY: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 72.

7 Ibid., 34.

8 The condition of possibility of this unworldly scream in Abel Ferrara's film is Finney's novel, where paradoxically, while made possible there, it does not actually appear!

9 The kind of topological space that allows the sky over the town in the high-angle shot to connect directly with the credits sequence—beyond the mundane space presented in the intermediate shots—echoes and somewhat corresponds to Melanie's boat trip, a shortcut between the town and Mitch's family's house across the lake (we see Mitch take the customary, longer trip by road in order to rejoin her at the town center); indeed, it is in this space of the

shortcut that a bird reaching the space of the lake from the credits sequence first attacks Melanie.

10 In Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* (1977), the eponymous protagonist arrives late for her appointment at a cinema theater with Alvy, who is performed by Woody Allen, to watch Bergman's *Face to Face*. He hurriedly inquires of the ticket clerk: "Has the picture started yet?" "It started two minutes ago." Exasperated, he exclaims: "That's it! Forget it! I can't go in." His companion pleads with him: "Two minutes, Alvy!" "We've blown it already. I can't go in in the middle." "In the middle? We've only missed the titles—they're in Swedish!" It would have been felicitous were the film they were going to watch either one where the credits are crucial for its diegetic intelligibility, for example, Hitchcock's *The Bird*s; or Godard's *Band of Outsiders* (1964), in which around eight minutes into the film a narrator recapitulates: "For latecomers arriving now, we offer a few words chosen at random: 'Three weeks earlier. A pile of money. An English class. A house by the river. A romantic girl.'"

11 My mixed-media work *Radical-Closure Artist with Bandaged Sense Organ* (1997) included a loop of the following reedited shots from Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963): a "cut on movement" of the electronic birds flying in an indeterminate plane in the credits sequence to birds assembling in the playground of a school and then irrupting from behind the school building to attack the schoolchildren, the attacking birds thus appearing to come from the credits sequence.

12 While some cases of the Capgras syndrome are a consequence of the irruption of an unworldly, ahistorical version of the spouse or friend or parent or sibling of the one in a radical closure, most have other, psychiatric or anatomical reasons (for example, certain brain lesions).

13 Kurosawa could as legitimately have made the spectator in the museum enter Van Gogh's *Portrait of Joseph Roulin* (1888), *La Berceuse* (1888), or *Portrait of Dr. Félix Rey* (1889), where the uncanny decorative background of wallpaper behind the figure most probably acts as an end of the world—a bare wall there would have been a relative closure.

14 He may unconsciously "forget" to close some opening in the house to rationalize how the birds managed nonetheless to enter.

15 The snow that falls inside the Russian church that had just been looted and damaged by the Tartars in Tarkovsky's *Andrei Rublev* (1969) is a worldly, natural snow.

16 Jack Finney, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978), 118.

17 Ibid., 202 and 206.

18 Similarly, that the words "*je ne vois rien autour du paysage*" (I see nothing around the landscape) linked to the man in Magritte's drawing *The Isolated Landscape* (1928) appear in a balloon is indicative of the materiality and externality of this thought and words—a thought-insertion—rather than being, as in comics, a conventional representation of the character's thoughts.

19 One can do so also by producing an impression of matting whenever the faces of two persons or a person and an effigy or portrait are visible in the same frame, this inducing in the alert spectator the suspicion that some kind of prohibition against their co-presence applies. In Albert Lewin's film *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1945), made at a time when the technique of matting was not yet seamless (the spectator of that period was aware of the invisible line dividing the two parts of the image in which the same actor playing both roles appears), one may notice that when Gray stands in front of his portrait either there is intercutting between the two, or Gray is shown from the back while his portrait faces the camera, or Gray faces the camera but only the canvas' back is visible; or else, when both are shown together in the same frame with their faces visible, matting is implied by a certain skewness of the look of Gray in relation to his painted image. This arrangement indicates that Gray and his portrait are doubles. Through the same formal, structural device, Lewin could have made Gray's double the painted portrait of a dissimilar figure.

20 The reappearance of the frail elderly man who died and the young couple who committed suicide would not be that of revenants from death, who are "*poor in world*," but would be an irruption of *unworldly* entities. This reappearance would resonate with the doubling in an earlier scene whose manner of editing makes clear that the repetition it shows is neither non-diegetic nor occurring in parallel universes. Most probably due to a premonition of the coming radical closure of their employer's house, two maids unexpectedly decide to leave notwithstanding the ongoing preparations for the dinner he's hosting. On their way out, they hear the approaching voices of the dinner guests, the host, and his wife. To avoid being seen, they hide. The host looks for the valet, then calls out his name. On getting no response (the valet had quit earlier that night—he too must have sensed the imminent radical closure), he rejoins his guests and wife and they all head upstairs to the dining room. On hearing their receding conversations, the two maids move toward the door, but then, hearing the approaching voices of the guests, the host, and his wife from the direction of the entrance (!), they quickly hide again. Once more the host enters in the company of his guests and wife, yells for the valet, gets no response, and then proceeds with his guests and wife to the second floor. Once again, the maids head toward the exit. This time though they leave the house. The way Buñuel edited the sequence, the maids saw the host, his wife, and their guests enter twice without leaving in between, which would imply that one of the entrances was by an unworldly version of the host, his wife, and their guests.

