



2<sup>nd</sup> edition

Over-Sensitivity

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Jalal Toufic

Forthcoming Books

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Forthcoming Books

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Life is too short to be lived<sup>1</sup>

## Author's Note to the Second Edition

While many books are first announced as forthcoming (for example in the inflated bios of mediocre academicians, who keep mentioning such books as forthcoming over a period of years), then published, *Over-Sensitivity*, published originally in Sun & Moon Press' Classics series in 1996, is here republished, in a revised edition, by Forthcoming Books, this making its status more explicit: even after its publication, it is still forthcoming.

What does a second edition indicate? That in the case of the first edition, one's fruits were ripe but one was not ripe for one's fruits ("Oh Zarathustra, your fruits are ripe, but you are not ripe for your fruits!" [Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*])?

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## Books by Jalal Toufic

- *Undeserving Lebanon* (Forthcoming Books, 2007; available for download as a PDF file at <http://www.jalaltoufic.com/publications.htm>)
- ‘*Āshūrā*’: *This Blood Spilled in My Veins* (Forthcoming Books, 2005)
- *Two or Three Things I’m Dying to Tell You* (Post-Apollo, 2005)
- *Undying Love, or Love Dies* (Post-Apollo, 2002)
- *Forthcoming* (Atelos, 2000)
- *(Vampires): An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film* (revised and expanded edition, Post-Apollo, 2003)
- *Diſtracted* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Tuumba, 2003)

Dedicated to the Jalal Toufic who wrote the first edition of this book

## Unrequited Love's Enigmatic Messages

Why does Gavin Elster's wife, Madeleine, appear so seductive to Scottie in the first part of Hitchcock's *Vertigo*? Is it because of her proximity to death, she who is reported to be possessed by a dead ancestor and who attempts suicide by leaping into the Golden Bay? No; it is because while the Judy impersonating Madeleine knows that Scottie is spying on her and, in the process, vertiginously falling in love with her (she uses that knowledge to mislead him to testify that Madeleine committed suicide), Madeleine, the real wife, does not know at all that he is following her and falling in love with her.<sup>2</sup> This coexistence of keen awareness and unsuspecting ignorance is seductive,<sup>3</sup> whereas fetishistic disavowal and hysterical dissociation are not.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, Madeleine's death unravels the seduction; indeed, following Madeleine's death, although Scottie remakes Judy into the woman she was when he loved her as Madeleine, he is not seduced by her.

## Unrequited Love's Enigmatic Messages— *continued*

Dedicated to Jean Laplanche

One of the rare instances where the number three produces an exquisite love story occurs in an episode of Pasolini's *Arabian Nights*. At one level, a woman, 'Azīza, loses her would-be husband, her cousin, 'Azīz, to another woman, Budūr; at another level, and while doing so, 'Azīza becomes enamored of Budūr without ever

meeting her in person, but the latter does not appear to reciprocate her love, 'Azīz merely serving as the unwitting messenger between the two.

On his wedding day, 'Azīz remembers that he forgot to invite his best friend to the wedding, so he heads to do so—already at the start of the episode he is a messenger. Perspiring profusely in the hot weather on his way to his friend, he sits to rest in an alley. Unexpectedly, a kerchief alights on him from above. He looks up to find out its source. His eyes meet those of a beautiful woman at a window. While looking at him, she puts her forefinger in her mouth, then joins her middle finger to her index finger and lays them between her breasts while pointing them downward, whereupon she shuts the window. He stays under her window hoping that she will reappear. At sunset, despairing of seeing her again that day, he heads home. There he discovers that, as a consequence of his absence, his father postponed the wedding for a year and all the guests have left. He starts weeping. When 'Azīza inquires what happened to him, he tells her: "I love a beautiful girl"! He mimics the woman's gestures to her and asks her: "What do those gestures mean?" 'Azīza *interprets them for him* according to what must be some "shared code or interpretive rule"<sup>5</sup>: "The finger in the mouth means you're chosen to be her body's soul. The two fingers between her breasts mean: return in two days to ease her heart."<sup>6</sup> When he goes to see Budūr two days later, she does not show up at her window. Did 'Azīza misinterpret the message? Frustrated, when he returns home, he hits her. Unfazed, 'Azīza interprets Budūr's failure to appear at her window as a test of the sincerity of his love. Exasperated, 'Azīz yells: "Love drives

you wild. You cannot eat or sleep."<sup>7</sup> She concurs: "I know. These are the signs of love." It soon becomes manifest that she interprets the messages efficiently for 'Azīz, since Budūr does indeed show up at her window the next night, and since her interpretation of Budūr's new gestures work efficiently for 'Azīz. But what is 'Azīza's translation of Budūr's enigmatic messages as far as she herself is concerned? Taking into consideration that the signifier of Budūr's messages is a "compromised signifier," in the dual sense that it is *a* compromise, like the symptom, as well as being *compromised by the unconscious* of its originator,"<sup>8</sup> 'Azīza, at least initially, translates the enigmatic message as indicating that Budūr reciprocates her love—albeit unconsciously: "The enigma leads back, then, to the otherness of the other; and the otherness of the other is his response to his unconscious, that is to say, to his otherness to himself."<sup>9</sup> Do the signs of love, "you cannot eat or sleep," persist on the night 'Azīz is supposed to at long last meet Budūr rather than only see her through her window? No. At the garden on the outskirt of the city described by 'Azīza as the interpretation of one of Budūr's signs, he finds a table with numerous kinds of food and drinks; while waiting for Budūr, he ends up eating and drinking and then falls asleep! Does he actually love Budūr since he eats and sleeps that night? It would appear not to be the case. When he wakes up, he finds a dagger and a coin on his belly. Does Budūr really love him? If she did, how could she, who presumably yearned for him, resist waking him, thus postponing their union? When he returns home, he asks 'Azīza what the dagger and coin mean. The dagger means: "She will kill you if you disappoint her again tonight." When he wakes up the



next day to go to his next appointment with Budūr, ‘Azīza entreats him: “When you leave her ... after ... recite these lines: ‘In the name of God, what to do when love becomes master?’” This time he waits for Budūr till dawn, at which time she indeed shows up. They engage in sexual intercourse. Because the words ‘Azīza asked him to recite do not directly concern him, all the more since in his case love has not become master, he forgets to say them to Budūr after his sexual intercourse with her. When he returns elated in the morning from his crucial nocturnal appointment with Budūr during which they “consummated” their love, ‘Azīza does not ask him what happened, but: “Did you recite the lines?” He excuses himself: “I forgot, because she gave this scroll to me.” “May I have it?” “Yes, if you like it”—was the scroll then, through the detour of ‘Azīz, destined to ‘Azīza? She entreats him while weeping, “Tomorrow, before leaving her, promise to recite those lines.” “I promise.” The next dawn, after having sexual intercourse with Budūr, he remembers to recite ‘Azīza’s lines to her. Budūr’s response is: “She who loves must hide her secret and be resigned to it.” When he returns home, ‘Azīza again does not ask him what happened between him and Budūr, but: “Did you recite?” He conveys Budūr’s response to her. Her own reply is: “She has tried, but her heart was broken by an impossible passion.” She entreats him: “Tomorrow, as you leave, recite these lines to her.” Budūr’s response to these relayed words is: “Unable to resign herself, she might as well be dead.” Again when ‘Azīz returns home, ‘Azīza’s immediate question is: “Did you recite?” When he relays Budūr’s latest words to her, who has been manifesting the same symptoms of love that had appeared in his case initially,

that is, a disinclination to eat and sleep, her response is: “We hear and obey. Say goodbye to her who has prevented my love.” The interpretation of “who has prevented my love” would be: who has stolen my would-be husband from me. But the translation of the enigmatic message would be: who has prevented my love for her by her ostensible unrequited love! What is the last thing ‘Azīza does before her foretold death? She takes the scroll out of the box where she has laid it, and stares at it protractedly. When ‘Azīz confirms to Budūr, “The girl who recited these lines has died,” she answers first with the ambiguous answer, “If I had known about her I would not have let you near me,” which may imply an acknowledgement of ‘Azīza’s love for her; but then continues, “May God make you weep for her as you made her weep for you,” which confirms “a fact of its [psychoanalysis]’ experience, namely that this message is frequently ... opaque to ... its transmitter,”<sup>10</sup> and implies that it is now ‘Azīza’s enigmatic message that fails to be properly translated by Budūr. ‘Azīza’s posthumous message to Budūr, “Fidelity is splendid, but no more than infidelity,” functions not only as an apology for infidelity that later mitigates Budūr’s punishment of ‘Azīz for his infidelity to her from outright death to castration, but also as an indication that had Budūr loved ‘Azīza while engaged in a sexual relation with ‘Azīz such an infidelity would all the same have been splendid. From this perspective, ‘Azīz is right when he answers his mother’s question, “What did you do to break her heart?” with, “I didn’t do anything,” for ‘Azīza’s heart was broken by Budūr rather than by him. ‘Azīza’s use of ‘Azīz to have a love affair with another woman (does the detached erect golden penis at the end of the arrow which ‘Azīz sends flying in the direction

of Budūr's vagina during one of their sexual encounters not only foreshadow his coming castration but also function as 'Azīza's prosthetic penis?) does not explain away her absence of jealousy and vengefulness concerning 'Azīz's sexual relationship with Budūr, her saintliness; the circumstance that 'Azīz is being used as a messenger between the two women<sup>11</sup> does not explain his lack of guilt concerning the suffering he is inflicting on his fiancée. Nothing should link these two manners of viewing the message, interpretation and translation (to use Laplanche's distinction), that is, there should be no message between them; they have to coexist but dissociated. One has to be just to the injustice in each of the two manners of viewing the event of love, and not account for one injustice by the other, that is, one has to be cruel, for cruelty is this heartbreaking encounter—on a dissecting table?—of two hearts and two injustices.

### In Other Words: Unrequited Love's Enigmatic Messages?

"Mainstream film neatly combined spectacle and narrative.... The presence of woman is an indispensable element of spectacle in normal narrative film, yet her visual presence tends to work against the development of a story line, to freeze the flow of action in moments of erotic contemplation. This alien presence then has to be integrated into cohesion with the narrative" (Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"—that there is in this essay "unfortunately much small and petty noise" contributed in no small measure to its inflated renown). In other words, "When

a man stands in the midst of his own noise, in the midst of his own surf of plans and projects,<sup>12</sup> then he is apt also to see quiet, magical beings gliding past him and to long for their happiness and seclusion: *women*.<sup>13</sup> He almost thinks that ... in these quiet regions even the loudest surf turns into deathly quiet ...." (Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 1882-1887, # 60).<sup>14</sup> For someone who has often experienced the suspension of his interior monologue, and who has thus become oversensitive to the interior monologue of others, "even on the most beautiful sailboat there is a lot of noise, and unfortunately much small and petty noise" (Nietzsche, *Ibid.*), so that it is far more probable that he would have moments of visionary contemplation regarding a horse or donkey being whipped by its coachman in a city street rather than a beautiful woman in a wild, and rough, and stubborn wood.

### Priority Mail: The Collected Letters of Jalal Toufic, 1991-1994

Jalal Toufic  
Urbana, Champaign, Illinois  
September 9, 1991

To whom it may concern (knowing your love for gossip, I cannot address the letter only to you; and since I do not know the names of all those with whom you'll discuss the matter ...):

You managed not to read any part of the manuscript of *Diſtracted* in the one and a half years we lived together (...). You have mentioned with pride that several male colleagues who have

a “crush” on you have recommended certain books to you and lent them to you to read. I will tell you when you’ll read my book: you will do so only when one of those mediocrities gives it to you to read. And who knows, a book the writing of which contributed to demolishing a relationship may serve the furthering of dating between the *ex* girlfriend of the writer and an x. Strange as it will seem to you, some people—I admit they are rare—prefer writers to readers!

(...)

When *DisTracted* is published, do not say to any discerning person, “I lived with him for one and a half years,” for when (*Vampires*) gets published he or she will know how meaningless such a statement is when said in relation to someone who was during that period dying/undead. (...)

Jalal Toufic, Costa Mesa, California  
October 20, 1991

Janalle Joseph, Chicago:

This strange nostalgia that amnesiacs or those who were amnesiacs for a while have at times for places that they have never seen, that they are seeing for the first time; in my case, California.

(...) It is not enough to see a place over and over to become habituated to it; habit is formed not of and by what one does but by everything else that infiltrated one’s attention to what one was doing.<sup>15</sup> Going by bus at dawn to my friend’s apartment after a long sleepless night, I realized that being extremely tired, spaced-out and sleepy, I was overlooking the scenery, neither detached from it nor feeling anything toward it. I felt this to be an unethical

act. And I knew that something was dimmed. As it happened, I overslept on the bus; I woke up in Balboa instead of in Fashion Island. The fog was covering much of the land. I walked on the pier until all the land had disappeared except for the waves between the sea and the fog. One more step and the waves were no more—just a section of the pier that extended until it disappeared in the fog, a section of the sea in the opposite direction, and at intervals a gull flying overhead, full of raw life, as if it alone could go into the fog and return. This was a grace I received: this disappearance of California cleared (...) what was at the first stages of turning into a habit.

(...)

It is the density of the traffic and no longer that of the buildings along the road that clues one that one is still in the city.

(...)

Jalal Toufic  
Urbana, Champaign, Illinois  
October 25, 1991<sup>16</sup>

Amy, New York:

We frequently foolishly pay attention only to one feature, finding it accidental (...) and therefore consider it an obstinacy on the part of the other person to want to maintain it, cling to it. But we have to be sensitive to whether or not it is confirmed elsewhere, made thus fateful.

For me as a person, our relationship has fully ended despite the nostalgia that I can detect in the circumstance that although (...) I am attracted to Mediterranean women, I now find women who

[like you] are blond and Midwestern-looking [also] attractive. But for me as a writer, the relationship has not ended yet: the nostalgia of writers is for what is being forgotten in the present of the event (other than by being disregarded through selective attention); it is a demand for the preservation through writing (which deploys postponement) not of the event but of what in the event could not be preserved except by being created.

The past can be neutralized according to disciplines of freedom, whether Buddhism and Hindu Yoga (the law of Karma suspended with the occurrence of enlightenment/Samādhi [...], events having *self-liberated*) or existentialism (Sartre). Unnatural immobilizations in dance and death can allow a backward-in-time movement, so that past events can be changed. Were you to die physically before me (who has already died before dying), becoming in the undeath realm a superposition of possibilities, and I opted for forgery rather than history, I would inflect what will have happened to you, the *late*. But as long as or when one is not dealing with any of these cases, the issue is not so much to remember the past as not to slander it (...). For my part, and in this I remain a Shi'ite, I will not rewrite the past, for I will never consider myself one of the victors (Beckett's words on my telephone message machine: "Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better"). You now profess that you never loved me, but merely needed me; even when *Diſtracted* is published, even when/if (*Vampires*) is published, and even if I become known, it will always hold true—once more as long as I do not reach/find myself in one of the idiosyncratic cases mentioned above, where the very notion of truth is no longer meaningful—that I loved you.

Jalal Toufic  
Urbana, Champaign, Illinois  
January 25, 1992

Frank Auerbach, London:

For a month I utterly hated pets, I couldn't stand seeing dogs in the streets. Once I thought with loathing of the millions and millions of cows in India, which could not be killed. I could no longer stand anything that was not, in however minimal a degree, suicidal. (...)

(...) Are we laconic enough for the sudden?

Being someone disinclined to sitting, I chose *JYM Seated* (1987-88) to be on the cover of *Diſtracted* in part because it is the one painting I have seen where the one ostensibly seated is standing. Instances of framing, whether or not the frame is visible (if we compare the left and right panels of Francis Bacon's *Triptych*, 1983, we see that while the head in the right panel is glued to a visible frame, the head in the left panel is glued to an invisible one), which are clearest in painting, but are to be sensed in life, produce one sort of exception to my dislike of sitting since the head or other parts of the body are then suspended by the frame—the other exception is sitting in meditation, especially sitting Chi Qong, where one is to feel as if the body is suspended from the sky by a thread attached to the crown of the head at a point called the *pai-hui*.

(...)

Jalal Toufic  
Urbana, Champaign, Illinois

February 5, 1992

Arlene, New Brunswick, NJ:

Your nice voice marred by the static of “you piqued my curiosity” (have I by now learned to disregard presages in order to live instead of survive?!). Was it out of curiosity that I called you? I am not a curious person; curiosity is occupied with the past. You arrived late for our meeting and left on time (for your train). In the restaurant, your voice reached me despite the clamor, not because it was loud, but because your physical features (the thin lips, thin eyebrows, the thin, almost transparent skin, the short hair) are those of a mime, hence imply the silence in which your voice propagates. (...) Two days later, I drove while sick from New York to Urbana, the “loneliest” of places, especially during the winter school break, to, among other things, write you a letter: Isn’t the best place from which to write letters one whose mention on the phone, “Urbana,” elicits from people the response, “Where?”—one then having to add, “Champaign,” and sometimes even, on hearing a silence, “in Illinois”—that is, one having to add the address? Unfortunately, your curiosity is an obstacle to my writing this letter to you who do not expect it.

Jalal Toufic, Chicago

May 12, 1992

Arlene, New Brunswick:

*Write* to me (... —) Why is it that life disappears when one wants to write, like the dream does when one wakes up?

Jalal Toufic, Chicago

May 15, 1992<sup>17</sup>

Arlene, New Brunswick:

You intuitively feel that it will not work between us. One is often right in one’s intuition with respect to those who follow their intuition, but rarely with regard to those who often “disregard their intuition”<sup>18</sup> (...)

Jalal Toufic, Chicago

May 15, 1992<sup>19</sup>

Arlene, New Brunswick:

(...)

I hope, since I am sending this letter only one hour after sending the other two, that it will reach you simultaneously with them (incidentally, in the case of letters, not only can the later and the earlier be simultaneous ...).

Jalal Toufic, Chicago

May 18, 1992<sup>20</sup>

Arlene, New Brunswick:

You must by now have received the two envelopes containing the three letters I sent you on the fifteenth of May, and the letter I sent you on the sixteenth.

It is presently raining here despite yesterday’s weather forecast of a clear day. Half an hour ago, people were sauntering in the nice weather outside, while I was sitting by the window in a cafe, writing. I went to the back of the cafe to make a long-distance phone call. Passing the restroom, I decided to wash my ink-splattered hands. Heading back to my table, I remembered that I

had intended to make a phone call (...) (I referred in my 16 May letter to memory). When I returned to my table, it was raining outside (...). It was as if I was looking at a distant place—a place to which one could make a long-distance phone call—where the weather was different.

Jalal Toufic, Chicago  
May 16, 1992<sup>21</sup>

Arlene, New Brunswick:

Memory (with respect to someone I met once and that for a short period): I copied the *Arlene* that begins the 12 May letter—since then I have not used the Copy command (thus cannot paste anything except your name), and hence I have been unable to edit expeditiously; when I wish to change the placement of a line, I delete it and retype it where it should be.

Jalal Toufic, Chicago  
May 27, 1992

Arlene, New Brunswick:  
(...)

Jalal Toufic, San Francisco

Rochelle, Los Angeles:  
(...)

Jalal Toufic, San Francisco

Anne, San Francisco:

*Anne: An Approximation*<sup>22</sup>

(...) A writer may live with a person for a long time and not write anything in relation to him or her; sometimes this is due to the circumstance that that person *gave* him a *writer's block*. Not to mistake this block for a passing obstruction that has to be overcome and try to write. A writer writes books but also *receives* writer's blocks. In *Distracted*, it is written: "You attract me fully for you attract both my writing and me"; one can supplement that sometimes by, "You attract me fully, for you attract me and *give* me a writer's block."

(...)

In Duras' *India Song*, the photograph of Anne-Marie Stretter placed on the piano is of a different woman from Delphine Seyrig, the actress "playing" Stretter. This dissimilarity (while the mirror still has its natural function as a reflecting medium) relieves and prevents Seyrig from trying to embody the character, neutralizing identification; to identify with the character is to extinguish the *aparté*, reduce the character to her life. Jealousy-inducers have sacrificed the *aparté*—disclosed in *India Song* by the dissimilarity between the photograph and the actress—for their two faces (frontal, profile).

(...)

Never have I managed to know the eye color of any of the women to whom I felt a strong attraction. My answers always took the form of: "either brown or black" ... In your case, who sometimes wear green lenses, and despite the strong attraction, for the first time I know the eye color: "either green or brown."

Had you undergone one episode of depersonalization, you would know how cruel and terrible it is to be without Anne and

you would therefore most probably not have stayed away for so long.

Jalal Toufic, San Francisco  
April 15, 1993

To Hope R— —, San Francisco:

Seeing a woman who strongly attracted him in a cafe or bookstore, it often happened that he did not speak to her then and there, and not only out of shyness. It was minutes after she had already left that he would go outside and try to find her; it was as if he had to allow her to be lost, this as it were changing the accidental into something pertaining to fate. Her name is Stephanie and she has a boyfriend.