21 In *Les Derniers jours de Corinthe* (1994), the irruption of the author, Alain Robbe-Grillet, in his work is often preceded or followed by the irruption of a fictive character in the autobiography: Henri de Corinthe. This fictional character appears as a real person of the childhood of Robbe-Grillet not

only in the autobiographical section narrated in the first person and invoking the names of such historical figures as Marguerite Duras, Jérôme Lindon, etc., but also in Robbe-Grillet's interview with J.-J. Brochier in the February 1988 issue of *Magazine Littéraire*: "*Quant il* était à *la maison, je n'avais pas le droit d'entrer dans la pièce où il se trouvait*" (when he was at the house, I had no right to enter the room where he was).

22 There are radical-closure filmmakers, for example, David Lynch; radical-closure novelists, for example, Alain Robbe-Grillet; radical-closure painters, for example, Francis Bacon; and then there are painters who occasionally produce radical-closure paintings, for example, Van Gogh (*Wheatfield with Crows*), filmmakers who occasionally make radical-closure films, for example, Buñuel (*The Exterminating Angel*) and Hitchcock (*The Birds*).

23 I consider that physicists working on black holes would find it inspiring to study paintings, films, and novels dealing with radical closure. Felicitously, it is because a black hole is within physics (though imprisoned—as too dangerous—behind an event horizon) without fully belonging to it (since at the singularity the laws of physics, or at least the ones we have now, no longer function) that it is a good realm where we have an intersection of physics and other domains—and, in physics itself, of quantum mechanics and relativity.

24 In David Lynch's film *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me*, while the first shot's television screen over which the credits roll can be considered as an intertextual reminder of, and link to the TV series *Twin Peaks*, the film then proceeding to show Laura Palmer's life during the week leading to her murder, thus functioning as a complement to the series since the latter starts with the discovery of her corpse; the subsequent appearance of TV static in the sky is an unworldly or diagrammatic irruption made possible by a radical closure.

25 Quoted in Alain Robbe-Grillet and René Magritte, *La Belle Captive: A Novel*, translated and with an essay by Ben Stoltzfus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 178.

26 Magritte is inaccurate when he writes: "In *The Unexpected Answer* I showed the closed door of a bedroom. Through a shapeless hole in the door night is unveiled" ("La Ligne de Vie," in *Magritte, 1898–1967*, ed. Gisèle Ollinger-Zinque and Frederik Leen [Ghent: Ludion Press; New York: Distributed by H. N. Abrams, 1998], 47). What we see through the hole in the door is not night but a black zone of inexistence that delimits a radical closure—in which, incidentally, an unworldly night may irrupt—even during the day (*L'Empire des lumières*)!

27 While *condensation* is the unconscious mechanism by which elements from both the space station and the earthly family house are combined in the scene in which Kris *dreams* of a woman who combines the physical likeness of his mother and the voice of his ex-wife, it is not at all what accounts for the last shot.

28 We find in the work of Magritte the same kind of irruption of an unworldly giant flower (*The Listening Room*, 1952) and of an unworldly giant apple (*The Tomb of the Wrestlers*, 1960) in a room, both too big to have been introduced there through the room's window. One can avoid this interpretation in terms of irruption of unworldly entities in a radical closure by hypothesizing an absence of the fourth wall.

29 From this perspective, the perfect Tarkovsky shot would be one long take that lasts for the whole film and that keeps leaving characters who are standing motionless, or sitting, or lying in bed or on the earth, as well as houses and various homely or ruined objects, and coming across them again along its meandering path.

30 We see a similar door in the midst of seemingly unobstructed space in the work of another image maker working with radical closure, Magritte: *Victory* (1939) and *The Scars of Memory* (1927).

31 Marguerite Duras, *Marguerite Duras*, contributors, Joel Farges et al., trans. Edith Cohen & Peter Conner (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1987), 103.

32 For a more traditional form of external memory, one can, if one suffers from fear of flying and wishes to keep one's mind off that fear, view, during a turbulent airplane flight, Mike Nichols' *Regarding Henry* (1991). At one point in the film, there's the following exchange: the presently amnesiac Henry Turner, "I don't like eggs"; the maid, "What!"; his daughter, "Eggs are your favorite!"; Turner, "OK, give me a lot of eggs"—we encounter here an amnesia coexistent with (an external, prosthetic) memory. Fugues would be a way to evade this external memory, hence a more encompassing amnesia.

33 "Grass and trees were painted in *Stalker* to intensify the almost hallucinatory greenness of the entry into the Zone." Vida T. Johnson and Graham Petrie, *The Films of Andrei Tarkovsky: A Visual Fugue* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 48.

34 Alain Robbe-Grillet, *For a New Novel* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1989), 152–153.

35 David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon*, 148.

36 It is interesting to note that both Bacon and Magritte do not describe themselves as painters, but as image makers. To be accurate rather than polemical: each is conjointly a painter and an image maker; they paint a radical closure structure in which an image they did not paint may irrupt.