I had been told separately by at least two persons that San Francisco is such a small city one is bound to run into the same person sooner rather than later or not at all. And sure enough, I did “bump into” Stephanie again. Or did I? Was my mistaking you for her “the oldest trick in the world” (...)? Stephanie is taller than you; but didn’t *Vertigo*’s Scottie mistake two other women for Madeleine, he who later remakes Judy into an exact replica of Madeleine? After six months in San Francisco, perhaps it is time to ask how big is this city? That is, will you treat my mistaking you for her as an accident, or will you treat it as a performative, becoming Hope-Stephanie R— — (...)? In the latter case, there would ensue a sudden disappearance of Stephanie. (...)

For as long as I can remember, I felt an abhorrence of introductions through third parties, felt that one should approach others as a stranger, on one’s own. The aforementioned mistaking

is an exception that confirms the rule: Stephanie, whom I barely know, introduced us in her absence.

He sometimes mistook her for others, but never or rarely for herself, i.e., did not disregard her *aparté*.

(...) “Ever tried. Ever Failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail Better” (Beckett). What makes me not try again when dealing with the vast majority of humans is not the apprehension that I may not succeed but the certainty that I cannot fail better.

(...)

Is this letter a(nother) mistake?

(...)

Jalal Toufic, San Francisco  
July 28, 1993

Richard Foreman, New York:

Apparently it has been the same these last six years: the indifference of others remained the same, the ninety per cent empty cup is still ninety per cent empty. But it is as if I am now looking with a microscope at the ten per cent ostensible plenum and seeing the large part of emptiness it contains; in fact I am seeing so much emptiness—almost ninety nine per cent of the ostensible plenum is empty—that I must have reached the quantum level. This may explain why at present I keep expecting some minimal evanescent fullness in the ninety per cent emptiness, that is, fluctuations. (...) Anyone who tells me, “I am surprised you thought you would encounter anything but indifference [from ninety per cent of people]; I never expected anything else,” (...) is part of the emptiness in the ten per cent that’s ostensibly full, if not

of the empty ninety per cent. (...) The others' nonreading of my book [*Distraction*], their reaction to it with indifference affects my overall feeling about it *when I am not reading it*. (...)

Since anyway the writing is going over their heads, to accentuate that: to make the writing such that they can get it only by being attuned to the -over (to those insensitive to the -over [mode], it would appear that the writing is becoming increasingly dull, or increasingly negligent, or both, since almost all the style has gone into the -over).<sup>23</sup> Beyond the aforementioned polemical reason, the basic reason for this overwriting is over-sensitivity: it is an oversimplification not to take into consideration the -over, whether in the form of the (...) voice-over-witness,<sup>24</sup> the diegetic silence-over,<sup>25</sup> the diegetic music-over,<sup>26</sup> the over-turn,<sup>27</sup> *overacting* (in reaction to an over-dose, i.e., to what is affecting one in the mode of the over [Arnulf Rainer's overpainting and portraits]), or *overexposure*.<sup>28</sup> In Parajdanov's *Ashik Kerib*, the minstrel is assigned by the two patrons of songs the most difficult exercise, to sing and play music to the deaf[-mute-blind]. Playing music to those who are (...) [not only deaf but also blind, and who are thus precluded even from resorting to synesthesia to hear the music with their eyes] is one way to train oneself in the -over mode, in rare cases one's song thenceforth attaining the -over, the deaf-blind *overhearing* it. [To add to his paintings the -over, for example, in the case of Arnulf Rainer, the paint or charcoal lines and scratches that affect retroactively the photos and the death masks over which they are inscribed, i.e., to achieve over-paintings, the painter may have to prepare himself by painting over paintings, that is, by painting for those who "have eyes but fail to see" the underlying layer]. (...)

Although the minstrel's playing often clearly goes out-of-sync in relation to the music we hear, and indeed although at times he momentarily stops moving his lips while the song continues, the audible song and music are by no means non diegetic. The hearing people who listen to him in later scenes of the film do not hear the voice and the sounds we may project from the movements of his lips and of his fingers on the strings, but the song-over and music-over (when no one is singing or playing music and yet we hear music and singing, the music is non-diegetic music-over).<sup>29</sup>

*Cut on movement* in film should also have this other inflection (the same way parallel montage should at least at times indicate [a] bifurcation [leading to additional universes within the multiverse], instead of occulting bifurcation through its dominant, Griffithian mode)(...): the function of an inflection (...)—a non-psychological inflection, a sort of clinamen without which we would be dealing with mere associations rather than with thinking (...). The cut on movement as neither dramatic nor psychological, but spiritual: as a chance of freedom. To become nothing but cuts on movement (*Cafe Amerique* in its written form). As they say in Zen, after *satori* mountains revert to being mountains;<sup>30</sup> everything reverts to how it was, except that it does so with cuts on movement. We find a playwriting variant of this *cut on movement* (a film term) in the work of the director of *Radio Is Good, Film Is Evil*, for instance in *Blvd de Paris*, where, on page 61 of *Reverberation Machines*, we encounter three consecutive "RHODA"s (ascriptions of dialogue lines), one following the other, without there being another character's speech in between; not to consider that this merely indicates pauses between the phrases Rhoda says in the



three instances, for when there is a pause it is indicated as such (“[Pause]”) *within* the space under the character’s name (p. 66). Hence the beauty of the RHODA that immediately follows another “RHODA” and begins with “[Pause]” (page 60). It is not easy to achieve these instances; one of the criteria for discerning whether they have been achieved is their having induced neither decomposition of thinking in the form of lapses (Nude Descending a Winding Argument) (...) nor psychological dissociation (multiple personalities) nor thought blocking, but awareness/attention. The second and third of the consecutive “RHODA”s on page 61 as well as the second of the two consecutive “RHODA”s on page 60 are a call. Can/Does Rhoda over-hear that she is being called (...) to attention, to awareness? (...). When you write in the preface to *Reverberation Machines*, “I would hope that if these plays are presented by other directors they would feel as free as I do to assign and reassign the lines of the text,” I wonder if they will manage to maintain the (...) call “RHODA RHODA” (this [...] [unheard-of] *sous-entendu* reverberation). (...) [Such] consecutive “RHODA”s function at the level of the writing as an equivalent to the strings at the level of the theater presentation (...). What I find very beautiful as a (laconic) writer is that even the expedient device in screenplays and theater plays of having the name of the character repeated in the center of the page whenever it is his or her turn to once more speak (the repetition of the name quickly becoming redundant since in conformist theater a character is precisely someone distinguishable [and recognizable]) is *used* in your work.

(...) Two or more [of your] characters are at times a collaboration,

one that took no time to get established. What some critics (as reported in Susan Letzler Cole’s *Directors in Rehearsal*) view negatively as your dictatorial relation to the actors (you do not collaborate with them) and your “non-collaboration” with David Salle and Kathy Acker on *Blood of a Poet* (...); but also your inhibition of any collaboration between the actors (“playing a scene, actors feed emotionally off one another between themselves and deepen the psychological communication ... I often stage scenes in a way that will frustrate that connection”),<sup>31</sup> and the circumstance that you are conjointly the playwright, designer (and, for the first plays, the one who constructed the set pieces and the props), producer and director of the Ontological-Hysteric Theater are to be placed within the context of your creation of characters-as-a-collaboration.<sup>32</sup> This amazing collaboration does not (and is not intended to) occur every time two characters are joined in a response (in a few cases we are dealing merely with a simultaneous response by the two characters), but mainly when one character does not rest after the move he or she made but is part of the response to it. Normally, the other (...) [interlocutor provides an occasion for one to rest until he or she has responded—be it in the manner of remaining silent]—this rest coexists with the additional tiredness due the prior passing identification of each interlocutor with the other in order to make the appropriate move,<sup>33</sup> hence with his or her having to do double the moves (...). The non-identification of the audience with the character [in your theater] is produced not only through the non-identification of the actor with his/her character (itself achieved through the neutral voicing of the lines by the actor, which lines are in many instances already

said by the TAPE; the character's referring to himself or herself in the third person,<sup>34</sup> etc.); but also, more importantly, through the inhibition of the aforementioned momentary identification of one character with the other characters in order to make his or her move (it is only through this neutralization of the dimension of the future that "everything you do is a brilliant decision, especially if it is something stupid."<sup>35</sup> Cage and Cunningham's collaboration, where the latter quote would apply equally well, also presupposed this absence of identification and projection: for compositional procedure, both artists used chance operations). Are we to expect an extra need for relaxation when the characters do not rest once they have made their move that involves no momentary identification with the other, but often (...) [respond to it], collaborating with the other (...)? Not at all. What we are to expect is an absent-minded body "that absents itself from nothing except rest, that is, from absence. It is in the same movement that one intuitively this absent-minded body and that one knows that one is always tired, with a weariness that admits of no rest"<sup>36</sup> (it is in this way that I would interpret what the TAPE calls Kate's "continual fatigue" in *Penguin Touquet*).<sup>37</sup> Your work managed to make one feel that the presence of two characters as a collaboration, for instance the KATE & DIANE who answer(s) KATE's "Look what a strange effect what I've eaten is having on my foot" with "I'm not interested ...",<sup>38</sup> is not facile (on the contrary, is utterly rigorous) but that the joining of lying down to rest and "CONTINUAL FATIGUE" (TAPE: "SHE IMMEDIATELY LAY DOWN AS A RESULT OF HER CONTINUAL FATIGUE") probably is (TAPE's next words, "WRONG, WRONG, WRONG, WRONG, YOU HAVE NOT

UNDERSTOOD A SINGLE THING," which have a different typography than those of the characters, may be applying across the intermediary lines of the characters to the TAPE's previous words) (...). It may be that both kinds of exchange enclose the same amount of tiredness: in one, I both do not indulge in the momentary identification with the other, and do not rest once I have made my move, collaborating with the other on the next move; in the other kind, I have made a momentary identification with the other in order to decide beforehand which move to make—hence have performed twice the number of moves in one move—but rest when it is actually the other's turn to respond. Nonetheless the former tiredness has a different origin and is dissociated from rest, from relaxation (...). How many times have we heard writers, painters, and filmmakers say that what they want from writing or painting or filmmaking is to "surprise themselves" (...). You recreated this "surprising oneself"; in *Penguin Touquet*, in answer to Gretel's question to David as to whether he has been in awe of doctors, "we" get: DAVID: "Yes." KATE & DAVID: "I knew it. I knew it!"<sup>39</sup>—or, David surprising himself. In *Cafe Amerique* in *Reverberation Machines*, the aforementioned idiosyncratic ascriptions and distributions of the spoken lines—the [overheard] call in the case of the single character, and the collaboration in the case of two or more characters—are there virtually.

We encounter this idiosyncratic, untimely sort of collaboration rather frequently in the case of the solitary.<sup>40</sup> *Disfracted* and (*Vampires*), two books I wrote in a phase of extreme solitude ([...] I no longer experienced the occasional reflex of looking up or back or to the side as others did on subliminally sensing

someone staring at them), are a collaboration, collaborated with each other.<sup>41</sup> Two characters collaborate on a life in *Laßt Chants for a Slow Dance (Dead End)* and *The Bed You Sleep In* by Jon Jost, who writes, directs, shoots, edits, cuts his negative, and, in some cases, composes and performs the music of his films. The frequent delays between the time the film is shot and its completion (for lack of money, etc.; as of April 1993, *Liebesfall*, filmed in 1984-1985, and *Psalm*, filmed in 1982, were still awaiting completion) are not as relevant and intrinsic to Jost's work as the sixteen-year interval between *Laßt Chants for a Slow Dance (Dead End)* (1977) and *The Bed You Sleep In*. In the latter film it is a matter of completing a finished film, *Laßt Chants for a Slow Dance (Dead End)*. The shot in *The Bed You Sleep In* that shows the character played by Blair driving to the lake to commit suicide, with the trees' reflections on the windshield superimposed on his face, is a remake of the last shot in *Laßt Chants for a Slow Dance (Dead End)*, which takes place just after the protagonist (also played by Blair) robs and mortally shoots a man whose car had broken down by a deserted roadside. In *The Bed You Sleep In*, concerning the allegations of the daughter of the Blair character that her father sexually abused her when she was a child, it is not clear whether we are dealing with a personal memory that was (...) [registered in consciousness *après coup*], or with a karmic fruit (the narration that ends *All the Vermeers in New York*, 1990, raises the likelihood that our acts in this life are determined or inflected by acts in a previous life). In the latter case, the narrative is not limited to one film but encompasses two films with different characters (the Emerson quote about lying in *The Bed You Sleep In*, which could be applying to either the daughter

or the father, can instead be alluding to the protagonist of *Laßt Chants for a Slow Dance (Dead End)*, who is an inveterate liar. (...) Even had the protagonist of *The Bed You Sleep In* been played by another actor than Blair, the similar shots of the protagonist driving in the car under the reflections on the windshield would have been enough to create the link between the two films, which become the two parts of a double feature (similarly, the shot of someone coming out of a cab on Spring Street in SoHo and walking up the stairs to Nicholas Ray's apartment is a hinge shot between Wenders' *The American Friend*, 1977, and *Nick's Movie*, 1980). The formal detachment of Jost in *The Bed You Sleep In*, like that of a psychoanalyst, triggers a coming to the surface of traumatic events; we are witnessing an implication of the content with the way the film is shot not in the conventional manner in which the content has the form that suits it but in the sense that the diegetic content is affected by the way the shots are filmed (the detached formal style and the improvisational way of arriving at the plot are complementary). Formal detachment to disclose traumatic events, whether these belong to the biography of the character or are karmic fruits from a previous life; then formal detachment so that while what is due will be actualized at the level of the content, no further karmic fruit will be produced (...).

(...)

To someone who patted him on the shoulder in the Elbow Room, in San Francisco, and apologized, "I'm sorry; I thought you were my friend," he replied (with Aristotle's): "Oh, my friend[s], there is no friend." I would be overjoyed were you to accept my friendship.

*Postscript:* In your blurb for my second book, (*Vampires*): *An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film* (1993), you wrote: “Jalal Toufic is an amazing writer. He documents the moves of consciousness in a way that leads the reader ever deeper, from impasse to illusion to new impasse—turning the trap of ‘what can’t be named’ into a true paradise.” Can I still do a second edition of (*Vampires*)? Can there be a second edition of paradise?

Jalal Toufic, San Francisco  
September 25, 1994

Carolee Schneemann, New Paltz, NY:

We’re basically constantly talking—the interior monologue (it is no longer enough for me to enter a hall where everybody is engrossed in his or her “thoughts” to feel that I am in a silent place—I still feel the noise produced by all the interior monologues). That must be why even writers who are very exacting in relation to their writing (including the epistolary one [...]) find it nonetheless not that objectionable and more or *less* easy to chat. I think that were one to manage to stop the interior monologue, words will become enigmatic (“An oak tree in the garden”—Joshu’s reply to a monk’s question as to why Bodhidharma came to China), or people will have the same difficulty speaking as writers have writing. But then, dear Carolee, what about intimacy, having someone on one’s mind? Can one have this intimacy in the absence of all interior monologue in relation to that person?

What I find remarkable in many a silent film is the absence not so much of talk—we get in intertitles a summary transcription of what the characters say—but of the interior monologue: when

the characters are not talking, I have the feeling that no interior monologue is going through their minds. More importantly than and before making the characters’ voices audible to us, the talkies gave the characters interior monologues, made them hear themselves. Since the interior monologue is a static that dims our gestures, its absence in silent films lets the gestures exist in all their vehemence (hence this vehemence and even the frequent seeming exaggeration should not be solely ascribed to a different style of acting, one that is still too influenced by theater—I who like subtlety [...] also like the unmitigated gestures that happen in the absence of the interior monologue). As a consequence of the absence of the interior monologue, the characters’ gestures are directed also toward us (rather than toward themselves, since they are not talking to, hence interacting with, themselves)—an aside that is not the artificial manifestation of the interior monologue to the [human, all too human] audience, but on the contrary the result of the absence of interior monologue.

In Lynch’s *Twin Peaks*, Cooper’s recording of his thoughts in a tape recorder he carries around with him functions as a [Lynchian] device to (...) [imply that when he is not doing so, no internal monologue is going on in his mind] (from this perspective it would be weak, indeed wrong, on Lynch’s part to have the character use the recorder as a playback machine, i.e., to show either Cooper or another person listening to what it had recorded earlier)—this absence of the internal monologue is the main reason for the frequently blank face of Cooper. Similarly, (...) a filmmaker may have recourse to situations where a character talks in a distorted albeit still understandable manner, for instance because he is in

a dream (*Twin Peaks*) or because he has a foreign accent, as an occasion to resort to subtitles (...) [in order to give the impression that whenever the character is not talking *and* no subtitles are shown, no interior monologue is going on in his head]. (...)

What is prayer but the most intense inner recollection (one that often drives others to ask us: “What are you thinking about?”) in the absence of any interior monologue?

Jalal Toufic, San Francisco

November 20, 1994

Dana R—, Austin, TX:

When one has lived in solitude for a long time, one tends to forget how much one is thrown back on oneself in the introductory stage of a new relationship—for the other person wants to know one. Were one to manage to do away with the internal monologue, would the other person still ask one to introduce oneself? Would the very idea of saying, “I don’t know you,” so much as brush the other person’s mind then? Or does the other person find the notion and the right to ask one about oneself in the circumstance that one keeps talking to oneself and mentioning oneself in the internal monologue-as-dialogue (during mild drunkenness, because of the absence of an interior monologue, [at times] one of the most difficult things to maintain is the belief in the curiosity of others [for with the absence of one’s interior monologue, the others’ interior monologues seem also to have disappeared])?

The living woman in T. S. Eliot’s *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* is found settling her pillow to sleep when she encounters the undead. What is this sleepiness that takes hold of us (...) in the

“presence” of the undead (and, when we do not actually sleep then, what is this doubt that assails us during or following the encounter with the undead as to whether we are dreaming or were dreaming, i.e., whether we are/were sleeping?)? What do the living want to know? Is it what the dead would want to tell them (isn’t it a sure indication of love when the revenant still wants and attempts to tell about the realm from which he is coming not in the cryptic language of the dead [for instance: “Recreat. Recreat xangoran temr e xangoran an. Naza e fango xangoranan. Inai dum. Ageai dum”], but in the language of the living?)? Or would they respond the way the woman in Eliot’s poem hypothetically does, “That is not what I meant at all. That is not it, at all”? Why would the dead want to tell us about death when we are in part already there, when a part of us is always there (we would not be able to die [not in the sense of biological extinction, but of undeath] were we not already dead/undead even as we live [this is confirmed by the circumstance that due to the trance that takes hold of one at the threshold between life and death, and that makes one miss the transition, the version of one in the undeath realm never moved there at any point and therefore must have always been dead])? Is it because that part is suffering from depersonalization, derealization, the association of words on their own, frequent amnesia and dissociation, etc., thus often unable to access what it is undergoing? “Tell you all,” Lazarus says in Eliot’s poem, and would that “all” not also include himself? Did Lazarus come back to tell himself about death? And did he find himself sleeping then (that has always been a motive for our asceticism: that we would not sleep when we come back from death to tell ourselves too about it)? In a vampire film, the woman

would be settling her pillow for hypnotized by the vampire, but you during our last two conversations, and the one in the poem, why are you settling the pillow, why are you so sleepy? What disclosure are you thus trying to elude? I have come across so many examples of such instances of sleepiness (that the guards in *Hamlet* do not feel sleepy or fall asleep when confronted with the revenant with unfinished business, the ghost come back to ask for revenge, implies that he is not indeed undead but merely in the *barzakh* between life and undeath), I sometimes have the impression that the reason we sleep at all is because someone has come back once more from death to tell us about that realm. If, yet again, we want to excuse the living, we can consider that the woman actually wished to hear about death, but the undead's presence drained her of her energy. How? Did the undead, as in vampire films, hypnotize her and then suck her energy (how very bored I am with all the big, deep eyes of charismatic persons or entities that stare into the victim's eyes in vampire films to willfully hypnotize him or her)<sup>42</sup>? Not at all; the undead neither spoke—had the undead spoken we could attribute the sleepiness of those present to a defense against hearing about anxiety-inducing undeath; nor stared into her eyes to hypnotize her, but simply stood next to the bed, tall but slightly hunched, while the other's eyes became heavier and heavier until she closed them, feeling passive, and, like the flower that withered (in time-lapse) as the vampire passed it, [largely] drained even of time. The scene thus discloses neither some guardian angel watching over us in our sleep, nor the vampire standing next to the victim after satiation with his blood, but some revenant come to talk to us, to tell us, and most probably also himself, about the realm he came from,<sup>43</sup> but

already having by his mere “presence” drained us of our energy and our readiness to listen, and perhaps also drained a part of himself of its energy and readiness to talk, making us sleep and giving him his demeanor of a somnambulist. The undead are not charismatic (...). But then how limited everything charismatic (...) is—unless the charisma was lost during the encounter with undeath, (...) that labyrinthine realm<sup>44</sup> (is there anything charismatic about the labyrinth, about endlessly returning to the “same” spot?), and then regained by grace (producing a Bodhisattva or a saint). Part of the attraction of the charismatic is that the dangers that they envelop are ultimately limited ones; as for the dead, they inspire in us awe (...) because of an apprehension of the far greater danger they suggest, and they are considered dull by us because they are so drained by themselves (...) as to have neither the energy nor the time to warn about that incredible danger. (...)

## Dead Air

The American president George H. W. Bush asserted on October 15, 1990 concerning Ṣaddām Ḥusayn: “We’re dealing with Hitler revisited”:<sup>45</sup> a matting phenomenon. Instead of maintaining an *am Ṣaddām*, Ṣaddām should have countered the *amBush* constituted by this abstraction from Hitler's historical context<sup>46</sup> by for instance appearing on TV made-up as Hitler and, through the special effects that made possible the compositing in Woody Allen's *Zelig* (1983), in the company of Nazi generals. The reports of sightings of Hitler months and even years after the end of World War II<sup>47</sup> should have been revisited, translated, and mentioned on Iraqi

TV<sup>48</sup> and in Iraqi newspapers. Şaddām Ḥusayn did nothing of the sort, lacked any humor. The Iraqis did not apprehend one of the implications of Bush's comparison of Şaddām Ḥusayn to Hitler: the main mass medium in their country would become the one used in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s: radio; indeed, in the first hours of the war over 90% of Iraq's electrical capacity was taken out of service by air attacks, with the result that virtually all televisions were rendered inoperative. Moreover, the trauma of the devastating war must have crazed many Iraqis, a number of whom may as a result have experienced a radiophonic functioning of the world:<sup>49</sup> auditory hallucinations (mainly voices); *thought-broadcasting* (of both one's thoughts and the thoughts inserted in one); the impression that the sound volume is being turned up or down ("During the last while back I have noticed that noises all seem to be louder to me than they were before. It's as if someone had turned up the volume")<sup>50</sup>; echolalia; thought blocking (as if the mental radio that each one of us is to himself has been turned off the air)<sup>51, 52</sup> While the US-led Coalition was using smart bombs,<sup>53</sup> ones that moved and redirected themselves on their own, the obscene amount of destruction inflicted on Iraq must have driven at least one Iraqi to go mad and to consider that the broadcaster is addressing him or her specifically:<sup>54</sup> a smart radio.<sup>55</sup>

Radio, like film and TV, is usually only the mold of the object and its duration (André Bazin: "The photograph proceeds by means of the lens to the taking of a veritable luminous impression in light—to a mold. As such it carries with it more than mere resemblance, namely a kind of identity.... The cinema ... makes a molding of the object as it exists in time and, furthermore, makes an imprint of the

duration of the object"<sup>56</sup>). Radio, like TV and film,<sup>57</sup> embalms the living, for the dead on radio were once alive. But is that all there is to it? No; as long as one harbors an unconscious or is reduced to an unconscious (the dead), that is, as long as one is not a lucid awakened, one sends more than one broadcasts, something *on the side*. Hence one has to acknowledge what one is unaware that one sent.<sup>58</sup> This acknowledgment should induce one to help those with whom one is interfering whether one knows it or not: the mad, the dead, and some of those in other altered states of consciousness. Most broadcasters are unaware that they are broadcasting the other dead air, not the one that occurs when "a carrier signal is being transmitted, but there is no modulation of that signal," but the voices and mental associations of both the dead and the dead rudiments of the living. One has to devise an alarming scheme that can induce the living—the vast majority of whom misconstrue their condition of mortals as implying only that they are going to die organically at some future date rather than that they are dead while alive—to become acutely conscious of their obscene unconscious interference with the mad, who died before dying (physically), and the dead, and therefore to try to counteract this interference. What intermediary to involve in such an alarming scheme? The most appropriate intermediary is not a medium (Kurosawa's *Rashomon*, 1950), since the latter does not connect to the dead but to the dead's messenger, the ghost; but an art of radio that lets itself be interfered with by a dead air it constructs. Here are two examples of the latter. A radio station intentionally broadcasts a signal that simulates one that would result from the mixing of what the listener assumes to be its own unadulterated signal with that



of another station broadcasting in a different language. The latter broadcast, spoken by a different broadcaster, would, uncannily, be a translation of what the announcer is saying on the first station. If the listener tries to get a better reception of the second station, he or she will hear a different subject being addressed by the second announcer. This uncanny effect should be intentionally induced by the stations, which would be collaborating unbeknownst to the listeners.<sup>59</sup> This inducing of the uncanny in the listener or spectator should not be limited to radio or TV but has to be extended to life too. Have a recording of your voice asking your roommate to remove the boiling water from the burner or yelling at your cat to stay away from a vase, then, *while* talking to someone on the phone, playback your recorded voice. Is there a danger that such practices may lead to chronic paranoia in the listeners? Yes, there is; but what is required is to immerse people, for a modicum of time, in a different mode of mental functioning so that they will be unsettled enough to be clearer about the plight of more than one hundred thousand seriously mentally ill<sup>60</sup> homeless persons in the United States<sup>61</sup> (where many have experimented with psychedelics, and hence know what it is to undergo a psychotic episode).<sup>62</sup> A “nice” old woman told me that she is for long-term rather than alleviating measures when it comes to dealing with the homeless. Would a thousand years count as “long term”? When the old woman came across him the next day, the psychotic homeless exclaimed: “I haven’t seen you in ages!” In response to her incomprehending interjection, “But it’s only been a day since I’ve last come across you!” he recited these words whispered to him by one of the voices “in” his head: “A day the measure of which is a thousand years of

what you count” (Qur’ān 32:5)!

One possible way to respond to the dearth of images in the (1991) Gulf War<sup>63</sup> is to have one of the characters in a film “on” that war performatively describe the events happening in the theater of operations and conclude these descriptions with the Durasian question at the end of the performative creation of sight through words in *Le Camion*, “You see?”; then have the interlocutor answer, once more as in *Le Camion*, “Yes, I see”<sup>64</sup>; then to the latter’s affirmative response, have the former character reply in a manner similar to that of the Japanese man to the French woman’s claim to have seen, by means of newsreel footage, etc., what happened in Hiroshima, “You have seen nothing in Iraq and the Kuwaiti theater of operations, nothing”<sup>65</sup>—not because there were no images, for the words did performatively create images; but because these images are unbearable to see, somewhat unseen even as one looks at them,<sup>66</sup> or because that war was a surpassing disaster, with a consequent withdrawal of some images. In Duras’ *Hiroshima mon amour*, the perfect witness is the one who did not see: the Japanese man’s recurrent words to the French woman after each account of what she saw in Hiroshima, “You saw nothing in Hiroshima. Nothing,” makes of her the perfect witness—of the withdrawal of tradition past a surpassing disaster.

### Voice-over-witness

In Claude Lanzman’s *Shoah* (1985), the use of the aural narration of two interviewees over the tracking shots of the road leading from Chelmno to the pits where those killed in the gas vans were



buried underscores a separation of the ethereal voice and the archeological image<sup>67</sup> of a nature that contains mass graves but, indifferent to what happened, continues its normal course, with the result that grass and tall trees cover the traces of the mass graves.<sup>68</sup> The film separates the voice from the image/body, making it a voice-over, but only to render in a filmic way the difficulty of speaking, of releasing the voice from the body. While watching the aforementioned shot, I alternated between the following two impressions:

— The voice remains on the surface of an earth that becomes denser, and increasingly impenetrable to it the more it is permeable to all sorts of natural organisms, to the rain, etc.: the more natural this earth is, continuing its life, the more, in the presence of the hovering voice-over, it seems that it can be penetrated only when one is to lay in it corpses.

— The voice cannot be delivered from this superdense earth; the only way it can reach us is as a voice-over, the same way the radiation of a black hole occurs by means of a particle that did not actually exist and never belonged to the black hole, but that was released into actuality because its complementary virtual particle (the two particles conjointly appearing out of nothing) got sucked by the black hole.<sup>69</sup> For an equivalent of these entangled, twin voices, one buried and one appearing *ex nihilo* to the other side of an event horizon, a voice-over, one can heed the complementarity of the absence of the voices of the on-screen characters (and actors) and the presence of voices-over in Duras' *India Song*. We find the voice sucked to the other side of an event horizon also in Bergman's *Persona*, Elisabet first not wishing then no longer able to speak,

having become a mute hole.<sup>70</sup> Nurse Alma takes the photograph of Elisabet's son from under the mother's palm, sits down facing her, and although she's never heard about the incidents in question, proceeds to tell Elisabet about her traumatic relation with her child. How does Alma know about the specifics of Elisabet's relationship with her son? How does she know that it was at a party that Elisabet first had the notion of having a child? The turning of Elisabet into a mute hole implies that the information that Alma proffers with regard to Elisabet's relationship with her son was not received from Elisabet through thought-transference<sup>71</sup>—the flip side of the indirect transfer of thought through words from Alma to the silent Elisabet—not only because Elisabet's memories and thoughts must have been reduced to fragments of phrases or single words (a phenomenon we encounter in the case of the astronomical black hole with the reduction of our information about what falls into it to mass, electric charge, and angular momentum), for example, “Warning and timeless. Irregular. When it should have happened not as a failure. Yourself where you are. But I should do it. Not inwards. They say calm advises others. A desperate perhaps. Takes ... but where is nearest it's called ...”; but also because such information cannot pass back the event horizon. The concurrence of Elisabet, in the form of her unconvincing denial of her hatred of her son, indicates that although what is being said by Alma in the sequence of shots in which Elisabet is shown in close-ups is by a voice that appeared *ex nihilo*, hence is not privy to the historical past of Elisabet before her becoming a mute hole, it is still the truth.<sup>72</sup> The *sur-vivant* can bear witness about a traumatic event only through the voice-over that appeared *ex nihilo* to the

other side of the event horizon.<sup>73</sup> To collect historical evidence and preserve the relics and the traces (the Auschwitz Museum, Oswiecim, Poland, and the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC, etc.) is in all likelihood enough to convince future generations that the Shoah happened and that it happened this way, refuting the revisionist questioning of the reality of the industrial-style slaughter in the gas chambers; but it is not enough for one to bear witness, since one would then be already totally outside the event horizon of the Shoah. Whenever concerning an event, the survivor who underwent it feels, “[today] while knowing perfectly well that it corresponds to the facts, I no longer know if it is real,”<sup>74</sup> in order to bear witness remembering is necessary but not enough. To bear witness in such cases is a double operation: the most scrupulous historical research, the archeological excavation to reach the buried has to be complemented, because certain traumas are mute and black holes, having an event horizon, beyond which one cannot go and return, by the voice that appears *ex nihilo*. In such traumatic circumstances, description and anamnesis are adequate only when *conjointly* words reach a performative function and the voice carrying them appears *ex nihilo*. In the case of the Shoah, it is not enough to be an eyewitness (and a voice-witness), one should also be a voice-over-witness. The attempt by the Nazis to produce a mute hole from which no information could transpire about the final solution to exterminate all the European Jewry both succeeded even in the case of the survivors: due to their trauma, the latter became a mute hole; and failed because of this voice-over that appears *ex nihilo* to the other side of the trauma’s event horizon, and which is part of witnessing. What the survivor dreads when he or she is

asked to bear witness to such a catastrophe is not only or primarily the pain of anamnesis; and/or the pain of discovering that he or she has forgotten all or part of what he or she thought unforgettable;<sup>75</sup> but also that he or she is asked also to definitively forget in order to release, this side of the event horizon, the voice-over-witness that appears *ex nihilo* (since as in the case of black hole radiation, what is released and actualized is something that “leaves” the black hole without coming from it, and can do so only because its double, with which it is entangled, got imprisoned in the black hole, i.e., lost [forever?]) and that can tell about a traumatic event. To the silence, to the inability of the barber Abraham Bomba to continue his narrative concerning his cutting the hair of women destined in a few minutes for the gas chambers, to Mordechai Podchlebnik’s “and let’s not talk about that” regarding the Shoah, one has to link perhaps by urging them to continue describing what took place subterraneanly, but only if one submits the released voice to the ordeal of the burial in this archeological but natural, cyclical earth that’s indifferent to the mass graves it contained, so that it, the voice, may appear as a voice-over to the other side of the event horizon and the archeological earth/image. The latter voice did not leave the superdense earth, but appeared to the other side, *ex nihilo*—this is one of the main modes of the voice-over. It is out of nothing—a nothing different from but linked to the one to which the Nazis tried to reduce the Jews and the Gypsies—that this voice appears to reminisce. Duras’ *India Song* problematizes representation not simply through the dissimilarity between Delphine Seyrig, the actress playing Anne-Marie Stretter, and the photograph, placed on the piano, of the dead character Anne-Marie Stretter; but also

because the voices-over that appear *ex nihilo* this side of the event horizon contradict at times the description of some of the same events in the previous book *The Vice-Consul*—even when what the voices describe is in conflict with the version in *The Vice-Consul*, they are telling the truth. Notwithstanding that many people find *The Vice-Consul* readable—it certainly was readable before *India Song*—it has been retroactively rendered unreadable by *India Song*; to these people I, who dispute many people’s reaction to many other books as unreadable, would assert: “You have not read *The Vice-Consul*” (a locution that would complement the Japanese man’s assertive response to the French woman’s insistence that she saw the hospital and the museum in Hiroshima: “You saw nothing in Hiroshima” [Duras’ *Hiroshima mon amour*]). This mode of the voice-over as a voice-over-witness was preparing Duras, or else she was preparing herself through it, to deal with what happened to the Jews of Europe in the Nazi period, the extermination (*Aurelia Steiner*, 1979).

## Postwar Lipogrammatic Literature and Calligraphy

How to write in Lebanon, use words, when, as is shown by the shattered shop signs, billboards, trade signs of institutions, we have been left with words from which certain letters are absent or that have been reduced to separate letters? Lebanese writers cannot circumvent this loss by writing in languages other than Arabic, since the words from which certain letters are absent or that have been reduced to separate letters in the shattered shop

signs, billboards, trade signs of institutions, etc., are in French and English as well as Arabic. Those who have not been hit by the disaster can appreciate the separate letters or the words with missing letters just for their graphic, “aesthetic” value; but Lebanese writers shouldn’t relate to them only at that level. Arabs have to take cognizance of this condition of words from which certain letters are absent or that have been reduced to separate letters, of this disaster affecting the Arabic language not only in the case of persons turned schizophrenic by the Lebanese civil war and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 (for example the man I interviewed in *Credits Included: A Video in Red and Green*), their language often reduced to word-salads, echolalia, etc. Will we end up with a lipogrammatic literature—one that is not the result of some writers’ self-imposed constraint not to use certain letters, but the consequence of the constraint of an alphabet with missing letters produced by a decimation or devastation that affects no longer merely the material inscriptions of language (in shop signs, charred books, etc.), but language itself, and where the difficulty of the lipogram is no longer measured, as in the conventional cases, by the frequency of the omitted letter and the length of the text? To keep pre-disaster writings accessible in a language that, among other things, has now a reduced alphabet, these writings are to be translated into their lipogrammatic version.<sup>76</sup> Such a lipogrammatic literature would not be that of so-called decadent historical periods (for instance the Baghdad of *Maqamāt al-Harīrī*) but of ages of disaster. In a film or video on Lebanon or Bosnia, I would not be surprised by subtitles that are either lipogrammatic or in which some words are unreadable because some of their letters are

physically left out. For a Lebanese calligrapher or painter sensitive to the devastation not only of his country but also of Arab Palestine, Iraq, Sudan, etc., for the foreseeable future, calligraphy, taking its cue from the shattered shop signs in Beirut's central district, should be reserved for either the *fawātiḥ* (the separate letters that begin many of the Qur'ān's *suwar*, for instance the *Alif*, *Lām*, *Mīm* at the beginning of "The Cow" *sūra*) or the lipogrammatic version of a pre-disaster literary work.

### *The Ontology of the Photographic Image in the Post-Minkowski Age*

Why is it that, rather than by accepting archival and documentary footage as it is, it is often only by submitting it to motion alterations (stop-motion, etc.)<sup>77</sup> that one can, as in Ernie Gehr's *Eureka* (1974) (the archival footage Gehr used was filmed from a streetcar in San Francisco in 1905), induce the sensation that the images are a window on another segment of a four-dimensional universe?<sup>78</sup> It is probably because these alterations are akin to the temporal alterations encountered in relativity. It is the fact that everything is preserved in a four-dimensional universe, rather than an absence of tenses in cinema, that results in the inability of the cinematic flashback to put us in the past—how, in film, past the immediate transition of the flashback we are back in the present tense. The arresting thing about cinema is not so much that it preserves time (Bazin), but that it sometimes makes us perceive that we exist in a four-dimensional world where nothing passes, where things are preserved. It is far less in time travel films such as Robert Zemeckis'

*Back to the Future* (1985) and *Back to the Future Part III* (1990) than in Gehr's *Eureka* and Thomas A. Edison's *Panoramic View from the Moving Boardwalk*; *Panoramic View from the Eiffel Tower, Ascending and Descending*; and *Circular Panoramic View of the Esplanade des Invalides* (all three filmed in July 1900 at the Paris Exposition<sup>79</sup>)<sup>80</sup> that we see a subsistence of the past. The ability of any indexical mode of reproduction to preserve is possible due to the circumstance that the past is already preserved, subsists. If the past does not subsist, how can anything remain, not be a fleeting fluctuation, disappear as it appears?<sup>81</sup> In *Back to the Future Part III*, the photograph showing the scientist's tombstone on which is inscribed the date of death changes whenever the time traveler to the past alters certain events there, functioning as a window onto the alternative universes induced by the different actions that the time traveler opts for in the past; but also presenting us with what would happen were the past not preserved. I am disappointed that the medium of cinema is absent at the diegetic level in most time travel films.<sup>82</sup> The following is a scene that seems to be missing from Robert Zemeckis' *Back to the Future Part II* (1989)—it would be felicitous were a future Director's Cut of the film to include it: the time traveler to the future, Marty, sees a relative in 2015 looking at a home movie showing Marty's parents in 1985, the time Marty has just left; when he later goes back to the past he enters the scene he has just watched, sort of walking into a movie. It is anachronistic that writing in 1945, that is, over three decades after Hermann Minkowski announced in his talk at the 80<sup>th</sup> Assembly of German Natural Scientists and Physicians on September 21, 1908, only a dozen years after the beginning of

cinema, “The views of space and time which I wish to lay before you have sprung from the soil of experimental physics ... They are radical. Henceforth space by itself, and time by itself, are doomed to fade away into mere shadows, and only a kind of union of the two will preserve an independent reality,” Bazin was still locating in his essay “The Ontology of the Photographic Image” the ontology of the photographic image in preservation instead of in being a (one-way) window onto a section of spacetime. Regarding its relation to the past, cinema is best viewed neither as providing a fictional recreation of it (as in period films), nor as making a documentary “mold of the object and its duration” (Bazin), but as an interface with what is ongoing in that other segment of spacetime.

## Credits Included

Dedicated to Walid Raad<sup>83</sup>

*The section that follows complements my video by the same title: it seems that just as multimedia becomes prominent, we will witness in some experimental works a separation that will not be (just) between the sound track and the image track, but (also) between the audiovisual work and the written section, the latter two distanced not only spatially, but also temporally, since a considerable time may elapse between the broadcast or screening of the one and the publication of the other.*<sup>84</sup>

If the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, 1945, respectively, are a surpassing disaster then beyond

not only the immediate death toll and the manifest destruction of buildings, including museums, libraries and temples, and of various other sorts of physical records, but also the long-term hidden material effects, in cells that have been affected with radioactivity in the “depth” of the body, and the latent traumatic effects that may manifest themselves *après coup*, there would be an additional immaterial withdrawal of literary, philosophical and thoughtful texts as well as of certain films, videos, and musical works, notwithstanding that copies of these continue to be physically available; of paintings and buildings that were not physically destroyed; of spiritual guides; and of the holiness/specialness of certain spaces. In other words, whether a disaster is a surpassing one (for a community—defined by its sensibility to the immaterial withdrawal that results from such a disaster) cannot be ascertained by the number of casualties, the intensity of psychic traumas and the extent of material damage, but by whether we encounter in its aftermath symptoms of withdrawal of tradition.<sup>85</sup>

In the case of surpassing disasters, the material loss of many of the treasures of tradition not only through destruction but also through theft to the victor’s museums is exacerbated by immaterial withdrawal. Basing themselves on what has been resurrected, some of those who belong to the community of the surpassing disaster can contest the version of history edited by the victors, who, not being part of the community of the surpassing disaster, have the advantage that the works and documents are available to them without having to resurrect them.