37 "'In fact, you've done very few paintings with several figures. Do you concentrate on the single figure because you find it more difficult?' 'I think that the moment a number of figures become involved, you immediately come on to the story-telling aspect of the relationships between figures. And that immediately sets up a kind of narrative. I always hope to be able to make a great number of figures without a narrative.... I want very, very much to do the thing that Valéry said—to give the sensation without the boredom of its conveyance. And the moment the story enters, the boredom comes upon you'" (David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon*, 63 and 65).

38 Is he doing so with the professor in the Zone of Tarkovsky's *Stalker*?

39 David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon*, 141.

40 I am sure that were Bacon the one who filmed the bathroom scene in Ferrara's *Body Snatchers*, he would have very quickly detected that it would be wrong to give the look-alikes an extraterrestrial but worldly origin, treating them instead as unworldly entities that irrupted in a radical closure.

41 David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon*, 148.

42 Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, translated from the French by Daniel W. Smith (London; New York: Continuum, 2003), 15–18, for example: "It is not I who attempt to escape from my body, it is the body that attempts to escape from itself by means of … a spasm…. There is one painting that can guide us, the *Figure at a Washbasin* of 1976: clinging to the oval of the washbasin, its hands clutching the faucets, the body-Figure exerts an intense motionless effort upon itself in order to escape down the blackness of the drain…. It is a scene of hysteria…. In the two versions of *Painting,* 1946 and 1971, the Figure … lets itself be grabbed by the half-spherical umbrella, and appears to be waiting to escape in its entirety through the point of the instrument: already we can no longer see anything but its abject smile."

43 David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon*, 57.

44 "To get there now … I take a combination of three *right* turns and three *left* turns … but I don't know which is the *right* series of *rights* and *lefts*…. All *right*, pay attention very closely, because we've got to make it *right* or we'll be *left* behind…. I'll take a *right* here [I think that's *right*], and then a *left* and now I'm *left* with two *lefts* and two *rights*. So all *right*, I'll take another *left*, which means I am now *left* with a *left* and a *right* and a *right* …" Quoted in Stephen G. Gilligan, "The Ericksonian Approach to Clinical Hypnosis," in *Ericksonian Approaches to Hypnosis and Psychotherapy*, ed. Jeffrey K. Zeig (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1982), 99–100.

45 This is how the French woman is described by her Japanese lover in Duras' *Hiroshima mon amour*—but in *L'Immortelle* such a description becomes literal.

46 "Between 1949 and 1964, Magritte made seventeen oils and ten gouache versions of *L'Empire des lumières*," https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/Lot/rene-magritte-1898-1967-lempire-des-lumieres-5138353-details.aspx.

47 Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Angélique ou l'enchantement* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1987), 38.

48 Concerning a radically different problematic of verbatim repetition, see my reading, in the essay "Credits Included" of my book *Over-Sensitivity*, of the endeavor of the Menard of Borges' "Pierre Menard, Author of *Don Quixote*" to write the ninth, the twenty-second and the thirty-eighth chapters of Part One of *Don Quixote* as a resurrecting gesture to make available again a book of literature that withdrew past a surpassing disaster.

49 Robbe-Grillet is a novelist and filmmaker who deliberately constructs a radical closure, where, as in Magritte's *La Clairvoyance,* what irrupts does so out of his control, fully formed; but whose fictional protagonist in such films as *Last Year at Marienbad* and *The Man Who Lies* is a performative narrator, who has to maintain the openness of the universe he performatively created by resisting the temptation to go along with its tendency to close on itself by reducing him or her to solely a protagonist within the narrative. Succeeding in resisting this temptation is all the more difficult since performative narration generates sooner or later a quasi-referent, for example, the photograph of Boris' meeting with Jean in *The Man Who Lies*. It is this excess in relation to what one fabricated that implies that there was a creation. The photograph of the meeting of Jean with Boris does not belong to the linear chronology in which most film spectators would be tempted to place it, because it could be an ahistorical, unworldly entity that irrupted in a radical closure fully formed, hence without being shot and chemically developed by anyone; or because it could have been one of the aforementioned quasi-referents that are sooner or later generated in any genuine performative creation and that appear to retroactively antedate the latter. The test of success of the performative creator is not the absence of contradictions in his narrative (these contradictions can be accommodated more or less easily by the one who keeps performatively creating himself), but his ability not to believe fully in the quasi-referent his performative narration sooner or later generates—it is only from the perspective of the one who believes the photograph to be evidence of the reality of the meeting that the film's title, "The Man Who Lies," would fit the protagonist; for those who do not consider the photograph in this manner, "The Man Who Lies" is, like "Last Year at Marienbad," another misleading Robbe-Grillet title (normal lying is different from performative creation since it upholds the belief in a referent that preexists it, and since for it to remain undetected it merely has to maintain consistency both internally and in relation to the known facts). As a mise en abyme, the reflexivity in Robbe-Grillet's work, as instanced, for example, by the words of the performative narration of the protagonist that repeat those of the play both he and the heroine will watch or watched near the beginning of *Last Year at Marienbad*, sucks the protagonist into the world he is performatively creating; but it also serves as a reminder that this world is a creation too, like the play whose lines it is repeating. The collaboration of Robbe-Grillet, who wrote the script, with Alain Resnais, who directed the film, on *Last Year at Marienbad* worked perfectly despite the discrepancy between the temporalities and the kinds of universes implied in the works of the two artists, because Resnais' universe and temporality is an intrinsic dangerous temptation that threatens the work of Robbe-Grillet: the universe of Resnais takes place once the Robbe-Grillet protagonist allows what he performatively created to close