What have we as Arab thinkers, writers, filmmakers, video makers, painters, musicians, and calligraphers lost after the

seventeen years of Lebanese civil war; after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982; after the symptomatic *Anfāl* operation against the Iraqi Kurds; after the devastation of Iraq; and after Ḥāfiẓ al-Asad's regime's symptomatic brutal repression of Hama in 1982?<sup>86</sup> We have lost tradition<sup>87</sup> (we leave it to teachers—with all due disrespect?—to propagate “it.” In the aftermath of the surpassing disaster, tradition is in some cases totally withheld from the thinker and/or artist; in other cases, it is withheld from him or her as a thinker and/or artist, but not as a teacher or historian or a person—is this partly why a year after writing the previous words of this paragraph, I began teaching?<sup>88</sup>). We do not go to the West to be indoctrinated by their culture, for the imperialism, hegemony of their culture is nowhere clearer than here in developing countries. Rather, we go to the West because it is there that we can be helped in our resistance by all that we do not receive in developing countries:<sup>89</sup> their experimental films and video art, their *ontological-hysterical theater*, their free improvisation, etc.; and because we can there meet people who can perceive, read or listen, and genuinely use pre-surpassing-disaster art, literature, music and thought without having to resurrect them. At this juncture in Arab history, John Barth, the author of the intricate *The Last Voyage of Somebody the Sailor* (1991), is a foreigner to me, an Arab writer, precisely because of his proximity to and his ability to use, as if it were completely available, *A Thousand and One Nights*, a book to the other side of the surpassing disaster.<sup>90</sup> If, following the devastation of Lebanon, Iraq, Sudan, and earlier of Arab Palestine, etc., I can have the same close relation with one of the most beautiful books of the Middle East and North Africa, *A Thousand and One Nights*, as Barth and

Pasolini (*Arabian Nights*, 1974) can, then I will know that I am either a hypo-critical Arab writer or already a Western writer (in the section of the first edition of *Over-Sensitivity*, 1996, on one episode from *A Thousand and One Nights*, and in “Unrequited Love's *Enigmatic Messages—continued*” on the same episode in this, second edition of *Over-Sensitivity*, *A Thousand and One Nights* is accessed and addressed through Pasolini's film).<sup>91</sup> Rather than a common language and/or racial origin and/or religion, being equally affected by the surpassing disaster delimits the community (is it legitimate to consider the Lebanese as one community when those of them who were living in East Beirut and other Christian-ruled areas were implicated in the desertion of besieged West Beirut during the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon?).<sup>92</sup>

Beyond the factor of the language in which one speaks and/or writes, it is in part whether pre-surpassing-disaster tradition is still available to one irrespective of any resurrection that reveals to one whether one is still part of one's native culture or whether one should consider oneself already part of the culture to which one emigrated. But for certain musical pieces, books, and miniatures, it appeared that the many disasters that befell their countries of origin in the Middle East and North Africa completely severed Arab exiles' links with these countries and cultures. But this proved not to be the case, for when these countries and cultures were devastated by an additional series of disasters adding up to a surpassing one, these musical pieces, books, and miniatures were immaterially withdrawn even for some of these exiles—this revealing that these exiles were still attached to these countries and cultures and not only to the music, miniatures, and calligraphy, and



now need to resurrect the latter if they desire them to be available again. Resurrection takes (*and gives*) time.<sup>93</sup> Pending their resurrection, such music pieces can show at most in the credits; although at no point is Munīr Bashīr's performance of *Maqām Kurdī* heard in my video *Credits Included*, it is listed in the music credits.<sup>94</sup>

Although many artists, writers and thinkers are viewed and/or view themselves as avant-garde (for example Nietzsche),<sup>95</sup> considered to be in advance of their time, when the surpassing disaster happens their works are withdrawn as a consequence of it, this implying that, unlike the vast majority of living humans, who are behind their time, artists, writers and thinkers are exactly of their time (the future component of their work, which maintains its relevance far into the future, comes to them through their untimely collaboration with future thinkers, writers, artists, etc.).<sup>96</sup> Was my writing my first two books in English (*Diſtracted*, 1991, and *(Vampires): An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, 1993), books thus withdrawn from those in the Arab World who are not proficient in English, a symptom of a withdrawal of tradition past one or more surpassing disasters affecting the Arab World? A translator who sets out to translate such a work to Arabic would first have to decide whether writing in English was a symptom of a withdrawal past a surpassing disaster, for in that case to translate into an Arabic that does not itself present a withdrawal in relation to Arabs who are not proficient in English would be a mistranslation.

Concerning a surpassing disaster, *collateral damage* includes much of what those who are insensitive to such a disaster view as having been spared. A filmmaker, thinker, writer, video maker, or

musician who in relation to a surpassing disaster still considers that tradition has persisted, never has the impression that he has to resurrect even some of what “survived” the carnage; who can ask, “Why have I survived and why has this building been spared while so much else was destroyed?” without any suspicion that the building in question as well as many books and artworks that had the good fortune of not being destroyed materially have nonetheless been immaterially withdrawn by the surpassing disaster, is hypocritical, that is, hypo-critical, still this side of the critical event of the surpassing disaster.

I have to do my best to physically preserve tradition, while knowing that what I will save physically from the surpassing disaster still needs to be resurrected—one of the limitations of history as a discipline is that the material persistence of the documents blinds it to the exigency of the resurrection. In rare cases, I feel that a film is not trying to adapt a book to another medium with its own specific parameters and/or to another historical period and hence another temporality, but to resurrect it—after the resurrection, it may still be in the judgment of some filmmakers in need of adaptation to new contexts. Similarly, remakes are not always to be viewed in terms of adaptation to other times or reparation occasioned by the failure of a filmmaker or video maker to heed his or her untimely collaborator who happens to be (also) a filmmaker or video maker.<sup>97</sup> Herzog's remake of Murnau's *Nosferatu* (1922) can be viewed not so much as a sound and color version of a silent film, but rather as an attempt to resurrect Murnau's film after its withdrawal following a surpassing disaster, the Nazi period. In which case, there are two ways of considering whether it was a

successful film: did it succeed as a film irrespective of its relation to Murnau's *Nosferatu*? In case it did not, did it nonetheless succeed as a resurrecting film? *Nosferatu*, one of the nine extant films out of the twenty-one Murnau made, was twice withdrawn: in 1925 it was withdrawn by court order because it violated the copyright for Stoker's *Dracula*—copies of it were back in circulation by 1928; past the surpassing disaster of the Nazi period, and although it was still circulating, it was withdrawn from the filmmakers of the following generation (Herzog: "We are trying in our films to build a thin bridge back to that time"<sup>98</sup>). Herzog's *Nosferatu* (1979): a vampire film trying to resurrect an extant film about the undead, about what simultaneously is and is not there, as is made clear by the mirror in which the vampire does not appear notwithstanding that he is standing in front of it; but which, because of the surpassing disaster of the Nazi period, is itself there and not there for the generation following that surpassing disaster. Godard and Herzog, who have influenced many filmmakers, producing, in Vertov's expression, "films that beget films," have also produced *films that resurrect films*. In his first films Hal Hartley, who knew then nothing about surpassing disasters, could imitate Godard, while Godard himself makes some of his films in the manner of someone who can no longer access his earlier ones (including his films of the New Wave, as the title of Godard's film about resurrection, *New Wave*, 1990, implies) as a result of some surpassing disaster(s), for example the one alluded to in his *King Lear*. One of the surest ways to detect whether there's been a surpassing disaster is to see when some of the most intuitive and sensitive filmmakers and/or writers and/or thinkers began to feel the need to resurrect what to most

others, and to the filmmaker and/or writer and/or thinker himself or herself as a person or teacher, i.e., in so far as he or she remains *human, all too human*, is extant and available.

Disaster films that are not exploitation ones sometimes include a resurrection of artworks, books of literature, and/or films. In Akira Kurosawa's *Dreams* (1990), a section showing the explosion of six nuclear reactors in Japan, the variously-colored radioactive fumes forming an eerie aerial palette resulting in the decimation of the population, is followed by a section where the late-twentieth-century protagonist enters, walks and runs in various Van Gogh paintings; in order to allow his protagonist to do that, Kurosawa had to digitally recreate the paintings (using the services of Industrial Light & Magic's postproduction visual effects), and this recreation functions as a subtle resurrection. In Chris Marker's *La Jetée* (1962), whose events take place for the most part after the nuclear destruction of much of the world, including presumably Chris Marker's favorite film, Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (1958), during the Third World War, while standing in the company of his female companion in front of a cut tree trunk, the time traveler to the past points to a spot beyond its perimeter and "hears himself say": "I come from here" (how subtle is this hint of quotation [of *Vertigo*'s Madeleine]!). Should we view this shot as an attempt to resurrect the shot in Hitchcock's *Vertigo* (and by implication the film)<sup>99</sup> where Madeleine, in the company of Scottie, points to a section of the cut trunk of a sequoia tree and says, "Somewhere here I was born"? Wim Wenders' film work, although it includes many references to ends, for example the possible end of the world in *Until the End of the World* (1991), and the possible end of cinema



in *Chambre 666* (1982) (one of the questions he poses to the interviewed filmmakers is: “Is cinema becoming a dead language?”), nonetheless rarely attempts to resurrect or evinces resurrections. Two *possible* exceptions: in *Tokyo Ga* (1985), a film that mourns the possible irretrievable loss of the Japan of Ozu, the 50-millimeter shot of an alley can be considered a resurrection of an Ozu shot. In *Until the End of the World*, the fact that the diegetic writer’s narration that begins the film, “It was in 1999 ...”, and goes on to relate the events that the film shows, focusing on a special camera that allows the blind to see the images it recorded, is part of a novel he began writing *after* the presumed nuclear conflagration of the (rest of the) world wiped his earlier novel-in-progress off his computer indicates that we are viewing these protagonists and events from the post-surpassing-disaster standpoint and requirements. The blind woman, whom we meet for the first time after the presumed nuclear conflagration, embodies the inclusion in the film of the loss of images and of the attempt to resurrect them: we hear her say jubilantly, “I see a blue ... a yellow ... a red ...”, as the Vermeer-like shot of her daughter sitting by the window and wearing a blue headband and a yellow dress begins to assemble again and become clear (taking into account that, as *(Vampires): An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film* points out, it is dangerous to resurrect if one is alone, felicitously the special camera requires for its efficient functioning that simultaneously with the blind person whose brain is linked to a computer simulation of the recorded image, the one who originally recorded the image see the latter by recall in his/her mind’s eye). In Godard’s *Passion* (1982), the failure of the diegetic director to finish his film is not

to be ascribed to an inability to come up with a story and to attain the right lighting; rather the inability to tell stories and to produce the right lighting is in this case merely a symptom of his obscure feeling that he has failed in his unconscious attempt to resurrect what has become withdrawn due to a surpassing disaster, which task he was trying to accomplish by producing a series of tableaux vivants of either the whole or part of paintings from earlier centuries, for example Delacroix’s *The Entry of the Crusaders into Constantinople* (1840). As far as those who commissioned Godard to do a film adaptation of Shakespeare’s *King Lear* that was to be ready in time for the following year’s Cannes Film Festival, the Cannon Films producers, Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus, were *unconcerned*, the play was obviously available. It was available too for the screenwriter, Norman Mailer, for whom “the mafia is the only way to do *King Lear*,” and whom we see finishing his cinematic script of *King Lear* at the preliminary section of Godard’s *King Lear* (1987). It was also available to the filmmaker Godard, who remarks that he said to Mailer, who at that point was not only the screenwriter but was also still contracted to play Don Learo, “Kate [Norman Mailer’s daughter] enters your room and kisses you when she hears you finished the play—not your play, but *the* play.” But then we hear, over the intertitle “No Thing,” a voice-over: “And then, suddenly, it was the time of Chernobyl,<sup>100</sup> and everything disappeared, everything, and then, after a while, everything came back, electricity, houses,<sup>101</sup> cars—everything except culture and me.” Taking into consideration Godard’s view that “culture is the norm, art the exception,” the protagonist later amends what he said: “I don’t know if I made this clear before, but

this was after Chernobyl. We are in a time now when movies and more generally art have been lost, do not exist, and must somehow be reinvented.” What can be included among what was and continued to be lost, withdrawn, no longer available even after “everything” came back? Films by Robert Bresson (for example *Pickpocket*, 1959, *Au hasard Balhazar*, 1966, *Lancelot of the Lake*, 1974, *L'Argent*, 1983), Carl Theodor Dreyer (for example *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, 1928, *Vampyr*, 1932, *Ordet* [aka *The Word*, 1955]), Pier Paolo Pasolini (for example *Theorem*, 1968, *Arabian Nights*, 1974), Fritz Lang (for example *M*, 1931, and *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*, 1933), Leos Carax (*Mauvais sang* [*The Night Is Young*, 1986]), who plays Edgar in the film; Virginia Woolf’s book *The Waves* (1931), a copy of which we see on the beach in Godard’s film; Van Gogh’s *Wheatfield with Crows* (1890); Giotto’s *The Lamentation of the Dead Christ* (ca. 1305); works by Shakespeare, including *King Lear*, the play Godard’s film was supposed to adapt! What about François Truffaut’s films? With the possible exception of *The Woman Next Door* (1981), his films continued to be available past the surpassing disaster. Is the work of the American theater director Peter Sellars, who plays William Shakespeare Junior the Fifth, including his production of *King Lear* in 1980 and the Shakespeare plays he directed while he served as director of the Boston Shakespeare Company in 1983 and 1984, included in what was withdrawn by the surpassing disaster mentioned by Godard? No. Were Norman Mailer’s books published prior to 1987, as well as his script for Godard’s *King Lear*, withdrawn past the surpassing disaster announced by Godard? The script seems not to have been withdrawn, so that we end up with a

give-and-take where Shakespeare’s play is itself withdrawn and requires the resurrecting efforts of William Shakespeare Junior the Fifth, but many lines from it are available to the two characters Don Learo (an aging mobster) and his daughter Cordelia through the script Mailer adapted from the play, and end up in the resurrected play: “Thanks to the old man’s daughter, I [William Shakespeare Junior the Fifth] had some of the lines.” Taking into consideration the withdrawal of tradition past a surpassing disaster, what is one of the tasks of an artist or a writer? “My task: to recapture what had been lost, starting with the works of my famous ancestor... Oh, by the way, my name is William Shakespeare Junior the Fifth.” According to the protagonist, he was assisted by a certain Professor Pluggy, played by Godard, whose research, he had been told, was “moving along parallel lines to” his. Is Godard’s *King Lear*’s image of the joining of torn petals back to a dead flower, which resuscitates, a citation of Cocteau’s resurrection of the shredded flower in *The Testament of Orpheus* (1960)? Is it an attempt to resurrect the flower? Is it a resurrection of the image of a resurrection of a flower in Cocteau’s film about the undead? It is the latter. Godard’s *King Lear* tackles the three tasks of the filmmaker and/or artist and/or thinker and/or writer or and/or video maker concerning a surpassing disaster: 1) to reveal the withdrawal of tradition, and therefore that a surpassing disaster has happened. *King Lear*: “I know when one is dead and when one lives” (William Shakespeare, *King Lear* 5.3.260); past surpassing disasters, it is important to know when something is available, and when it is no longer available since withdrawn: the play, which is ostensibly available to the producers of the film and to its screenwriter,

Norman Mailer, is no longer available to the community of the surpassing disaster; 2) to resurrect what has been withdrawn by the surpassing disaster, which is the task assigned to the protagonist, a descendant of William Shakespeare, who rediscovers *Hamlet*'s "to be, or not to be" while in Denmark, and manages to rediscover 99% of, if not the complete *King Lear*—yes, past the surpassing disaster, "the image will appear in a time of resurrection" (these words are attributed by Professor Pluggy to St. Paul); 3) and, in some ominous periods, to imply symptomatically by the timing of the film that a surpassing disaster is being prepared in scientific experiments in various laboratories and/or by governmental and/or nongovernmental covert operations, etc., thus functioning as an alarming implicit appeal for thoughtful intervention by the minority of *contemporaries* to prevent the imminent surpassing disaster from happening.

We have to distinguish between on one side quotation, remake, "repetition" of oneself, and, on the other side of the surpassing disaster, resurrection. Sometimes, one accuses some filmmakers, writers and artists—indeed they themselves sometimes voice the apprehensive self-accusation (for example, Wenders in his *Notebook on Cities and Clothes*, 1989)—that they may be beginning to "repeat" themselves. In some cases, they are indeed beginning to "repeat" themselves (Wenders' *Notebook on Cities and Clothes*); but in some other cases, they are actually attempting to resurrect their work and art in general following a surpassing disaster, one which may be explicitly invoked in their films or their interviews. Past a surpassing disaster, and taking into account the withdrawal of tradition, as a historian and archivist of myself, I can imitate

myself, "repeat" myself, but as a filmmaker I cannot do so even if I wished since my previous work is no longer available—I have to resurrect it before being able to "repeat" myself. Preservation of an artistic film that was made prior to a surpassing disaster requires not only the actual conservation of the filmstrip in excellent condition, without deterioration of color, etc., but also the resurrection of the film. The surpassing disaster alluded to or explicitly presented in a film may remain just part of the latter's diegesis or it may reach beyond the diegesis to the film itself or to a previous film or films or paintings, with the consequence that the spectators may then witness, as a countermeasure to the withdrawal, the apparition of resurrected images in the film. In Tarkovsky's last film, *The Sacrifice* (1986), the shot of the bedroom curtain flapping in the wind and modulating the light while the child sleeps is reminiscent of the scene in the hotel room in *Noŝtalgia* (1983) in which the advent, change in intensity, and then cessation of rainfall alter the light coming through the windows. Later, those gathered to celebrate Alexander's birthday hear warplanes flying overhead, experience an unexpected power failure, discover that the phone is inoperative, then are informed by a radio announcement of the imminent threat of a nuclear disaster. Alexander prays to God, vowing that if the world is spared, he would willfully lose everything: his family, house ... When following his vow and the "averted" disaster, Alexander returns to his child's room with its lightly-flapping curtains, I feel that there is "repetition" neither of the shot in *Noŝtalgia* nor of the shot's earlier appearance in *The Sacrifice*, but rather that we are watching the latter shot's resurrection. A beautiful differential coexistence of "repetition" and resurrection within the same film:

to one side of the surpassing disaster, unfortunate “repetition” by the filmmaker of a shot from a previous film; to the other side of the surpassing disaster, a resurrection of a shot from the same film. Untowardly, after filming that shot as a resurrected one, Tarkovsky got sidetracked from the surpassing disaster by the script—the script should be delimited by the surpassing disaster. Nonetheless, in *The Sacrifice*, a sort of *answer of the real* made the camera break down in the middle of the shot in which Alexander sets fire to the house, leaving Tarkovsky with both an unusable shot and the burned-to-the-ground house (one more unusable celluloid strip in a film of the surpassing disaster, to join the one on the floor of the editing suite over which the protagonist crashes in Godard’s *King Lear*). Tarkovsky accompanied his character not just through identification and empathy,<sup>102</sup> but also through this parapraxis<sup>103, 104</sup> confirming that even though the house still stood there, it was withdrawn and had to be resurrected in order for it to be available for the shot of its burning by the protagonist. Past the surpassing disaster, Tarkovsky had to rebuild an exact copy of the house in order to film its burning, and this time he used two cameras to cover the event. A filmmaker who had contributed to rendering visible in his films *Solaris* (1972) and *Andrei Rublev* (1966) respectively instances of what was otherwise either invisible, the world of Stanisław Lem’s science fiction novel *Solaris*, or for the most part no longer visible, fifteenth-century Russia, had then to deal, in *The Sacrifice*, with what *was materially present*, the house, as unavailable to perception expect through a resurrection. Whereas in other Tarkovsky films an unworldly version of something that is no longer there sometimes repeatedly erupts in a radical closure,

for example Hari in *Solaris*, in *The Sacrifice* what is materially still there is immaterially withdrawn as a consequence of a surpassing disaster (that was seemingly averted). In this film which begins with Alexander planting a dry tree trunk in the sand and telling his little son about a monk who for three years daily watered a dead, dry tree until it blossomed again, and ends with the small child carrying two heavy buckets of water to the tree and watering it, Tarkovsky resurrects one of his shots and the house. Here cinema deconstructs what it ostensibly usually does, preserve what is disappearing (Bazin), what is withdrawing into the past: it shows us the withdrawal of what it preserved from disappearing (into the past).

Any building that was not razed to the ground during the surpassing disaster, materially subsisting in some manner; but was immaterially withdrawn by the surpassing disaster; and then had the fortune of being resurrected by artists, writers, and thinkers is a monument. Therefore, while many buildings that were considered monuments of the culture in question are revealed by their availability, without resurrection, past the surpassing disaster as not monuments at all of that culture, other buildings, generally viewed as indifferent, are revealed by their withdrawal to be monuments of that culture.

It is highly likely that the artworks and literary and thoughtful texts that, past a surpassing disaster, imply the withdrawal of other artworks and literary and thoughtful texts; and/or the messianic movements that, past a surpassing disaster, reveal the withdrawal of the religious dispensation and law would have themselves been withdrawn past the surpassing disaster had they existed when it

happened. The two kinds of artworks and literary and thoughtful texts or of religious movements, the withdrawn and the one that reveals the withdrawal, are part of the same tradition.

Past the surpassing disaster, tradition is inaccessible by traditional, “legitimate” means. In 1941, in Buenos Aires, Borges published a collection of eight short texts, one of which is titled: “Pierre Menard, Author of *Don Quixote*.” What surpassing disaster could Pierre Menard have felt and that made him attempt to write the ninth, the twenty-second and the thirty-eighth chapters of Part One of *Don Quixote*? What surpassing disaster could Borges have felt for him to think of writing such a text, specifically in September 1934? Had this something to do with the recent congress of the Nazi party at Nuremburg in the same year and month? One of the manners of looking at Sherrie Levine’s (re)photographs of the work of other photographers, for example “After Walker Evans” (1981) (the Evans photograph dates from 1936), “After Edward Weston” and “After Eliot Porter,” is to view them as a resurrection of the works of these photographers (it may be that as a postmodern artist, she can resurrect only in series: the six “After Andreas Feininger,” 1979 ...). A title like “After Walker Evans” is really “After the Surpassing Disaster—Walker Evans.” What surpassing disaster(s) separate(s) Sherrie Levine from these works? In her later work, the *After* takes place in parenthesis (*The Bachelors (After Marcel Duchamp)*, 1989), implying that the appropriation (the casting of the fountain in bronze in *Fountain (After Marcel Duchamp)*, 1991; the change of the painted billiard table of Ray’s painting *La Fortune*, 1938, into an object made of felt, mahogany and resin, and multiplied six times in *La Fortune (After Man Ray)*) is occurring

on the basis of the prior resurrection that made the works available again (such as Sherrie Levine works as “After Walker Evans” and “After Edward Weston” may have contributed to resurrecting what has been withdrawn past the surpassing disaster in question, so that there was no need to try to resurrect the aforementioned Duchamp and Ray works specifically). That is why the critics’ anachronistic commentary on the earlier rephotographs in terms of appropriation and the questioning of originality and authorship should be displaced to the aforementioned later works<sup>105</sup>—one cannot appropriate if one is resurrecting, for prior to the resurrection the works are no longer available ... for, among other things, appropriation (and this irrespective of the mode of producing the post-surpassing-disaster work: Levine often uses tracing of copybook prints of the works in question). Since I view the earlier Levine work in terms of resurrection of what was withdrawn past a surpassing disaster rather than in terms of appropriation of available past works, I am surprised by “Untitled (After Alexander Rodchenko)” (1987): what nerve to do this minimal appropriation, making a work by merely rephotographing another! What would have been appropriate following the “After Edward Weston” (1981), is, rather than “After Edward Weston” (1990) (a bad repetition of her earlier work—granted rephotographing another photograph, but the gesture is the same), an “Untitled (After Edward Weston)” with the same photograph as in the 1981 Levine work—the placement of the *After* in parenthesis implying a move from resurrection to appropriation.

With the passage of time, tradition loses much of its potency and relevance not only due to the advent of new kinds of temporalities,

but also because following surpassing disasters one continued to treat it as still available (this is the other disaster: that one does not discern the extent of the disaster), this preparing for yet another, future disaster; in the case of a work like *A Thousand and One Nights*, which with its tales within tales within tales is certainly not outdated in this era of fractal self-similarity and hypertextuality but actual, it is the latter cause that is paramount in the curtailment of its potency and relevance. In many instances, a good part of what unconsciously motivates the attack on tradition is the intuition that a surpassing disaster had occurred before one's birth or in one's childhood and that no attempt was made to resurrect tradition, this leaving it a counterfeit of what it was.

A distinction has to be maintained between an understandable “willful” rejection by some of the defeated of what they associate with the defeat; and an objective withdrawal that has nothing to do with the intentions of individuals or communities, although the latter can *sometimes* be read as a symptom of the objective withdrawal. Following a surpassing disaster, one should in no way confuse those who are trying to resurrect what has been withdrawn, and which functioned as a counter to the state of affairs that led to the surpassing disaster, assisting thinkers, writer, artists, filmmakers, and messianists in resisting such an ominous state of affairs; and those who, as a cheap reaction, are advocating a return to tradition without noticing that it has been withdrawn—a withdrawal that largely accounts for the widespread ignorance and forgetfulness of tradition in all these post-surpassing-disaster returns to “it.”<sup>106</sup> All returns to tradition in the aftermath of a surpassing disaster have to be fought because tradition has been objectively withdrawn,

and hence the “return” would be to a counterfeit tradition, one characterized by reduction to the exoteric and lack of subtlety. From this perspective, invoking tradition as the domain of the genuine is derisory, since in many cases tradition did at one point or another undergo a surpassing disaster (for the Jews, the destruction of the temple, the expulsion from Spain, and the Nazi-period extermination; for Twelver Shi‘ites, the slaughter of imām Ḥusayn, his family, relatives and companions at Karbalā’; for the Ismā‘īlīs, the delay in the answer of the Second Emanation in a Gnostic drama in Heaven, which delay produced its retardation to the 10<sup>th</sup> rank; for the Armenians, the 1915-17 genocide; and for the Turks, who, in the first decades of the twentieth century, exemplify one of the clearest cases of the withdrawal of tradition, for instance of the Arabic script, Sufi lodges, Sufi music and Ottoman art music, and the fez—well, it is for Turks (and some others) to answer “this question mark so black, so huge it casts a shadow over him [or her] who sets it up” [Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*]), and hence is, in the absence of the resurrection of what has been withdrawn by the surpassing disaster, rather the arena of the duel with the double and of the suspicion of usurpation by the counterfeit (prior to the Mahdī’s/messiah’s resurrection of tradition, there is the danger that his double, *al-Dajjāl*/the Antichrist, will be mistaken for him). Following the surpassing disaster, I am confronted with the counterfeit/double in one form or another: without the seemingly absurd attempt at resurrecting what for most people is extant and available, the succeeding generations will have received counterfeit tradition; but every resurrection by anyone who is not “the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25) is ironic, insinuates a



distance between the one or the thing that has been resurrected and himself/herself/itself: in so far as I am not “the resurrection and the life,” I can never be sure that the one I resurrected is the one who was deceased rather than an other, his or her double (Godard’s *New Wave*). Coming to check on him as he lay very sick, *covered with sores*, in the dry, hot weather, his sisters saw that Lazarus had fallen asleep. They thought hopefully: “If he sleeps, he will get better.” He soon woke up, anxious, and, when questioned by his sisters, told them the dream he had just had: “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate I, a beggar, laid, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked my sores. The time came when I died and the angels carried me to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with myself by his side. So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’ But Abraham replied, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.’ He answered, ‘Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father’s house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.’ Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.’ ‘No, father Abraham,’ he said, ‘but if someone from

the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”<sup>107</sup> Later, many Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. One of them, their neighbor Abraham, a rich man, was dressed in purple and fine linen. He was accompanied by his five sons—the sixth had died recently. None of the rich old neighbor’s five sons were convinced by Lazarus’ rising from the dead that Jesus is “the resurrection and the life.” Instead of repenting, did one or more of them go to the Pharisees and tell them what Jesus had done? Taking into consideration that Lazarus was resurrected by Christ, “the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25), it is felicitous that we no longer hear about him in John. But what would have happened had Lazarus been resurrected by someone other than the one who is *the resurrection and the life*? In that case, while it is possible that he would have gone back to his two sisters, been viewed by them as their brother until the end of their earthly lives, and was reconciled with his life,<sup>108</sup> it is thenceforth also possible that, one hour, two days, three months, or four years later, on looking up from all her preparations for the supper as Mary poured perfume on her brother or sat on the floor listening to what he said, Martha would have had the apprehension that the man she was looking at is not Lazarus, not really their brother, and would have begun to manifest the symptoms one associates with those suffering from Capgras syndrome. Indeed it is possible that a Lazarus who has been resurrected by someone other than *the resurrection and the life* would sooner or later apprehensively suspect that he is not Lazarus, suffering from depersonalization.

It is often the case that the thinker, writer, videomaker, filmmaker, artist or religious figure attempting to resurrect pre-surpassing-disaster tradition feels that he or she failed to accomplish such an incredible task. But while he or she may be the best judge as to whether there has been a withdrawal, he or she often proves not to be a good judge as to whether the resurrection succeeded or not. That is why oftentimes those insensitive to the withdrawal of tradition past a surpassing disaster have the last word against those sensitive to it since they can, after the latter's acknowledgment of failure to resurrect, point out rightly that tradition is available—resurrection is often a thankless task. The vanity of some thinkers, writers, artists, and filmmakers is revealed not by their attempt to resurrect what has been withdrawn past a surpassing disaster but by their considering that they are the best judges of its success or failure (were I to try to resurrect but then consider that I failed to do so, I would most probably feel that the preceding words are unconvincing or do not apply to me!). In an interview in the May 1982 issue of *Cahiers du Cinéma*, Godard confesses to feeling slightly hypocritical in making *Passion*'s protagonist, the film director Jerzy, unable to film because he does not feel that he has achieved the right lighting for the tableaux vivants, when he, Godard, thought on the contrary that the lighting is right, filming these tableaux vivants. Rather than being viewed in terms of hypocrisy, this presence of double standards is to be attributed to the infelicity that the one doing the resurrection, in this case Jerzy, is not the best judge as to whether it succeeded or failed, which makes him continue to feel that his attempt has failed when it has succeeded for another. The coexistence in Godard's *Passion* side

by side in the same camera movement of different tableaux vivants from different historical periods is not so much postmodern as the one we expect in the case of *the resurrection of the dead* (on Judgment Day? Rather on the day of the *critique of judgment* [or should I write, *critique of the power of judgment*?] preparing one, albeit inadequately, *to have done with the judgment of God*). If one feels unequal to the attempt to resurrect what was withdrawn by the surpassing disaster, tradition, then it can be argued that at the end of the “season in hell,” one is to abolish tradition altogether: “absolutely modern” (Rimbaud). A modernism that willfully rejects tradition or is indifferent to it never really becomes absolute, but remains a relative one that quickly turns abstract when it attempts to become absolute—hence its tone of exaggeration then. Only those who fully discerned the withdrawal of tradition past a surpassing disaster, tried to resurrect tradition, but failed in doing so may become truly absolutely modern.<sup>109</sup>

## The Subtle Dancer

Dedicated to Merce Cunningham, whose dances suspend my interior monologue<sup>110</sup>

While watching a great dance film, I witnessed a dancer enter a painting. Taking into account that human bodies cannot do this, was that movement metaphorical or symbolic or oneiric? It was none of these. It struck me as a fact, an *aesthetic fact*. Consequently, since it happened and since normal human bodies cannot enter paintings, the question becomes: what kind of body is produced



by dance and can do what I just witnessed, enter a painting? It is a subtle body with different characteristics than the physical one.

In one sort of “dance,” the dancer remains in the homogenous space and time where his or her physical body is—I consider this sort a form of theater or performance rather than dance. But another kind of dance projects a subtle dancer into a realm of altered movement, body, space and time specific to it,<sup>111</sup> though having an affinity to the undead realm.<sup>112</sup> In *The Band Wagon*, the walk of Fred Astaire and Cyd Charisse in Central Park imperceptibly turns into a dancelike mannered movement that maintains the dancers where their physical bodies are; I can very well imagine the following variant of this scene: they go again to the park, reach the same spot where earlier they imperceptibly began their mannered movement, but this time while ostensibly seeming to have continued merely to walk, the peculiar alterations in space and time imply that they are now dancing—the one seemingly walking is actually dancing if he or she has been projected by means of his or her movement into dance’s specific realm of altered body, space and time. While film usually makes the projection induced by dance explicit, so that we can actually witness the subtle dancer and dance’s specific altered movement, space and time, on the stage the projection of a subtle dancer into dance’s realm frequently remains implicit, felt by the discerning spectator. An imperceptive audience member thought that he was the first to leave the theater, in protest against what he viewed to be anything but dance—little did this slow-witted person know that way before him the dancer on the stage had, by means of dance, also left—to a realm of altered movement, body, space and time.

Given that they are projected as subtle dancers into dance’s realm of altered movement, space and time, then even while seemingly continuing dancing with their ostensible partners, dancers have left them behind when the latter are ersatz dancers. Ironically, on two different occasions an ersatz dancer swerved toward me while I was sitting at a remove and accompanying the real dancers through writing, and incited me, “Just do it!”; can’t she see that I am doing it, writing, while, being an ersatz dancer, she is not doing it, is not really dancing?

In narrative dances, the actor-dancer is a hinge between two entities: the character, and a subtle dancer he or she projects through his or her dance and that the artwork may (for example in the “dream ballets”<sup>113</sup> of cinematic musicals) or may not explicitly present. By getting rid of the plot, one gets rid of the character but not necessarily of the subtle dancer. It seems that many of the 1960s dances attempted to get rid not only of the character, but also and mainly of the projected subtle dancer, since their unreserved aim was to nullify the aura; yet the aura cannot be nullified merely by minimizing or even annulling derivative sorts of distance through the use of nonprofessionals, everyday clothes (instead of pointe shoes, tutus, etc.), everyday movements (instead of *assemblé*, *ballotté*, *battement*, *batterie*, *vole brisé*, *chaînés*, *chassé*, *entrechat*, *fouetté rond de jambe en tournant*, *jeté*, *pirouette* ...) and everyday positions (instead of *arabesque*, *attitude* ...); the eschewal of performing on a proscenium; and/or devising situations that make the performers intermingle with the spectators. Since even when the dancer is ostensibly with non dancers in a certain location, and they ostensibly touch him or her, he or she is dancing in the form

of his or her subtle body elsewhere, in dance's realm of altered movement, body, space and time, to which the one who is not a dancer has no access, dance is an exquisite example of the aura, of a *phenomenon of a distance, however close it may be* (Walter Benjamin).<sup>114</sup> But it is not only discerning non dancers who feel the aura of the dancer; other dancers too feel the aura of the dancer since dancers continue to be separated however close they get to each other: even a *pas de deux* is made possible by a seamless *superimposition* of two dancers' movements across the two distinct branches of dance's realm of altered space and time into which their dance projects them. Taking into account that both those who are not dancers and other dancers feel a dancer's aura, dancers are all-around auratic beings.<sup>115</sup>

When a dancer addresses the camera before being projected by his dance into a realm of altered movement, body, space and time, he or she is addressing an indeterminate spectator, but when the subtle dancer addresses the camera while in dance's realm of altered movement, space and time—one of whose characteristics is the intermingling of media and world—he or she is addressing each specific audience member—such an address induces a psychotic affect.

Dance is an altered state of the body, hence presents its own dangers, for example the loss of the reflection/shadow, the immobilization induced by diegetic silence-over, from which the dancer can never be sure when, indeed if at all, he or she will be released, and the auto-movement of the dancer's shoes, which, for as long as it persists, forces him or her to continue dancing; *and*, concurrently, a safeguard when going through other, more

dangerous states of altered consciousness, time, space and body, for example death-as-undead.

Is it surprising that while putting on makeup in preparation for the dance, which will project a subtle version of each of them in its realm of altered movement, space and time, dancers often surround themselves with tokens of their identity, for example their photos, their reflections in the mirror, and some of their cherished belongings, and talk about their memories and projects? Such seemingly redundant assertions of identity and mentions of future plans often signal an apprehension that a threshold to a condition in which they may no longer have access to these is imminent.<sup>116</sup>

Most often, the dance student practices his or her movement in front of a mirror while training to achieve dance. Having achieved dance's state of altered movement and body, no dancer looks in a (reflective) mirror as a dancer, while dancing. She was now dancing in front of a mirror; she was unaware of this, but also, and unlike in Kierkegaard's *The Seducer's Diary*,<sup>117</sup> but as with the vampire, neither was the mirror. Why didn't the mirror register her presence? It was because she was not fully in front of it, but was already partly in dance's realm of altered body, space and time. At some point during their training, dancers of the same gender form duos that perform the same movements and gestures (Carlos Saura's *Sevillanas*, 1992). The dancer is thus training himself or herself to accept without anxiety the frequently dissimilar-looking alter dancer he or she projects in dance's realm of altered movement, body, space and time: in Agnes de Mille's ballet for Fred Zinnemann's *Oklahoma!* (1955), a somnambulant Laurey (played by Shirley Jones) extends her palm and rests it on the

raised palm of her dissimilar-looking alter dancer (the ballet dancer Bambi Linn)—the two hands miming an invisible border—and then her alter dancer, who replaces her in dance’s realm of altered movement, body, space and time, sees Curly (played by Gordon MacRae) standing, eyes open, next to his dissimilar-looking alter dancer (the ballet dancer James Mitchell), eyes closed, who then replaces him. The custom in musical films of choosing dancers to play the main characters is not such a good idea, for it obfuscates the material dancer’s replacement by the subtle, alter dancer in dance’s realm of altered body, movement, space and time, who may happen to be (as in the case of *Oklahoma!*’s Jud, who is played by Rod Steiger to both sides of the threshold) but *often is not* identical-looking to him or her. In this manner and sense, every dance is a *bal masqué* in the eye of the dancing beholder (and the film spectator). In Vincente Minnelli’s *The Band Wagon* (1953), if we view the alteration of Tony Hunter in the distorting mirror at an arcade as a foreshadowing of his future metamorphic transition to dance’s realm of altered movement, body, space and time, then the actor playing him should not have been Fred Astaire since the latter performs the subtle dancer that dance projects into its realm.<sup>118</sup> A high degree of ascesis is required of the advanced dance student in order to accept the dissimilar reflection provided by another dance student who is duplicating his or her every movement, or for the subtle, alter dancer, who loses the natural reflection and the natural shadow<sup>119</sup> in dance’s realm of altered movement, body, space and time, to accept the dissimilar, unnatural reflections or shadows<sup>120</sup> he or she encounters there;<sup>121</sup> at one point in *Swing Time*, the other female dancers, who are performing the same dance movements

as the one dancing with Astaire, line up behind Astaire’s partner, giving the impression of a *mise en abîme*, that they are the non-identical-looking reflections of the one dancing with him.<sup>122</sup> Regrettably, the dancer may be tempted to try to reestablish the differentiation with the dissimilar unnatural reflection through rivalry and jealousy, as is clearly the case in Carlos Saura’s *Carmen* and in the *pas de trois* in his *Tango*. Yet, as René Girard has shown, “when mimetic rivalry escalates beyond a certain point, the rivals engage in endless conflicts that undifferentiate them more and more; they all become doubles of one another.”<sup>123</sup> This is clear in the dances of rivalry in Carlos Saura’s *Blood Wedding* (1981) and *Carmen* (1983), where the two rivals (whether individuals or groups, for example the two groups at the factory in *Carmen*) try to distinguish themselves by excelling in making the same gestures, but instead become more manifestly mirror images. All this rivalry, with its Girardian danger of undifferentiation and doubling and that very frequently ends in death-as-cessation-of-life (*Blood Wedding*, *Carmen*), may also be an intuitive way to forget the uncannier doubling in death-as-undead. A mortal aristocrat who died before dying, I am attuned to the difference between someone who prefers to me people I reckon to be quite inferior or tries to induce jealousy and provoke rivalry; and rare persons, for example those who died before dying and dancers, who have no discrimination not because they are plebeian,<sup>124</sup> but because for them all distinction has been undermined.<sup>125</sup> I quickly avoid the former; on the contrary, I am fascinated by the latter, in the company of whom what I hold dear is cruelly discounted.

Taking into consideration that dance is affined to death-as-

undeath, are over-turns, a peculiarity of the undeath realm,<sup>126</sup> one of the risks of dance's realm of altered movement, body, space and time? If so, then (ballet) dance's pirouettes would be an attempt to render, albeit awkwardly in the absence of cinema's cuts or of an equivalent of the blocking of Kabuki theatre's kurogo,<sup>127</sup> conjointly the over-turn and a countermeasure to it, a turn that overturns the over-turn, through the production of a two-faced straightforward being.

In Carlos Saura's *Love, the Magician* (aka *A Love Bewitched*, 1986), while showing almost no signs of psychological vengefulness toward her husband, José, and his mistress, Lucia, Candela has a perfect revenge on both through the permeability of the two realms of life and death made possible by her dance—while she dances, the other gypsies who were singing and dancing with her are suddenly frozen,<sup>128</sup> this implying that a transportation, through dance's altered realm of movement, body, space and time, to the undeath realm has already occurred:<sup>129</sup> José is engaged in a fight during which he is mortally stabbed, becoming thus the first victim of such a permeability, then, following the community's misstep of trying to ritually stop the permeability of life and death (which is allowing the dead José to become a revenant) by means of what made possible such permeability in the first place, dance,<sup>130</sup> and after being taught how to dance by Candela's lover,<sup>131</sup> Lucia is possessed by the dead José, thus confined in the *barzakh* between life and death.