on itself. What is the objective or temptation of the protagonist in *Last Year at Marienbad*? Perhaps his objective or temptation is to change from a Robbe-Grillet character to a Resnais character, to accompany the cinematic adaptation by Resnais of Robbe-Grillet's script, to move from a (narrative) world that is being performatively created by him to one where he did meet the woman historically the previous year at Marienbad. The characters and settings of the fictional world that is in the process of fabrication may resist and disobey the writer (Alain Resnais' *Providence*, 1977), partly due to the influence of the unconscious, partly because every creation involves some untimely collaborator(s); in turn, given that a novel or artwork or work of thought has a tendency to totally separate itself from its creator, the latter has to resist the (relative) closure of the created world—in order to maintain the potentiality of the literary or artistic work or the work of thought for resistance; in turn, the literary or artistic work or the work of thought resists the reader/spectator; in turn, the reader or spectator has to resist the literary or artistic work or the work of thought (the latter teaches one to resist, first of all itself)—only then can he or she use the literary or artistic work or the work of thought in his or her resistance in the world, if not also to the world.

50 I wonder why the University of California Press did not join the translation of the first chapter, which appears already in *Topology of a Phantom City*, to the translation of the other three chapters, which appears in *Recollections of the Golden Triangle*, to the Magritte illustrations and title the book *La Belle Captive*—translated by Underwood. Were they unable to acquire the rights to these previous translations?

51 Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Recollections of the Golden Triangle*, translated from the French by J. A. Underwood (New York: Grove Press, 1986).

52 David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon*, 24.

53 For example, the one painted in 1931 (38.5 x 55.5 cm) and the one painted in 1946 (49.5 x 36 cm).

54 Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Recollections of the Golden Triangle*, 88.

55 Quoted in John Russell's *Francis Bacon*, revised edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 105.

56 Keeping in mind his painting *La Clairvoyance*, I suspect that in many of Magritte's works the painting is divergent from its "model." An interpretation of Robbe-Grillet's novel that does not take into consideration that the latter deals with a radical closure can hypothesize that the differences between the descriptions in the text and the illustrations of Magritte's paintings take into consideration the differences implicit in the Magritte paintings in relation to their "models" and try to inscribe these differences intrinsic to many Magritte works in their own relationship to them.

57 In Wenders' fiction film *The American Friend* (1977), the painter Derwatt (played by Nicholas Ray), presumed to be dead, turns out to be still alive and to be busy counterfeiting his paintings, which are later sold to art patrons. And in Wenders' *Lightning Over Water* (1980), a Nicholas Ray dying of cancer (he died on 16 June 1979) tells Wenders that he would like to make a film where the protagonist is a sixty-year-old painter dying of cancer who steals his own works from museums and replaces them with counterfeits he made. My imminent death may be augured by a doubling that can take the guise not necessarily of an encounter with a double but of my apprehension that my artworks are counterfeits—such an apprehension complements the feeling of some schizophrenics, who died before dying, that they are the true artists and creators of works attributed falsely to other artists and filmmakers. Dying Ray's gesture can thus be interpreted as the wish to embody what he feels: I will replace my paintings in galleries and museums, which I feel to be forgeries, by counterfeits.

58 Jalal Toufic, *Distracted*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley, CA: Tuumba Press, 2003), 82.

59 There is a radical difference between a blank that shows the potentiality from which the rest of the painting issued and a blank that functions as the border of a radical closure, allowing entities to irrupt in the painting even after it is finished. All five of Toba Khedoori's paintings shown at Los Angeles' Museum of Contemporary Art in 1997 were *untitled* (the indication of the models appearing only within parentheses). Unless the radical-closure painter subscribes to a disjunctive relation between the image and the title, his or her paintings are either to be left untitled, since at any time fully formed entities may still irrupt in them, or he or she, while still alive, or a representative of him or her, following his or her death, has to keep revising the title to take into consideration whatever may irrupt in the painting. Aware of the unknowability of what may *yet* irrupt in his or her ostensibly finished radical-closure paintings, the artist may prepare the spectator for such an eventuality by training him to accept the disjunction between title and model/subject matter (which is the case in at least some of Magritte's paintings); leave it untitled (Khedoori); or distance himself from the title by explicitly leaving it to the gallery to add it, thus making it at bottom illegitimate (Francis Bacon).

60 I also suggest that the owners of the following two painting by Francis Bacon, a radical-closure painter, *Figure in Movement* (1976) and *Oedipus and the Sphinx after Ingres* (1983), take out insurance against the eventuality of the disappearance of the Erinyes from these paintings.

61 Here are Signac's words as quoted in Gustave Cocquiot's *Vincent Van Gogh* (1923), page 194: "Toute la journée il me parla peinture, littérature, socialisme. Le soir il était un peu fatigué. Il faisait un coup de mistral effroyable qui a pu l'énerver. Il voulut boire à même un litre d'essence de térébenthine qui se trouvait sur la table de la chambre. Il était temps de rentrer à l'hospice" (All day long he talked to me of painting, literature, socialism. In the evening he was a little tired. A fearsome mistral was blowing, which may have made him irritable. He tried to gulp down

a liter of turpentine that was on his bedroom table. It was time to go back to the hospital), http://vangoghletters.org/vg/letters/let752/letter.html#n-1.

62 Le grand registre de l'asile de Saint-Rémy, Arles, France, May 1889. See http://vangoghletters.org/vg/documentation.html#id8May1889.

63 Were there crows in the painting we presently know as *Wheatfield with Crows* (who gave the painting this title?) by the time Van Gogh died? Did they rather irrupt in it sometime between the death of Van Gogh and the first time someone else saw it?

64 Pierre Cabanne, *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp* (New York; London: Da Capo, 1987), 43.

65 Le grand registre de l'asile de Saint-Rémy, Arles, France, May 9, 1889. See http://vangoghletters.org/vg/documentation.html#id8May1889.

66 *The Complete Letters of Vincent van Gogh, with Reproductions of All the Drawings in the Correspondence*, vol. 3 (Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 1959), 123–124.

67 Chris Rodley, "David Lynch," *Icon*, no. 1 (April 1997): 67.

68 Isn't the experience that decided the painter David Lynch to start filmmaking one that is recurrently encountered in Alain Robbe-Grillet's novels: the animation of what was presented initially as an illustration in a newspaper, or a frieze, or a series of sculptures? The change from an inanimate image to film is present within one of Lynch's films, his sixth feature, *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*, this time because the radical closure presented by the film allowed the irruption of animated figures into the photograph that Laura Palmer places on the wall.

69 The Frank of David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* kidnaps a man and cuts off his ear; then he has intercourse with the hostage's wife, whose blue velvet dress functioned as a curtain indicating the end of the world when the film's opening credits were overlaid on it (that a certain type of curtain functions as a radical border of the world is even clearer in the case of the red curtain in Lynch's later film, *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*); then he places in his hostage's mouth a piece of that blue velvet robe and says, "Do it for Van Gogh!" Frank certainly knows more about the two Van Gogh self-portraits with bandaged ear than Kurosawa, who makes the Van Gogh character in his film *Dreams* explain that he cut off his ear because it would have been jarring, composition-wise, in a self-portrait he was painting. Had Frank not cut off his hostage's ear for him, it is likely that the kidnapped man would have ended up doing so himself, in a desperate attempt to stop the kind of unworldly sounds audible when the camera zooms into the ear as it lies in the grass.

70 The quoted words are a borrowing from the title of one of Antonin Artaud's texts, "Van Gogh, the Man Suicided by Society" (1947)—Antonin Nalpas (it was under this name that some of the letters ascribed to Artaud were signed: "As for the name of Nalpas, it is … 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") could have given his letter to Dr. Ferdière dated February 12, 1943, the title, "Antonin Artaud, the Man Suicided by Society": "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) (*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).

71 Kurosawa made a *faux pas* by having the Van Gogh character walk beyond the spot where the two converging lines of grass meet, and then pass behind the horizon, undoing the radical closure the painter Van Gogh had constructed, thus undermining the condition of possibility of the irruption of the unworldly, electronic birds he, Kurosawa, unleashes over the field in his remake of Van Gogh's painting. While it is crucial to have a Director's Cut for some films, it is also crucial to have a Thinker's Cut, especially if the thinker was an untimely collaborator in the making of the film: were there to be a Thinker's Cut by Jalal Toufic of Kurosawa's *Dreams*, I would make the Van Gogh character come to a stop at the spot where the two converging lines of grass, outlining the dirt path through the compact field of wheat and tracing lines of perspective, meet in a green line parallel to the horizon.

72 Did she then actually leave her radically-closed apartment?

73 "At the very core of the 'rationality' of our culture … is an exclusion that precedes every other, more radical than the exclusion of madmen, children or inferior races, an exclusion preceding all these and serving as their model: the exclusion of the dead and of death." Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, revised edition, trans. Iain Hamilton Grant (London: SAGE Publications, 2017), 147.

74 Regarding this concept, see my book *The Withdrawal of Tradition Past a Surpassing Disaster* (Forthcoming Books, 2009; available for download as a PDF file at: http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads/Jalal_Toufic,_The_Withdrawal_of_Tradition_Past_a_Surpassing_Disaster.pdf).