In religious ceremonies, dance frequently plays the role of a means of transition to other realms, religious ones. But dance can implicate its own realm. Indeed, it can implicate its own realm

even as it acts as a passage to a religious one—the dance realm, although it may be similar in many of its characteristics to the one to which the dance is leading in the religious ceremony, is nonetheless a distinct one.

Dance connects directly what someone who is not dancing would consider and experience as non-contiguous spaces-times. Dance transports the subtle dancer seamlessly from one space-time to another, non-contiguous one, thus juxtaposing the two. In the ballet of Minnelli's *An American in Paris* (1951), dance transports the dancer directly and seamlessly from Place de la Concorde (à la Dufy) to the Pont-Neuf and the flower market (à la Renoir) to a deserted street (à la Utrillo) to the Jardins des Plantes (à la Rousseau) to Place de L'Opéra (à la Van Gogh) to Montmartre and the Moulin Rouge (à la Toulouse-Lautrec), then back to Place de la Concorde.<sup>132</sup> In Maya Deren's *A Study in Choreography for Camera*, the film edits implement this characteristic of dance's realm of altered space, time and body: Tatley Beatty raises his leg in the woods then, in a cut on movement, deposits his foot in a room, then, in another cut on movement, in a hall. In cinema, such a juxtaposition of non-contiguous spaces-times made possible by dance has for consequence that the offscreen frequently turns out not to be the homogeneous extension of the on-screen space. Those who refuse, and justly so, to have film merely document a dance must guard against the eventuality of occulting that many if not most of the devices their films are using to better show the dance, for example edits that seamlessly join different spaces-times, altered movements such as backward in time motion, speeded and slow motion, etc., are intrinsic to dance, objective characteristics the

latter implements on its own diegetically, although often virtually, i.e., often by means of the subtle dancer it projects and who often remains implicit in theatrical presentations. Consequently, the filmmaker has to try to prevent the misinterpretation by the spectators of the abrupt “changes of place and focus”<sup>133</sup> in dance films as non-diegetic filmic edits: for example, whereas when the camera pans with a character who is not a dancer as he or she steps beyond the frame, our natural assumption that the previously offscreen space is the homogeneous extension of the previously on-screen space is confirmed, when later in the film a dancer steps beyond the frame, we discover that the previously offscreen space is inhomogeneous to the space that was on-screen, learning that such “changes of place and focus” are to be attributed to the dance (unlike walk, dance, with its aristocratic quality, does not move between different spaces-times, linking them gradually; it rather directly connects them). It would be also instructive in a dance film to have the subtle dancer seamlessly continue a sentence he or she began in one space-time in a second space-time that is not contiguous to the first and that he or she reached in the film in a cut on movement, this indicating that unlike with the standard cinematic edit, the direct joining of non-contiguous spaces-times in dance is diegetic. Gracefully, the dancer is not jarred at all by either these furtive sudden changes of space-time or the sudden freezing and the sudden coming back to motion of the other dancers, and he or she is able to come out of such an immobilization without needing any readjustment, hence without clumsiness, thus including the interruption in a continuity.

Taking into consideration dance’s direct linking of non-

contiguous spaces-times, in many dance films the dissolve from one location-time to another, remote one frequently does not imply a passage of time between them but implements an extra movement: a movement while not moving or a movement to the second power. In Max Ophüls’ *The Earrings of Madame de ...* (1953), as the two dancers waltz, they move in dissolves from one space-time to another. The circumstance that their dialogues refer to waiting between their successive meetings across four days, then two days, then twenty-four hours can be interpreted in two ways. 1) It is not dance, but film edits that produce the changes in time and space; in which case, we are dealing with a non-diegetic abridgment of the diegetic time, and the mentioned waiting is a psychological state experienced by the two protagonists at various times during these four days, then two days, then twenty-four hours. 2) It is not the film edits, but dance that produces the changes in time and space; in which case, no time passed between these meetings, and the waiting is all in the words and has a subtle performative modality.

Immobilization is an element of dance, more specifically it is the genetic element of movement that has to be reached in order for all sorts of extraordinary movements to become possible,<sup>134</sup> for example:

— Diegetic speeded motion, for instance at the party in Gene Kelly’s *Invitation to the Dance* (1956).

— Diegetic slow motion. In Charles Walters’ *Easter Parade* (1948), during a performance in the theater, while the other dancers in the background move in standard motion, Astaire dances in slow motion. In Maya Deren’s *Ritual in Transfigured Time* (1946), the seated woman played by Deren moves a yarn in slow motion while

the other two women in the room act in standard motion. In *Blood Wedding*'s knife-fight, Saura lets the dancers do their slow motion without resorting to cinematic special effects, this making it clearer that the slow motion is an effect of the dance itself.<sup>135</sup>

— Diegetic backward in time movement, whether it is rendered by recourse to cinematic special effects (for example the woman rising backward in the air in Deren's *Ritual in Transfigured Time*)<sup>136</sup> or takes the form of a dancer's smooth movement backward with no hesitation whatsoever<sup>137</sup> (whether such a movement is motivated, for example backing off—into the past, to a time prior to a threat facing him or her—or, preferably, not). In Agnes de Mille's *Fall River Legend*, when we see the youthful Lizzie standing apart, pensive, then find her in the presence of the child Lizzie around the time of her mother's death and her father's remarriage, are we to consider what is occurring as a stylized rendition of a simple memory of the youthful Lizzie? Is it rather some sort of hypnotic reliving of the past? Or did she actually return to the past—a return made possible by the immobilizations we witness throughout de Mille's piece? It is most probably the latter<sup>138, 139</sup> Taking into consideration that we witness an interpenetration of times within the same movement in *Cría cuervos* (1976) by Carlos Saura, it is fitting that this filmmaker went on to make several dance films, where the interpenetrations of past and present will no longer be, as in *Cría cuervos*, only special effects of subjective memory, but objective.<sup>140</sup> Conversely, it is often the case that even in their other films, directors who dealt with dance in one or more of their films do not have straightforward flashbacks. Does the subtle body acquire new memories in the altered space and time into which

dance projects it? Yes, but frequently these memories remain dissociated from the others. Approaching the dancer at a mundane party, he asked him: "We've met before? Don't you remember?" "No!" For some reason, the dancer felt that his negative answer was unconvincing—even to himself. That dancers, who can actually go back to the past, something made possible by their immobilization at an earlier time or by other dancers' immobilization, do not try to alter it cannot be fully explained by the repetition-compulsion, which acts as a sort of hypnosis, distracting one from reacting appropriately to the situation one wants to alter, but is to be attributed largely to their endorsement of fate. The backward in time movement and dancers' endorsement of fate together make possible the apparent recurrence of the exact same events, as at the party in Deren's *Ritual in Transfigured Time*. Taking into account dancers' endorsement of fate, a dance adaptation of Sophocles' *Oedipus the King* does not have to start after Oedipus has killed his father and married and had sexual intercourse with his mother. Only in the context of dance, which makes possible motion into the past in the realm into which it projects the subtle version of the dancer, can a film, novel or play concerned with the oracular not have the oracle and what it presages already come to pass by the time the film, novel or play begins, but instead have it be what not only the majority of the audience members and readers but also its protagonists usually mistake it to be: something one can still possibly alter.<sup>141</sup> Thus dance has often resorted to past periods as setting not only for extrinsic reasons, for instance exoticism, but because his or her earlier immobilization or that of other dancers makes possible for the dancer to actually, though subtly,

go back in time. Since dance makes possible an actual move back in time, frequently the flashback in dance films rather than serving a narrative function, for example the implementation of an act of memory of the character, induces the sensation of an extra movement (either a movement while not moving [when the dancer is not moving in both shots of the dissolve] or a movement to the second power [when the dancer is moving in one of the shots of the dissolve]) that may itself be diegetic or function as a foreshadowing of a diegetic one.

— A diegetic extra movement: a movement while not moving if the subtle dancer is motionless or immobile, and a movement to the second power if he or she is moving. While all kinds of objects can become automobile as a consequence of the freezing of some or all of the dancers, for example the cans that move by themselves before the ball that the Fred Astaire character aims at them hits them in the arcade in Vincente Minnelli's *The Bandwagon*, there are two kinds of auto-movement that are exemplary in this regard: the auto-movement of the ground and the auto-movement of the dancer's shoes. And yet the same anomaly, immobilization, which was the condition of possibility of the auto-movement of the shoes, can seize the dancer and thus suspend his or her compulsion to indefinitely move along with the automobile shoes. Unfortunately for *Giselle*'s Albrecht, who is forced to dance on and on, several times falling exhausted to the ground, he doesn't reach the state of freezing, while the Wilis are constantly gracefully in and out of it, and were in it in their graves. We find the conjunction of a freezing of the dancers and an auto-movement of the ground in the finale of Charles Walters' *The Barkleys of Broadway* (1949), where Astaire

and Rogers dance in front of figures initially immobilized on a revolving fountain; and in the beginning of "Broadway Melody" in *Singin' in the Rain*, where immobilized figures on a moving floor glide by the dancer who has just arrived on Broadway. Indeed, in *Easter Parade* the gliding floor in the number "A Couple of Swells" (as well as the slow motion of Astaire) confirmed my feeling during Astaire's and Judy Garland's audition for Ziegfeld that the people behind them, *on the stage*, are immobilized. This is an exquisite scene as the people on the stage are at the intersection of three different states, at least two of which are mutually exclusive: an audience watching the performance, and whose subsequent applause at the latter's conclusion is its token of approval of what it saw; an audience entranced by the couple's dance, thus motionless, and whose members' startling applause is a means to snap themselves out of the trance;<sup>142</sup> dancers (hence their placement on the stage) that have become immobilized during the dance, in which case the applause is not their reaction of approval of what they saw—for they saw nothing (indeed, they do not turn their heads to accompany the couple's recurrent lateral movement across the stage<sup>143</sup>—a movement that functions as an equivalent to the waving gesture one makes in front of the eyes of someone to check if he or she is blind)—but is the joyful exercise of the ability to make a sound and to hear it following a diegetic silence-over. In addition to gliding floors whether at a theater stage or dance platform or in the world at large, changing backprojection or moving backdrops or flashbacks also can function as means to impart diegetic objective extra movement to the dancer. With the occurrence of immobilization, we have to be attentive to the



quality of the camera movement itself, which may be implicated in the diegesis, giving the dancer a diegetic extra movement. In some cases, it is simply this diegetic extra movement imparted by the camera that makes a film not just a documentation of a dance but a dance film. In case such movements while not moving or movements to the second power made possible by immobilizations are to occur in a film, it would be advantageous to have in advance instances of indiscernibility as to who is moving due to the relativity of movement, since such instances can function then as a subtle foreshadowing of the actual movement without moving. In rare instances, the extra movement may be imparted by the aforementioned indiscernability,<sup>144</sup> the movement now revealed to exist irrespective of the reference frame, with the result that dance (whose freezings, which are the coming of motionlessness to a sudden, furtive dead stop, present a case of absolute deceleration) would be generating a non-relativistic favoring of one reference frame over others. The aforementioned movement while not moving made possible by dance makes mountains, which most humans take to be steadfast, move. In its manner, dance, and not only faith (“I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move” [Matthew 17:20]), can move mountains.<sup>145</sup> Auto-movement is something that can be experienced not only in dance (*The Red Shoes*) but also in the thinking process (Darren Aronofsky’s *Pi*, 1998). Nietzsche frequently felt keenly an inability to stop thinking and he unconsciously tried to defend himself against such inability with migraines! (Pierre Klossowski: “The agonizing migraines, which Nietzsche experienced periodically as *an aggression that*

*suspended his thought*, were not an external aggression ... his own physical self was *attacking* in order to *defend* itself against a dissolution”).<sup>146</sup> Which thinker has not at some point felt conjointly that ideas are associating on their own and that he or she is not thinking (the exclusive association of ideas on their own is not really thinking but often a mark of madness)? Thinking should be neither “human, all too human” *nor* inhuman, all too inhuman (the exclusive associative auto-movement of ideas), but humanly inhuman or inhumanly human. But while the associative auto-movement of ideas is not thinking, the auto-movement of shoes or the ground in dance, made possible by the dancer’s earlier (or later?!) freezing or by other dancers’ concurrent freezing, is part of dance, making possible movement while not moving or a movement to the second power (when the dancer is moving), but sometimes revealing something inhuman about dance (*The Red Shoes*), possibly a mortal danger to the dancer. Nietzsche, who wrote in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*,<sup>147</sup> “I should only believe in a God who knew how to dance,”<sup>148</sup> as well as, in a 22 February 1884 letter to Erwin Rohde, “My style is a dance,”<sup>149</sup> is being hastily unconditional when he writes, “Get out of the way of all such unconditional men! They have heavy feet and sultry hearts: — they know not how to dance,”<sup>150</sup> since he is disregarding a danger that is not encountered by those “who know not how to dance,” a danger that is intrinsic to dance: an “unconditional,” automatic movement, the sort we see in *The Red Shoes*. O my very dear Nietzsche: who has not only a sultrier heart than *Giselle*’s Albrecht, who caused his jilted lover to commit suicide, but also heavier feet than him, who is forced to dance protractedly in the undead realm and who



but for the intercession of his lover Giselle would have been forced to continue to do so until his second, final death?

Whether the dancer becomes immobilized intentionally (to reach the genetic element of movement) or not (due instead to diegetic silence-over), the other subtle dancers perceive such a freezing as uncanny.

In Charles Walters' *The Belle of New York* (1952), the camera zooms-in on a still-frame of a recreation of a Currier & Ives painting until the frame of the painting disappears; once this immobilization that is non-diegetically imposed on the movement is discontinued, all the figures resume their dance movements,<sup>151</sup> then, with the exception of Fred Astaire and Vera-Ellen, freeze again, but this time diegetically. Soon after, Astaire and Vera-Ellen, while dancing amidst these men and women immobilized by the diegetic silence-over,<sup>152</sup> begin to tap dance and, hearing the sound of their footsteps, smile joyfully. When a musical film underscores dance, it becomes an instance of an ostensible continuation of "silent films"—actually, since the latter films were not really silent ones,<sup>153</sup> of the inaugural appearance of silent films—in the era of sound films, not only because of dance's stylized movements and gestures, which are affined to the manner people moved in "silent films" and to mime; but also and mainly because of the immobilization-inducing diegetic silence-over, which can at any moment hush sounds absolutely in dance's realm of altered movement, body, time and sound. It is fitting that the musical was the transition between the "silent" period of cinema and sound films (this transition is the subject around which *Singin' in the Rain* revolves), since there is often simultaneity of silence

and sound in dance. When in *An American in Paris*, the subtle dancers performed by Gene Kelly and Leslie Caron dance amidst immobilized people, who in the diegesis is hearing the music audible to the film spectators? The couple alone is hearing it. The subtle dancers performed by Caron and Kelly can visually detect the silence through its effect on the other subtle dancers: the latter are immobilized by it—a moving blind dancer would miss this silence. To the film spectator, there is simultaneously silence and music in this scene: the other, immobilized subtle dancers are in the silence and were immobilized by it, while the subtle dancers performed by Kelly and Caron can continue dancing because they are enwrapped by and hearing a diegetic music-over. Dance is not just about movement and music; it is equally about immobilization and silence<sup>154</sup>—it is curious that John Cage, who collaborated with Cunningham on many dance works, continued, despite the immobilizations encountered in dance, to declare that there is no silence!<sup>155</sup> In musicals that reach the immobilization of some of the dancers, we often witness other dancers' wonder at the very occurrence of sounds (wonder: a surprise without surprise, a graceful surprise). The surprise at the occurrence of the sound that film spectators must have experienced on first hearing an in-sync aural accompaniment of the image, the voice of Al Johnson in *The Jazz Singer* (1927), is thus induced whenever in the history of the musical film a dancer is released from the immobilization induced by diegetic silence-over or witnesses other dancers immobilized by such a silence, making such films reflexive whether they explicitly refer to their "silent" past (*Singin' in the Rain*) or not. In one of its modes, tap dancing in musicals is the joyful demonstration

that one can (still) hear the sound (most tap dancing has no such function, since the vast majority of tap “dancers” were never projected as subtle dancers in dance’s realm of altered movement, space, time and sound, where such a silence[-over] can occur and cover and absolutely hush the sounds[-in], and consequently they, as tap “dancers,” never encountered dancers immobilized by silence-over). One detects the joy in sound derivative from an encounter with and an overcoming of such a diegetic silence-over in Astaire’s use as percussion instruments of the gym’s appliances in Stanley Donen’s *Royal Wedding* (1951) or of the gadgets in a penny arcade at Times Square in *The Band Wagon* and a toy shop in *Easter Parade*, and in Kelly’s dance with a squeaky floorboard and a newspaper in *Summer Stock*.

In musical films, sometimes the subtle dancers dance to a music that has no diegetic source; sometimes the visible orchestra playing for the dancers does not have a number of the instruments that we hear, or one or more or indeed all of the musicians stop playing (in *Invitation to the Dance*, the valet begins to dance to the music the pianist is playing, enticing him to join her in the dance, which he does shortly, yet the piano music persists!) or do not visually accompany the audible music at the right speed. In a fine dance film, this implies that the music, song or tapping sound that continues even after the one who was ostensibly producing it stops doing so was all along a song-over or sound-over (in *Love, the Magician*, the song Candela continues to hear notwithstanding that the gypsies who were ostensibly singing it and clapping to it come to a dead stop is thus revealed to be a diegetic song-over), and that *dancers do not accompany music* that has a diegetic source

*but are accompanied by diegetic music-over* (although he or she may have began moving to the music-in to reach dance, once he or she is projected into dance’s realm of altered movement, space, time and sound, the fortunate subtle dancer is then accompanied by diegetic music-over). Why, following the rehearsals, does Merce Cunningham add music to the dance although the latter was choreographed irrespective of it, the music in some cases joined to the dance for the first time only at the premiere? Is it merely in accordance with the convention that when one goes to see a dance performance, one usually expects to both see dance and hear music? Not really. Is it to mark the independence or detachment of dance and music, as John Cage, who composed the music for many of Cunningham’s dances, demands? Yes, but it is also because the dancer is accompanied gracefully, as a grace, by diegetic music-over. Cage’s sounds can be considered music not only for the rigorous original reasons he gives, but also because in his collaboration with Cunningham, for instance in *Points in Space*, the sounds manage to perform music’s function of accompanying the dancer in the -over mode in the altered realm in which his or her dance introduced him or her. In Cage’s collaboration with Cunningham, for instance in *Child of Tree* (1975), there is a double determination of the sounds we hear: they are both music-over and the sounds that music-over gives back to us, allows us to hear, the “ambient sounds” conventional music-in repressed in the first place (the fact that diegetic music-over with long stretches of “silence”<sup>156</sup> can counter the silence-over, releasing the dancer from immobilization, clearly indicates that the “silence” it contains is the normal one, a misnomer for ambient sounds<sup>157</sup>).

“Silence” is interrupted by sound, which itself can be covered and absolutely hushed by diegetic silence-over,<sup>158</sup> which itself can be dispelled by diegetic music-over. While “everything grew still” as diegetic silence-over started spreading in the undeath realm, Orpheus opened his mouth to sing and moved his hand to pluck the lyre. Just then—“Oh pure uprising!”<sup>159</sup>—or should I write, “O sheer transcendence!”<sup>160</sup>—of a diegetic music-over and song-over, which countered the diegetic silence-over, with the consequence that even in Hades “Orpheus sings,” “Orpheus is singing!” How weird that Orpheus, who was a singer while alive, should still be able to sing and play the lyre in the undeath realm! Orpheus is the exemplar of a previously unheard of felicitous sync between the music he is playing as well as the song he is singing *and* a similar song-over as well as music-over.<sup>161</sup> The song-over and music-over releases the undead from the *unheimlich* immobility induced by the diegetic silence-over to the *heimlich* “silent”<sup>162</sup> motionlessness required to listen clearly to the music sung and played by Orpheus (“Creatures of stillness crowded ... / and it turned out that their light / stepping came not from fear or from cunning / but so they could listen” [Rilke, *Sonnets to Orpheus*]).<sup>163</sup> If Rilke was right to write, “When there’s singing, it’s Orpheus,” this would be because “when there’s Orpheus [in the undeath realm], there’s singing[-over].” The power of music to move us (*emotionally* and at the level of muscular empathy) is *founded* on its ability to release us from the immobility induced by the diegetic silence-over; only those who died before dying and subtle dancers know the fundamental sense of *music moves me*.

Toward the end of the Bolshoi Ballet’s production at Battersea

Park of Michel Fokine’s *Les Sylphides*, the frozen corps de ballet suddenly moves, bows, then freezes again. Then one of the three principal ballerinas enters the stage, bows to the audience, moves to the right and freezes. Then another one enters the stage, bows, moves in dancing steps backward to the left and freezes. Bowing is external to the plot; doing away with the plot allows, among many other things, the extension of dance even to the bowing—not merely in the sense of extending the stylized gestures and poses to the bowing, but also and mainly in the sense of allowing these dance gestures to be the occasion for some of the effects dance may produce, for instance freezing and therefore, amidst the audience’s applause, the diegetic silence-over it implies.<sup>164</sup>

What attracts many of the most interesting directors of musicals and choreographers to painting—beyond their possible resort to the latter in set design (à la large strokes of red paint on both the walls and the bar counter in the dance number of Gene Kelly and Mitzi Gaynor in George Cukor’s *Les Girls*, 1957)—is the freezing encountered in dance,<sup>165</sup> which provides the occasion to compose the immobilized subtle dancers into tableaux, and that the presence of flat painted backdrops next to the dancers and to three-dimensional objects renders the space with fractional dimension into which dance projects the dancer, a space that is neither two-dimensional nor three-dimensional, but between the two. In the ballet of *An American in Paris*, by placing Kelly in a recreation of Toulouse-Lautrec’s drawing *Chocolat dansant*, making him move for a while amidst flat painted cardboard figures, then enter a café where a number of human figures dressed and lighted in the Toulouse-Lautrec manner are immobilized while three Can

Can girls dance on the stage in the background, Minnelli made Kelly move from one space with fractional dimension to another, both with a dimension between 2 and 3, but the former closer to 2, the latter closer to 3. Cinema has presented us with visionary states where the three-dimensional material object or landscape itself is the vision (Herzog's *Heart of Glass*), and with realms, mainly in dance films, where space is not three-dimensional but has a fractional dimension between 2 and 3, a space between a surface and a volume. The Zen master's injunction "When you reach the top of the mountain, continue climbing" is something dancers accomplish in their own manner. The dancer's movement is frequently a creation of space, making the resultant space if not a full three-dimensional one then one that is closer to being so. The creation of space in dance is conveyed either directly, for example through the dancer's movement into flat backdrops, often paintings;<sup>166</sup> or indirectly, for example through going beyond a spot at which another dancer or the same dancer previously turned aside instead of proceeding ahead (implying thus space's limit). The grace of the dancer's movement then resides not only in the absence of imbalance and imprecision but also and mainly in his or her bringing space into existence at the pace of his or her smooth progress.

As Astaire and Vera-Ellen dance on the grass in *The Belle of New York*, they keep bumping against each other although they see each other; this is not because of an imperfection in their dance movements—these are still executed with elegant precision—but because their dance has introduced them into distinct branches of its realm of altered movement, body, space, and time. We can

thenceforth better detect in the following sections of the dance, which show the two dancers in perfect harmony, the seamless superimposition of their movements across the separate spaces into which the two dancers have been projected by dance—this tele-characteristic of dance, that it is a dance at a distance, is always missed by unrefined spectators, who take the two dancers dancing a *pas de deux* to be in the same location (these same unrefined spectators take Gene Kelly and the animated cartoon character Jerry the Mouse with whom he dances in George Sidney's *Anchors Aweigh*, 1945, to be in the same location, instead of discerning that they are *superimposed* figures who happen, against all odds, to exquisitely accompany each other [gracefully]). At one point in Saura's *Blood Wedding*, the two dancers, at the two ends of the dance studio, which stand for separate locations, make complementary gestures while not facing each other, each dancer's arms tracing and miming the outline of the other, beloved person in a caressing or hugging gesture. Dance provides an exemplary manner of testing whether two people are really a couple, for by dancing, they enter separate branches of dance's realm of altered space. Indeed, while a *grand pas de deux*, as codified by Marius Petipa, opens with the ballerina and her partner dancing together, it continues with solos ... The two dancers' maintenance of their interaction despite their projection into separate branches of dance's realm of altered space (the *grand pas de deux* concludes with a coda where the two dance together again) confirms that they are a couple or indicates the formation of a couple.

The frequent independence of the dancers in the choreography of Cunningham, where the phrases and movements for the different

dancers are determined by chance procedures, each dancer or group of dancers doing his/her/its separate movements, stems *partly* from this general characteristic of dance: its introduction of the dancers into separate branches of its realm of altered body, space and time (many of dance's personages are ones who suddenly disappear from sight: the sylphs ...) <sup>167, 168</sup> In Cunningham's work, the two kinds of independence, the furtive introduction of the dancers in separate branches of dance's altered space and the programmatic assignment of independent phrases to the different dancers, sometimes simultaneously determine the dance, sometimes alternate.

The solitude of the dancer: dancing amidst frozen figures, or with partners that are suddenly immobilized (in the dream ballet of *Oklahoma!*); dancing with his independent shadows, who end up abandoning him (Astaire in *Swing Time*), or independent reflection (Kelly in Charles Vidor's *Cover Girl*, 1944); dancing at a distance with a partner (*Blood Wedding*); dancing with an electronic puppet (Tharp's *The Catherine Wheel*), or with life-size windup toys that continue to move even after their winding mechanism has come to a stop, having acceded to the auto-movement made possible by dance (Ashton's "Tale of Olympia" in Powell and Pressburger's *The Tales of Hoffmann*). <sup>169</sup>

With the exception of the ones presented by cinema, subtle dancers are invisible to those who are not dancers; but they are also occasionally invisible to other dancers, when the latter become immobilized (In *The Earrings of Madame De ...* the coquettish Countess Louise, now in love, tells her paramour while they move to the music-in: "I wish I could be seen only by you." Were

the two actually dancing, would she need to wish for that when it is something dance often actualizes, for example through the freezing of others?). What cool impertinence to place dancers in the position of spectators and then have them immobilized, frozen still, for then they *have eyes but fail to see* (Mark 8:18) the other subtle dancers who have continued dancing to a diegetic music-over they hear—such impertinence is all the more remarkable when the latter dancers happen to be (performed by) Fred Astaire, Natalia Bessmertnova, or Galina Ulanova. Notwithstanding that musical films are often reflexive, showing the making of a musical within the film, they frequently stage the aforementioned absence of the look and therefore of the spectator.

## Radical Closure

Cinema, a centrifugal art according to Bazin in "Painting and Cinema" in *What Is 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"), 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 demarcating limits where there would not seem to be ones, for example the borders of the zones of spatial inexistence in dance's realm of altered body

and space, which zones are sometimes delineated by motionless dancers; or the *gateless gates* 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).

In *The Birds* (1963), Hitchcock gives another inflection to the expression "it is the end of the world" proffered by a drunkard in response to the report that birds have attacked the town's school children; and to the expression "it's a small world" jestingly proffered by Mitch in response to Melanie's statement that she's an acquaintance of his friend Annie: both are to be understood also as a comment on the radical closure of the world. 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 look 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 the temptation to explicate the possible humor of such a shot when considered as a 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 is homogeneous with what we see on screen, when that shot implies rather the absence of offscreen (the border 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 world. This end of the world, this radical closure is already foreshadowed impressionistically: in a long shot, Melanie walks toward the man who has reserved a boat for her, then, in a telephoto medium shot, she comes very close to him, almost bumps against him, and yet he does not step back—*exactly as if his back were already to the end of the world*. What do we notice in films and paintings that concern a radical closure and therefore deal with the irruption of unworldly entities and/or the diagrammatic? In the case of the sense of sight, because there is sometimes nothing to the other side of the threshold, 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),<sup>170</sup> 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 Magritte paintings as *The Unexpected Answer* (1933). In the case of the sense of hearing, one notes the attempt to stop perceiving the excessive, unworldly sounds, thus the severed ear in David Lynch's *Blue Velvet* (1986) and the severed ear of the painter of *Wheatfield with Crows*. Robert Altman errs at least twice in the first of the only two worthwhile scenes, which both take place in a wheat field, in his *Vincent & Theo* (1990): first by relating Van Gogh's severance of his ear to a fight with fellow painter Gauguin instead of to the unworldly cawing he



hears in the same scene in Altman's film; 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 on-screen but hidden or offscreen, and yet these sounds are not non-diegetic. Such sounds act both as an excess, since they are unworldly,<sup>171</sup> with the result that the world seems supersaturated; and as a symptom of lacks in the world, but not of the worldly objects that naturally produce them, rather of those objects (and spaces) that the people imprisoned in the radical closure at first misreckon to exist behind the horizon or a wall or door that marks 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*,<sup>172</sup> and the whistle that wakes Lale from her sleep or day-dreaming on the beach in 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:<sup>173</sup> 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 at all to his behavior or his emotions or his thoughts, but instead hold parallel 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 on-screen, they are doing so from the (temporal) end of the world. Duras' *Her Venetian Name in Calcutta Desert* (1976), which has the same sound track of *India Song* (1975), does not revisit the same places now in an exacerbated state of disrepair, no longer habitable; it rather reveals at which 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 events on the screen (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 appear, the connection is more tenuous between the images of *India Song* and its sound track than between the same sound track 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.”<sup>174</sup> 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 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.”<sup>175</sup> And yet Francis Bacon,

a great radical-closure artist, did make 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*.<sup>176</sup> Once we heed all the repeated explicit indications in Ferrara’s film that these 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 Alfred 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<sup>177</sup> showing abstract birds flying in an indeterminate space.<sup>178</sup> Thus



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 thus 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*; and in the section "Crows" of Kurosawa's *Dreams* (1990), when electronic birds fly over the wheat field.<sup>179</sup> 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 zones of spatial inexistence and 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 in Tharp's *The Catherine Wheel*, and two-dimensional painted backdrops? No, since the subtle dancer—and not some unworldly *sosie* of him or her—can create space by means of dancing and thus penetrate the otherwise two-dimensional sections or the inexistent zones of space. 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 otherwise *heimlich* is experienced as *unheimlich*, and a generalized Capgras syndrome takes place, what we have grown to feel as the most familiar having then the equivocation of what has come from a radical elsewhere<sup>180</sup>—in such cases the appearance of the double 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. The homely is no longer homely when it is radically closed, the *heimlich* (homely, familiar, intimate) takes on in such cases its antithetical sense of uncanny. In *Dreams*, when Kurosawa decided to make the spectator in a museum enter the paintings, why did he chose these to be a series of Van Gogh paintings ending with *Wheatfield with Crows*? It is probably because he must have sensed that the latter painting is open to entities from a radical elsewhere.<sup>181</sup> In Van Gogh's *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 the most 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 wider radical closure in which the house is situated, whatever he does to completely close the house will fail, because the wider 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<sup>182</sup> (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 [and with] 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).<sup>183</sup> 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 to do so from the edge of the frame rather than suddenly from anywhere in the space; 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 Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon*, a film where we encounter a radical closure of space since the running protagonist never catches up with the 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*' 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, and 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 entropy. In Jack Finney's *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, 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 it was scattered with sharp-edged little chuckholes, and occasional bigger ones"<sup>184</sup>—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 shattered 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 disconnected from each other and decomposing).

Having realized that they are in a radical closure, the pursuer walked without haste 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.<sup>185</sup> 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 hatching 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 threshold 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 contrive 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 after driving back to the town, the next time we come across him, he is once more attempting, this time unsuccessfully,

to flee the town. 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 ...”<sup>186</sup> This sudden knowledge is not the outcome of a process of thinking, but an extraneous thought inserted fully formed in their minds in the radically-closed space;<sup>187</sup> indeed, thought-insertion, and not some process of thinking, is most probably the manner by 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 threshold to be nonetheless crossed, the spectator has to feel either that the protagonists were suffering from an illusion and have finally conquered their psychological fascination and its *positive hallucination* of a border; 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.<sup>188</sup> “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 borders in the offscreen rather than somewhere on-screen or at the screen frame, to have the offscreen close radically in the offscreen, for instance by making the offscreen limit of a playground or building trace the border of a 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 borders trace the ends of the 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 borders 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 to 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 without genesis, 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 complexity at the expense of the surrounding space: thus, in *The Exterminating Angel*, the accelerated dissolution of the distinctions of class, education, 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 objective radical closure of the room. 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,<sup>189</sup> 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 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. Is it because two of the guests die in the radically-closed room of Buñuel's film and are not coincidentally replaced by their unworldly duplicates that all the permutations cannot be accomplished, with

the consequence that the ostensible exit of the prisoners 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. But I can conceive of a variant of the end of this Buñuel film of variants: having reached the original state after exhausting all the other possibilities, the surviving guests and their hosts leave the room. The shot continues for a while after all of them have exited the frame. Then we see the man and woman who died come out of the room, cross the space and exit frame. In this variant, there would be no subsequent imprisonment in the church during their thanksgiving for their release from the room. The reappearance of the man and woman who committed suicide would not be that of revenants from death, where one is "*poor in world*," but would be an irruption of *unworldly* entities that reactivates and links 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. Shortly before the planned dinner, two maids unexpectedly decided to leave. On their way out they heard the approaching voices of the guests and their host. To avoid being seen, they hid in a closet. The host came forward from the group of his guests at the front door, looked for the valet, then called for him. On getting no response (the valet had quit earlier that night—he must have sensed the imminent radical closure), he rejoined his guests and they all headed upstairs to the dining room. On hearing their receding conversations, the two maids moved toward the door, but then, hearing the approaching voices of the guests and the host from the direction of the entrance (!), they rushed back to the closet and hid in it. Once more the host

entered in the company of his guests, yelled for the valet, got no response, and then proceeded with his guests to the second floor. Once again the maids opened the closet door and headed toward the exit. This time though they left the house. The way Buñuel edited the sequence, the maids saw the hosts and guests enter twice without leaving in between,<sup>190</sup> which would imply that the second entrance was by an unworldly version of the latter.<sup>191</sup>

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 deflect attention 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-heel 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—this conjunction of the accidental and the forced recurrence is one of the figures of fate. 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, figures, and objects 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, and the cardboard trees and hedges that René, “a schizophrenic girl,” came across (“Trees and hedges were of cardboard, placed here and there, like stage accessories”).<sup>192</sup> Indeed, in most cultures, prodigies are an omen announcing the end of the world. If there is a temporal/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 border rather than a

one-way radical border, that is were it not that the world continues to lose objects to the black hole, this precluding the event horizon from being also the world's radical limit, and hence from making the world itself radically closed, there would ensue a contagion between two radically-closed spaces, the world and the black hole, by means of entities that are other than the ones imprisoned within the event horizon (for example light), 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" (that is, in and bordering) the world. Those who criticize the filmmaker or painter of the latter kind of radical closure for being indifferent to the audience's response must limit the influence of the work of art on the world 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, initially painterly or cinematic or literary elements may irrupt 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;<sup>193</sup> then they, as well as unworldly versions of worldly entities, and fictional characters 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.),<sup>194</sup> psychiatry (schizophrenia or psychosis with their end of the world motif and their irruptions of unworldly entities, for example the voices and the "fleeting-improvised-men" [Daniel Paul Schreber]), and physics (black holes),<sup>195</sup> 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 *Laßt Year at Marienbad*) and TV (the TV noise/"snow" in the sky in Lynch's *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*)<sup>196</sup> 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 *Laßt 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 *Laßt 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 a photograph or a film shot does not always function as just a mediumistic or conventional or 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 radically borders 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,"<sup>197</sup> 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).<sup>198</sup>

In Tarkovsky's *Noštalgia*, Domenico shut himself up in his house with his family for seven years in the expectation of the end of the world. The coda of *Noštalgia*, 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 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 is an ahistorical, unworldly irruption. If this panning shot is to be considered a memory, then it can only be the 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 most dear 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 *sosies* of the cosmonaut's dead wife, Hari. In *Lašt Year at Marienbad*, we encounter such an irruption in the film director's universe of memory and nostalgia (according to Alain Resnais, the man and the woman did meet the previous year at Marienbad) of the screenwriter's fully-formed ahistorical entities in a radical closure (according to Robbe-Grillet, the woman's and the man's existence



does not extend beyond the one and a half hours during which they are on screen). In Tarkovsky's films, we see subjective flashbacks, denoting nostalgic memory; instances of an indiscernibility of what is a subjective memory and what is 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 irruptions of ahistorical, unworldly entities, for example in *Solaris* the consecutive Haris that appear in the space station on Solaris. Those who reappear after their deaths in a radical closure, for example the Russian poet in the coda of *Noŝtalgia* 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 signaled by a 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 *sosie*/version in a radical closure, for example, the ahistorical, unworldly version of the Russian house with its vicinity in the extraterrestrial ocean in the coda of *Solaris*<sup>199</sup>

or in the Italian cathedral in the coda of *Noŝtalgia*.<sup>200</sup> 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, within the shot as a temporal unit*), that the past does not vanish but is still there;<sup>201</sup> but it can also imply that the second Kris is an unworldly entity that irrupted in a radical closure.<sup>202</sup> Unlike in Duras (the French female protagonist of *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 in the atomic explosion in Hiroshima: “Like you, I know what it is to forget .... Like you, I am endowed with memory. I know what it is to forget .... 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 ... For my part I struggled every day with all my might against the horror of no longer understanding the reason to remember. Like you, I forgot”), in Tarkovsky memory is not threatened by forgetfulness. Like in Duras (in *India Song*, while the voices-over do the remembering, the characters on screen are “uninhabited”), in Tarkovsky memory coexists with amnesia: in Tarkovsky's *Solaris*, the patchy, disconnected memories of the ahistorical, unworldly Hari who irrupts repeatedly on the space station of *Solaris* are themselves ahistorical, unworldly phenomena that irrupted in a radical closure.<sup>203</sup>

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 is actually an ahistorical, unworldly entity that irrupted in the radical closure, hence basically radically 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).<sup>204</sup> The alternation we see through the wide windows of the space station on *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 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,<sup>205</sup> since what irrupts in a radical closure usually has no shadow (appropriately, although using the services of Industrial Light & Magic's postproduction visual effects to create his electronic birds, Kurosawa did not add shadows to them). 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 being afloat or go straight through the separating threshold, whether it be a mirror or a wall. 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*, 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 are ahistorical beings who irrupted fully formed in a temporal radical closure 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."<sup>206</sup>

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 torero, 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 by means of painting, then all or some of the other figures, things and elements in the painting were not gradually painted by him or her but 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.<sup>207</sup> 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* (1928), which shows the painter laying one more brush stroke on the existent part of one of the arms of a painted 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 will 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."<sup>208</sup> 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*

(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. This suspension should not be viewed as temporary, the gesture resumed 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 easel because the image irrupted there fully formed, was not gradually painted by him. When he or she does his or her autoportrait as a painter, the radical-closure painter paints himself or herself either as someone painting the radical-closure structure, or else, 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.<sup>209</sup> 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 the painterly, the cinematic, or the 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, repetition of the same shots,

etc.) irrupt. A videomaker 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 allowing, 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 1922 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 often used not to give the painting a homogeneous off-frame (Jan van Eyck's *The Arnolfini Couple*, 1434), but, on the contrary, to indicate, for example by showing what would otherwise be the off-frame as a black zone of inexistence, that the painting is radically closed and thus signal its opening onto an unworldly elsewhere: the dressed 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 element in it, for instance the Erinyes 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 Orešteia 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,<sup>210</sup> but also the one that in a relative closure leads to the figure we see, that of its genesis. 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 radical closure is indicated by the curtains in the background and the black of the lower third of the painting; or in the side panels of *Triptych Inspired by T. S. Eliot's Poem "Sweeney Agonistes"* (1967), where the radical closure is implied by the irruption in the left panel's mirror of an ahistorical, unworldly figure talking on the phone;<sup>211</sup> 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 *sosie* of the other, one that has irrupted in a radical closure. Francis Bacon: "I think I even might make a film ...";<sup>212</sup> 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<sup>213, 214</sup> 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 irruption. 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 irruption, an impostor, a figure that is itself trying to illustrate, to resemble, to achieve the likeness of another. 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")<sup>215</sup>—an exquisite description of the double 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 double. 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 concentration of the figure into 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 in the radical closure he or she set. When looking at Bacon’s paintings one has to decide if the absent organs and/or wiped parts of the body are hysterical symptoms (indeed, as is usual in hysteria, they do not coincide with their anatomical definitions), therefore a rendition of subjective states either of the figure or the painter or of their interaction; 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*, the figure seems to be attempting to disappear gradually (albeit spasmodically) through the point 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.<sup>216</sup> Claustrophobia is linked to the degree of relative closure of a space, becoming intenser as the space’s openness becomes increasingly tenuous; it has as such nothing to do with a radically-closed space. Whereas relative closure entraps the worldly (and often in Bacon’s case hysterical) figure, who then tries to gradually escape from it, radical closure is a *trap* (Bacon’s term), in the sense that it 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 can either go through the limits of such a trap or suddenly disappear: the spectators in the curved panel at the bullfight have suddenly disappeared in *Second Version of “Study for Bullfight No. 1”* (1969), leaving the panel empty. In instances where the hysterical mode is paramount, the impression of proximity is due to the excessive presence in such a state; in instances of radical closure and irruption of the diagrammatic or unworldly, the impression of proximity is due to the intermingling of media and world. 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 either an unworldly irruption or the product 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.