75 Walid Raad, "*Bidāyāt 'ajā'ibiyya—miswadda* (Miraculous Beginnings—A Draft)," trans. Tūnī Shakar, *Al-Ādāb*, January–February 2001, Beirut, Lebanon, 64–67. The document in question appears on page 65.

76 Walid Raad, "Miraculous Beginnings," *Public*, no. 16 (1998): 44–53.

77 So can the video *Hostage: the*

Bachar Tapes (English Version), 2000, produced by Walid Raad and whose purported director is the hostage Bachar Souheil notwithstanding that historically there was no hostage by that name.

Is it at all strange that the director of the radical closure film *The Birds* (1963) should conceive the following scene for *North by Northwest* (1959)? "Hitchcock: 'Have you ever seen an assembly line?' Truffaut: 'No, I never have.' 'They're absolutely fantastic. Anyway, I wanted to have a long dialogue scene between Cary Grant and one of the factory workers as they walk along the assembly line. They might, for instance, be talking about one of the foremen. Behind them a car is being assembled, piece by piece. Finally, the car they've seen being put together from a simple nut and bolt is complete, with gas and oil, and all ready to drive off the assembly line. The two men look at it and say, "Isn't it wonderful!" Then they open the door to the car and out drops a corpse!' 'That's a great idea!' 'Where has the body come from? Not from the car, obviously, since they've seen it start at zero! The corpse falls out of nowhere, you see! ...' 'That's a perfect example of absolute nothingness! Why did you drop the idea? ...' '... We couldn't integrate the idea into the story'" (François Truffaut, *Hitchcock*, with the collaboration of Helen G. Scott, rev. ed. [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984], 256–257). In radical-closure films such as *The Birds*, the Hitchcockian suspense is abrogated—the first, abrupt attack of a bird breaks with the principle of alerting the spectator to the dangerous element—and we switch to surprise (and then, past the first irruption, to free-floating anxiety). The haunting quality of Toba Khedoori's *Untitled (Doors)*, 1995, and *Untitled (Apartment Building)* does not emanate from some possible presence of lurking people behind the rows of closed windows and doors, but from the eventuality of untimely irruptions. Consequently, despite the resemblance between her *Untitled (Apartment Building)*, 1997, and Hopper's *Early Sunday Morning* (1930), there is a fundamental difference between these two paintings, since Hopper's space is not a radical closure. Sooner or later (better later, when he or she has become adept at impressing on us the difference between a relative closure and a radical one), a radical-closure artist paints or produces prisons or prison-like structures (the prison of Robbe-Grillet's *Topology of a Phantom City*, of Magritte's *Universal Gravitation*, of Khedoori's *Untitled [Chain Link Fence]*), but the radical closure is elsewhere, for example, the blank of Khedoori's *Untitled (Auditorium)*. It is unsettling to see the museum guard walking in front of a radical-closure painting such as Khedoori's *Untitled (Park Benches)*, 1997, with its life-size benches, for such a painting gives the impression that the guard himself, supposed to prevent people from touching the painting, could irrupt in the latter (as happens to the museum spectator in the "Crows" section of Kurosawa's *Dreams*). Because they cannot shield from the irruption of what does not come from the surrounding space, watchdogs are irrelevant in situations of radical closure, though unworldly barking sounds may still irrupt in the radically-closed space (Lynch's *Lost Highway*). At one point in Duras' *The Man Sitting in the Corridor*, the till then extra-diegetic narrator tells the female protagonist, whose eyes are shut, that the man who was standing in the corridor is coming towards her: "We—she and I—hear footsteps.... I see and tell her, tell her he is coming" (Marguerite Duras, *The Man Sitting in the Corridor*, trans. Barbara Bray [New York: North Star Line, 1991], 19). Notwithstanding André Bazin's proposition in 1951 that unlike in theater, with its flesh-and-blood actors, there is no presence in cinema, these irruptions introduce a presence in that medium: the women who irrupt in the final few minutes of Duras' *Her Venetian Name in Deserted Calcutta* can be viewed as the fictional characters Anne Marie-Stretter and one of her party guests, but also as the actresses themselves. In Kubrick's *The Shining*, before leaving the hotel on his yearly winter leave sometime in the 1970s, the psychic cook told the psychic child of the middle-aged Jack Torrance that he should not worry about the visions he might see in the Overlook Hotel, for they are like pictures in a book: they cannot hurt him. But precisely with radical closures, there is intermixing of world and media, and therefore what is inside a picture can intermingle with what is outside it, and vice versa. Did the child's father end up becoming one of these, a picture in a book: the photograph with the inscription "Overlook Hotel, July 4th Ball, 1921" in which he appears as a middle-aged man?

78 See Walīd al-Khālidī, *Kay lā nansá: qurá Filasṭīn al-latī dammarathā Isrā'īl sanat 1948 wa-asmā' shuhadā'ihā (All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948),* 2nd ed. (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1998).

79 Juwānā Hājjī-Tūmā and Khalīl Jurayj, *"Ṭayyib raḥ farjīk shighlī"* ("OK, I'll Show You My Work"), *Al-Ādāb* (January–February 2001).

80 Ibid., 37.

81 Alongside the irruption of ahistorical fully formed unworldly entities in the radical closure that the 1982 besieged West Beirut may have become (Walid Raad's *Miraculous Beginnings*, 1998 and 2001, *The Dead Weight of a Quarrel Hangs*, 1996–1999, and *Hostage: the Bachar Tapes [English Version]*, 2000); the withdrawal of tradition past the surpassing disaster that Lebanon may have become during and even after the 1975–1990 civil war (my *Credits Included: A Video in Red and Green*, 1995; Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige's *Wonder Beirut*, 1999); tracking shots from a moving car that are not followed by reverse subjective shots and therefore do not indicate vision but the condition of possibility of recollection in Beirut (Ghassan Salhab's *Phantom Beirut*, 1998); the fourth most important aesthetic issue and strategy in relation to Lebanon is that of the archeological image, a subject already addressed by Gilles Deleuze regarding Straub-Huillet's work (with the break in the sensory-motor link "the visual image becomes *archaeological*,

stratigraphic, *tectonic*. Not that we are taken back to prehistory [there is an archaeology of the present], but to the deserted layers of our time which bury our own phantoms … These are … essentially the empty and lacunary stratigraphic landscapes of Straub, where the … earth stands for what is buried in it: the cave in *Othon* where the resistance fighters had their weapons, the marble quarries and the Italian countryside where civil populations were massacred in *Fortini Cani* …" [Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 244]); Serge Daney in relation to Palestine ("As for the missing image, it is, still in *L'Olivier*, when Marius Schattner explains in a very soft voice that beneath the Israeli colony [which we see] there is, buried, covered over, a Palestinian village [which we don't see]. I also remember this because we are among the few, at *Cahiers du cinéma*, to have always known that the love of cinema is also to know what to do with images that *are really missing*" [Serge Daney, "Before and After the Image," trans. Melissa McMuhan, *Discourse* 21, no. 1 (Winter 1999): 190]); and myself, mainly in *Over-Sensitivity*'s section "Voice-over-witness" in relation to the Shoah. Clearly, the issue and aesthetic of the archeological image belongs to any of the zones that have suffered massacres and mass graves: Lebanon, Rwanda, Cambodia, Srebrenica, etc. Do we witness an archeology of the image in those sections of Danielle Arbid's *Alone with War* (2000) where she goes to the Ṣabrā and Shātīlā Palestinian refugee camps and to the Christian town ad-Dāmūr, the sites of massacres and mass graves in 1982 and 1976, respectively, asking playing Palestinian children whether they have come across anything arresting while digging in their makeshift playground? Regrettably, the possibility of an archeological image is somewhat botched because what we hear in relation to these images is not a voice-over-witness, but journalist Arbid's commenting voice-over. It is therefore better to look for this archaeology of the image in Paola Yacoub and Michel Lasserre's *Al-Manāẓīr* (The landscapes), 2001, where at the corner of some of the photographs of the green landscapes of south Lebanon one can read the inconspicuous terse factual information about Israel's invasion; and where one can hear the discarnate voices of the stretcher-bearers ascend from this archeological earth to relate work anecdotes and describe life during the long Israeli occupation. While in this postwar period in Lebanon, those of us who have not become zombies are suspicious of classical cinema's depth (Deleuze: "You [Serge Daney], in the *periodization* you propose, define an initial function [of the image] expressed by the question: What is there to see behind the image? … This first period of cinema is characterized … by a depth ascribed to the image.… Now, you've pointed out that this form of cinema didn't die a natural death but was killed in the war.… You yourself remark that 'the great political *mises en scenes*, state propaganda turning into tableaux vivants, the first mass human detentions' realized cinema's dream, in circumstances where … 'behind' the image there was nothing to be seen but concentration camps.… After the [Second World] war, then, a second function of the image was expressed by an altogether new question: What is there to see on the surface of the image? 'No longer what there is to see behind it, but whether I can bring myself to look at what I can't help seeing—which unfolds on a single plane.' … Depth was condemned as 'deceptive,' and the image took on the flatness of a 'surface without depth,' or a *slight depth* rather like the oceanographer's shallows …" [*Negotiations, 1972–1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995)])—which may explain, no doubt along with financial reasons, why a substantial number of the most interesting Lebanese makers of audiovisual productions work in video, with its flat images, rather than cinema—we believe in the depth of the earth where massacres have taken place, and where so many have been inhumed without proper burial and still await their unearthing, and then proper burial and mourning.

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

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

84 In a number of Robbe-Grillet novels, the use of first person narration, with its personal pronoun "I," which is a shifter, is not so much to allow a seamless and, at least initially, undetectable shift from one narrator to another, as to allow the narrator, without necessarily being an undead or someone who, like Nietzsche during his psychosis, died before dying, to go through if not all the names of history then at least all the names of those in the radical closure, and therefore all the manners of speaking and behaving, occupations, etc., associated with the various names. Were "he" (?) in this manner to exhaust all the permutations possible within the radical closure, "he" would be able to leave the radical closure.

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

86 "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, https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/gallery/philip-seymour-hoffman-actors-who-660897/1-philip-seymour-hoffman-and-the-hunger-games-mockingjay.

87 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*, 247). Hitchcock then cast Kim Novak

instead in the roles of Madeleine and Judy.

88 As one can see in Michal Leszczylowski'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*.

89 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" (J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, with an introduction by Daniel Lagache [New York: W. W. Norton, 1974], 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.

90 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.

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

92 An aphoristic writer, "if I sometimes quote myself, it is because I have a loathing of paraphrasing—even myself" (*Distracted*, 2nd ed., 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.

93 "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, https://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 spectators (me included), if not all of them, would have been registered by the Lacanian big Other.

94 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.

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

96 Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Project for a Revolution in New York: A Novel* (New York, Grove Press, 1972), 1–3.

97 If one considers a black hole as a radical closure, then there are two sorts of possible photographs that are specific to it: the freezing and flattening at its *gateless gate*, the event horizon; and the photographs, shot by no one and no camera, that irrupt "in" it (by *objective chance* the unworldly photograph, taken by no camera, that irrupts inside the black hole may show the same image as the "photograph," also taken by no camera, of the astronaut frozen and flattened at the black hole's event horizon).

98 And there is a sort of video that is specific to a radical closure: the video that irrupts in it without being shot by anyone within it. In David Lynch's *Lost Highway*, the circumstance that Fred Madison and his wife twice omitted setting the alarm system on the day preceding their reception of the anonymous videotape showing shots of the interior of their house leaves open the possibility that they are dealing with an unlawful entry through the door or window by someone who then took these shots with a camera. The two detectives who come to investigate the case ask Fred to thenceforth activate his alarm system. Therefore we can assume that (unlike in the script, where he again fails to activate the alarm) he did so, and, moreover, since he does not hear the alarm sound,

that no unlawful entry took place through any of the entrances of the house, and, consequently, that no camera served to take the new video shots of the inside of the house—the videotape, unworldly, shot by no one, irrupted in the radical closure. Similarly, it is quite possible that the tracking shot of the highway at night, with the broken yellow lines illuminated by the headlights of a moving car, which is first seen in *Blue Velvet* (1986), and which accompanies the opening credits sequence and the ending of *Lost Highway* (1997), was not filmed for the latter film but irrupted in it from the earlier film. Since the highway of *Lost Highway* is a cinematic shot from an earlier film rather than a road, it cannot be used to flee somewhere else—unless the person flees his pursuers not farther along the highway but through (his double's?) irruption into the shot of the highway (that is why, while being unsettled, I am not surprised that when the Mystery Man, standing next to Fred Madison, hands the wounded man on the desert sand a portable pocket television, that monitor shows the Mystery Man handing a portable pocket television while standing next to Madison, that is, as an image).

99 For example, David Lynch's "Paintings and Drawings," Touko Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, January 12–27, 1991; and *David Lynch: Sala Parpalló – Palau dels Scala, Mayo–Junio 1992, Diputación Provincial de Valencia* (Valencia; Sala Parpalló: Edicions Alfons el Magnànim, Institució Valenciana d'Estudis i Investigació).

100 Here are two examples of the artist as producer: Warhol, who simply turned on the camera and let it shoot what was in front of it until the end of the film roll, or else assigned others to make the films or the silkscreens; and Robbe-Grillet, who produced radical closures in which images that are ostensibly those of others (Magritte, Rauschenberg, etc.) irrupted (in the process introducing singularly unfamiliar elements amid his recurrent imagery).

101 In Francis Bacon's work, painting foregrounds or at least addresses its being a two-dimensional medium not so much in a self-reflexive manner but through dealing with the flattening of the figure (from the reference frame of an outside observer) at the border of the radical closures he establishes.

102 Paintings such as *Triptych March 1974*, where the figure is shown holding a camera next to its face, presumably in the act of taking a photograph, are exceptional in Francis Bacon's work.

103 Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1986), 10.

104 "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 must be described 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." *Wikipedia*'s "Quantum Entanglement" entry, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quantum_entanglement.

105 For example, in his *L'Immortelle*, the female protagonist's name is Eliane, Liane, Lucile, Lale, etc.; she is French, she isn't French; she is neither as old nor as young as the man looking for her says; she is fair-haired, she is very dark …

106 Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, 10.

107 David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon*, 148.

108 Stephen Pizzello, "Highway to Hell," *American Cinematographer*, 1997.

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, free of charge, at his website: www.jalaltoufic.com. Most of his videos are available for viewing on Vimeo. He was a participant in the Sharjah Biennials 6, 10, and 11; the 9th Shanghai Biennale; the 1st Asia Biennial & 5th Guangzhou Triennial; and "A History: Art, Architecture, and Design, from the 1980s Until Today" (Centre Pompidou), among others. He was the Director of the School of Visual Arts at the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts (Alba) from September 2015 to August 2018, and he is currently a Professor at the Department of Humanities and Creative Writing at Hong Kong Baptist University.

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