There are two kinds of quarantine in films of radical closure: in Murnau's *Nosferatu*, the human-imposed quarantine, a relative closure, to contain the plague is to be set in the context of a prior radical closure (marked by the bridge, "When he crossed the bridge the phantoms came to meet him"; but also by the iris effect, which in this case is not just a pictorial device, but is also indicative of a radical closure and produces diegetic effects) that is confirmed by the irruption of the ahistorical, unworldly *Nosferatu*. Against something nefarious that intrudes from the adjoining space, or for that matter the extraterrestrial space within the future light cone, one can resort to quarantine; but concerning what irrupts in a radical closure, indicating such a closure, a quarantine is useless. In fine radical-closure films, the hero would be indifferent to the others' attempt to set in place a quarantine, since he intuitively feels that these measures are totally ineffective at the level of actually closing the space to what, due to a radical closure that encompasses the area where he or she resides, can irrupt any time; or else he would actively do everything he can to undo these quarantine measures against a worldly danger since he somehow intuitively feels they may contribute by some unexplainable mechanism to a radical closure, thus seeming, at least for a while, to be a traitor. In Murnau's *Nosferatu*, through her selfless sacrifice, Mina destroys the ahistorical, unworldly vampire; but doing so without opening the radically-closed space that made him possible is not enough to save the world from the irruption of yet another ahistorical, unworldly entity—the unworldly entity that was destroyed in Murnau's *Nosferatu* irrupts again in a radical closure in Herzog's *Nosferatu*. In Herzog's film, Harker, turned

selfless by his contamination by the vampire, indeed turning into a vampire, paradoxically takes an extra step in saving the world since now the contagion he spreads takes place gradually, through a homogenous space (the final shot with the great expanses of space opening onto the rest of the world), this signaling a reduction of the radical closure to a relative one. The pessimistic vampire films are those that end with the destruction of the ahistorical vampire<sup>217</sup> (Murnau's *Nosferatu*)<sup>218</sup> but without somehow opening the radical closure that made his or her irruption possible; it is of these that remakes are made (Herzog's *Nosferatu*),<sup>219</sup> to historicize the vampire, from an unworldly one that irrupted in a radical closure to another who had a history, and whom we saw become a vampire. The next stage are films that start with a historical vampire and end with his second, final death—opting to refer in its title to another vampire work, then rather than to Stoker's book (*Bram Stoker's Dracula*), Coppola's vampire film should have referred in its title to two films with the aforementioned progression from unworldly to historical vampire, for example: *After the Phantom of the Night's Symphony of Horror* (a title that incorporates the subtitles of the two *Nosferatu* films). The historical vampire haunts a historical castle that deteriorated, whether or not in time-lapse, becoming dilapidated; but the ahistorical, unworldly vampire irrupts fully formed in a castle in a radical closure, thus a castle that either irrupted already dilapidated or became dilapidated almost instantly, in time-lapse (spectators see time-lapse elsewhere in the film, for example flowers and animals that wither in seconds, yet do not seem to view such temporality as the probable process by which the ruins were produced, ascribing old age to them!).

In Robbe-Grillet's *L'Immortelle*, while we can easily understand that the two Western protagonists in Turkey are suspicious of the antique dealer's assertion that the terracotta 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 old, rather than becoming so naturally and therefore gradually. Her 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 fascination-inducing device: 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<sup>220</sup> 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 response 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 later discovers that the paper is blank. What he takes to be the same woman are actually numerous ahistorical, unworldly entities that irrupted in a radical closure. Thus, and as in *La 8t Year at Marienbad*, "she" exists only for the time during which she is on screen (like *La 8t Year at Marienbad*, *L'Immortelle* 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 will once he has set the radical closure?). Since she is an ahistorical, unworldly irruption in a radical closure, she may disappear definitively; 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"<sup>221</sup>: 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 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?"

Should we be guided by its title in viewing Magritte's *La Clairvoyance* (*Autoportrait*) (aka *Clairvoyance* (*Self-Portrait*)), in which case it would be showing a painter who is clairvoyant, able "to see objects or events that cannot be perceived by the senses," so that when he is presented with an egg, he already sees and paints the future bird into which it will develop? Rather, the painting shows the painter's hand, which is holding a paintbrush, suspended in front of a canvas that functions as a radical closure or is in one and where a paint bird has irrupted. Making use of both the original subtitle of the painting and its English translation, one can advance that the self-portrait of the radical-closure painter is an *autoportrait*, an automatic portrait, a portrait that he or she did not paint but that irrupted fully formed in the radical closure he or she set. 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 erasures and accretions, by which he paints, would bring forth clearly the contrast between sudden irruption in a radical closure and gradual production in most other cases). 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 volition would turn out to be

identical again and again:<sup>222</sup> 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 by 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 ...*” (all this time—nearly a year—the quill raised, awaiting God knows what apparition ...).<sup>223</sup> 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)<sup>224, 225</sup> 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 explicitly 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).<sup>226</sup> 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 ...”,<sup>227</sup> 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, “however, 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 “as already mentioned” as one of the symptoms of the irruption of the text fully formed from the earlier book, *La Belle Captive*. While repetition can be attributed to psychoanalytical return of the repressed or to psychiatric obsession, in cases of radical closure it is often the result of non-psychological, non-psychoanalytical, unworldly irruptions. 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 due concurrently to 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 Velasquez *Pope*, because it just haunts me, and it opens up all sorts of feelings and areas of—I

was going to say—imagination ...’)<sup>228</sup> and to unworldly irruptions in the radical closures he set through these paintings. And it is possible to view the unworldly, ahistorical entities that the Kris of Tarkovsky’s *Solaris* encounters in the radical closure on Solaris as inflected by his guilt feeling concerning not heeding his wife’s warnings that she would commit suicide, which warning she ended up realizing with the ampoule of poison he had carelessly brought to the house. 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 paintings are given the same title in Magritte’s work, for example *La Belle Captive*,<sup>229</sup> would be that in a radical closure the painting may irrupt fully formed with its title.

We should differentiate the following modes in Robbe-Grillet’s novels: there is repetition of the same Robbe-Grillet motifs and elements from book to following book: structure of radical closure, diegetic silence-over, immobilizations, contradictory versions of events; there is the usual intertextuality (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 Robbe-Grillet’s *The Voyeur*<sup>230</sup>] in the report”); and there are the irruptions of ahistorical, but otherwise identical versions of sections of one book 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 irruptions themselves, but concerning 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; the women’s hair is falling to the ground in the novel but not doing so 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.”<sup>231</sup> 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*.<sup>232</sup> Basing oneself on *La Clairvoyance* one can imagine the following possibility: by surrealist *hasard objectif* 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 his or her work but is now legitimately someone else's, the radical closure artist or writer in whose painting or novel duplicates of these irrupted fully formed.<sup>233</sup> 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.

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

Radical closures do not necessarily do away with travel, but often give it autonomy, divesting it from departure and arrival, making it attain a pure mode (the four minutes and fifty-five seconds long sequence of Burton's car trip through tunnels and on overpasses in Tarkovsky's *Solaris*). In Tarkovsky's *Stalker*, we are presented with a three and a half minutes long sequence shot, mostly in close-ups, of the three main characters' flatcar drive toward the Zone, a sequence that puts us and the three characters in a hypnotic blurring of the environment, so that it is no longer clear if they are progressing, getting anywhere; then, all of a sudden, across a lapse, "they" are already in the Zone; then, at the end of the film, "they" turn up in the bar from which their journey to the Zone started although *Stalker* had much earlier gotten rid of the flatcar they ostensibly used to travel to the Zone.

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 one cannot use to escape (moreover, one is confronted in the radical closure with *spurious prisons*, which are not constructions serving to produce an extreme relative closure, but are themselves effects of a radical closure).

While an extreme relative closure, for instance a very well-guarded prison in the case of a convict condemned to life-imprisonment, may practically preclude any exit from it; a radical closure may apparently allow a person to leave—actually it is an

unworldly irruption of him or her that appears to the other side of a 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 unworldly/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 on-screen 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 on-screen 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 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 in relation to the dollar and other currencies, may have been so

exacerbated during West Beirut's siege by Israel during the latter's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, it may have changed into a radical closure. The appearance of green paint (the *green* of the subtitle) on the thumb with which I touch a leaf in the 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 videomaker since the next scene starts in a mental hospital; yet it could also have been viewed as an unworldly or diagrammatic irruption 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—is *Distracted's* “Lebanon. Nothing left, not even leaving”<sup>234</sup> indicative of such a radical closure? The possibility of 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 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 probable 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. But 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 are instances of what was even then

a redundant, frequently tasteless (Salloum's video) problematizing of representation, specifically orientalist representation, but rather because Beirut may have by then been at some point a radical closure, with the consequence that what irrupted in one or more of the videos is (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 entities of the diegesis presented by the artwork in the world, as is 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.

### More or Less Easily

Science has discovered so much and so many things in even very small spaces, but it has also known how to inject even more emptiness in them. At least some artworks should also do that.

In Herzog's *Heart of Glass*, Hias foresees images of an earth that is tumbling and the birth of a new earth. Are these visions? No. For the visionary Hias, the entranced flesh and blood people at the inn are a vision. The vision of the entranced: not so much what the entranced see, but the entranced as a three-dimensional vision

that does not require anyone to see it. The relation between the trance and the vision is not causal—the entranced villagers were not entranced by Hias the visionary—but reciprocal; one cannot happen without the other, but neither is the cause of the other. In the scene of entranced Ascherl and Wudy sitting around a table in the inn, we are dealing rather than with a cinema that tries through depth of field and/or other manners to produce an impression of three-dimensionality regarding what is two-dimensional, the film image projected on a screen; with a cinema that deals less with images than with things and people as visions. We are dealing here with the presence, within a medium that reduces all the senses to sight and audition and turns things into immaterial images, of a material vision, consisting of things and people, therefore of a vision that has touch, hearing and smell as constituents, though not through synesthesia. In *Heart of Glass*, vision is quartered between being a (quasi) memory in the case of the hypnotized (there is such a delay between the image and its registration in the consciousness of the hypnotized person that in their relation with the objects and people they encounter they are dealing less with perception than with memory—with the consequence that the entranced person is constantly troubled by forgetting what he or she is seeing), and being the physical event itself in the case of the visionary Hias; between being doubly indirect, the quasi memory of an image, which itself is already at a remove from the event, and being direct, things themselves, hence having nothing to do with point of view shots. One of the countermeasures to the substitution of reality by media images is this visionary reality that short-circuits the image since it is itself the vision.

The detachment of the vision from the visionary in Herzog's *Heart of Glass*<sup>235</sup> complements the detachment of the shadow from the undead in vampire films, for example in Herzog's *Nosferatu*. Moreover, the materiality of the vision in *Heart of Glass* complements the materiality of the shadow in vampire films, for example in Coppola's *Dracula*:<sup>236</sup> it is the shadow of Dracula's hand, reaching the table before the hand itself, that tips the inkwell over Mina's photograph.<sup>237</sup> One consequence of this materiality and detachment of vision in relation to the visionary is that Hias can be in his own vision (this counterbalances the absence of the vampire in the mirror in Herzog's *Nosferatu*). Is there simultaneity of the object of one's sight and oneself? While it seems to be the case, actually, due to the finiteness of the speed of light (the speed of light in a vacuum, *c*, is 299,792,458 meters per second), in usual sight what is seen is already in the past of the one looking. Yet in those cases where the visionary is inside his or her vision, for example, in the case of Hias sitting in the inn with entranced people, there is, exceptionally, simultaneity of the object of one's vision and oneself.

In Patrick Bokanowski's film *L'Ange*, when in the shot of the librarian flipping the index cards, the music is first not in sync with the action and then continues after the librarian stops flipping the cards, this is not a choreographic failing of the filmmaker—one that would remain non-diegetic—but is an indication of the continuing urge, of the persisting compulsion/impulse that is being resisted—a compulsion/impulse indicated by means of the music, which is the affective, spiritual modulation of these masked

characters who do not have emotions and psychology in general—it is this music, rather than the frozen expression of the mask, that gives the affective tone to the character. Music plays this role also in most, if not all films with puppets: these are moved not by an internal will and impulses,<sup>238</sup> but with an external, more spiritual, less emotional/psychological element: music.

Some music works manage to make one hear distinctly the sounds of the various instruments not occasionally but throughout the work, none of the sounds turning sooner or later into background, indistinct ones. Some of these music works manage to conjoin the absence of such a background of indistinct sounds with a subsistence of the sounds—this subsistence is the kind of background I affirm. Such music works are experienced as abundantly layered since they *creatively* make the listener discover that sounds persist (other works' use of repetition and refrains is sometimes an attempt to occult a subsistence one intuitively). The danger then is to mistake the endless for the eternal—a musician creates also to remember that the subsisting sounds had a beginning; indeed, a musician is able to create only because the subsisting sounds started. The silence in such music works does not result from the extinction of the sounds, but is coexistent with these subsisting sounds, as their historicity, denoting that they began.

To live the moment is to know that it subsists and that one leaves it only in a lapse. To live the moment is to reach the stage where an extended awareness is coexistent but parallel with an extended, indefinite lapse.



One responds to generosity by trying to take its measure. Going beyond is intrinsic to generosity, so that one has to discern how such going beyond what is adequate has always already surpassed what one took it to be at first—one cannot respond to generosity except by being generous.

Viewing things in terms of an oeuvre, one sometimes discovers that a director, while making other films, was all along, sometimes in whole scenes, sometimes in frames, making an extra film (one that will not be included in his filmography), for instance a vampire film (in the latter example, this would be felicitous, since such films deploy in their diegesis action at a distance and haunting).

I am for an impressionistic cinema, one in which impressions play an influential role. An impression may be confirmed through an explicit later shot or scene (irrespective of whether such confirmation was intended or not by the filmmaker)<sup>239</sup>—if it is clear enough, an impression does not need to be confirmed by something else, it confirms itself. It is more and more such impressions that strike me, impressionable witness, as foreshadowing, while a foreshadowing at the level of the content seems to me imposed, blatant.<sup>240</sup> In Satyajit Ray's *The World of Apu* (1959), on his way home from work, having just finished reading a letter he received from his wife, a happy Apu finds the neighbor's small child quite close to the train tracks and carries him away from them; while this shot does not inflect in a causal way what will happen later, it implants a sensation of absence—*where is the mother?*<sup>241</sup>—that links poignantly with Apu's learning a few minutes later that his

wife died during childbirth.

Gerhard Richter's paint covers various landscapes in his *A Calendar for 1990*. Are there seasons for the paint that can cover a landscape?

— There must no longer be any distinction between life and writing/art: life as a work of art.

— Yes, there must no longer be a distinction between life and writing but not in life,<sup>242</sup> rather in the writing—yet not in the form of an indistinction between the life and the writing of the diegetic character. In the section “Beatrice's Story” (based on Ryunosuke Akutagawa's “Hell Screen”) in Kathy Acker's novel *My Mother: Demonology* (1993), having been commissioned by the Mayor to do a painting, narrator Beatrice's father, a famous painter, says on various occasions: “If I want to paint New York, I have to paint horror....<sup>243</sup> In order to paint horror as horror actually is, or a portrait of New York, I need to show myself doing what's most horrible for me to do.... I have to paint myself killing my own daughter.” The mayor: “Do what you have to do. I want the painting.” The painter: “To paint my daughter's murder, I have to see it. Since painting's partly fictional, I only need to see a young girl being murdered in order to see my daughter being murdered.” The mayor “decided that the safest procedure would be to take a dead girl out of one of the city morgues. The girl or the dead person would be set on fire.”<sup>244</sup> What exactly happens after that? We have several non-mutually-exclusive interpretations of how the story progresses:

— The mayor, who by the time of the incident of the burning not only hated the painter's daughter but also wanted to get back at the painter for the awe he, the mayor, felt for him, substituted the substitution, placed the daughter in the car: "The blindfold was taken off my eyes.... I sat still, bound by thick bandages to the inside sides of the car.... Heard: 'Going to set on fire.'"

— The painter's daughter put herself in the limo on the point of being set on fire: "Has every victim chosen victimization? Then I knew that I had, also, put myself in this limo for my father."<sup>245</sup>

— The person in the limo on the point of being burnt is the substitute dead girl (the Mayor: "I tied and bound the dead body for your [the painter's] appreciation"). But what begins as a René Girardian situation of a substitution with an indifferent element,<sup>246</sup> a dead poor woman, ends with a substitution of the substitution. The critical attitude of the narrator/writer toward the painter is most probably provoked less by the latter's collaboration with rich art patrons than by his obliviousness to the circumstance that substitution through fiction, in this case through figurative painting, is itself potentially reversible in (another) fiction, in this case in writing: while the painter deludes himself that he has added in a fictional way what was not experienced (by the daughter), Acker shows that something has been experienced, even by the (un)dead. We have here the exquisite case of a writer who, unlike the diegetic painter of her novel, does not have to see or experience something in order to write about it since she uses others' texts as found material, yet who shows that experience extends beyond what many who create in terms of it consider its limit, whether such an extension is accessed in undeath (because the poor woman

is dead, she may be possessed by others or feel, "I am Kathy Acker ... I am Beatrice ... every name in history is I")<sup>247</sup> or is created in (fictional) writing. Writing can document substitutions, but (fictional) writing can also undo/counter substitutions and scapegoating, through a substitution of the substitution (which is not to be confused with or reduced to an identification), that is, can, in this manner, be counter-sacrificial.<sup>248</sup>

When the prophet Muḥammad, along with Abū Bakr, migrated from Mecca to Yathrib circa September 622, he left behind 'Alī b. Abī Tālib to sleep in his bed to make the many Meccans who were plotting to assassinate him believe that he had not left Mecca yet. Anxious for Muḥammad's safety, if not for his own life, did 'Alī spend a sleepless night? Or did he fall asleep at some point during that night? If he fell asleep, did the prophet Muḥammad appear to him in the dream sleeping in his bed? If the prophet Muḥammad appeared to him in the dream sleeping in his bed, then, taking into consideration the following tradition traced back to the Prophet on the authority of Abū Hurayra, "Whoever sees me in a dream then surely he has seen me for Satan cannot impersonate me,"<sup>249</sup> Muḥammad would have thus confirmed, in and through the dream, what he, a truthful man, had led his enemies to believe, that he is sleeping in his bed (while being paradoxically at another place at "the same time"—to be more accurate, he would have been at "the same time" *in* two paradoxical places, the cave on whose mouth there was a spider's cobweb, and a dream, the dream of 'Alī).

Taking into consideration the following tradition traced back to the

prophet Muḥammad on the authority of Abū Hurayra, “Whoever sees me in a dream then surely he has seen me for Satan cannot impersonate me,” one cannot legitimately say to anyone, even to a madman, even to the schizophrenic Shi‘ite ‘Alī ‘Abd Muḥannā, who repeatedly asserts in my *Credits Included: A Video in Red and Green* (1995), “I am the messenger of the prophet Muḥammad, and I am Jesus Christ ...”, “In your dreams, you are the prophet Muḥammad.”

The indistinguishableness of who wrote what in a collaboration is to be judged neither by whether there no longer subsists for the readers nor indeed for the collaborators themselves stylistic markers by which they can differentiate, in some cases very easily, who wrote what, nor by the frequency of the use of the *we* instead of the *I*, but rather by whether the effects and experiences that gravitate toward what has been written may do so also toward the person who ostensibly did not write on their subject (in which case, one may write the whole essay oneself and it would nonetheless still be a collaboration). Thus collaboration can function as a kind of exorcism or transfer to another on the part of one of the two collaborators. Indeed it can function as a kind of exorcism on the part of both collaborators: by separating or drifting apart after the publication of their joint essay or book, they would be transferring what is exorcised to an entity that no longer exists. They should not do that as long as they consider that what is being received is neither issuing from, nor itself something completely lacking awareness and/or any feedback mechanism. Till the (drive as/of the) other do us part.

What separates us is the part in each where we are indistinguishable: the extra, featureless clump (of clay) that is between the man and the woman after they separate following their fusion in Jan Svankmajer’s clay animation *Dimensions of Dialogue* (1982).

This piece of bread that we divide, half of which will become (part of) her body.

To go from a state where even the big feet of a woman are attractive, dear to one, a state of strong attachment, to Buddhist nondiscrimination and hence detachment, the big feet neither good nor bad, attractive nor repulsive—or rather not viewed as big or small—is more difficult than to go from the normal state to Buddhist nondiscrimination.

I am too close to the situation not so much to be detached from it, but to see that in large part I am detached from it.

In the vast majority of cases the psychoanalyst has no free-floating attention but is mesmerized by any lapsus.

Against forgetfulness, one can perhaps resort to extreme heat! It was so hot that they lay motionless, did not have the requisite minimal energy to forget.<sup>250</sup>

He now managed to forget an additional thing whenever he forgot something of importance, so that having remembered the former and went back to fetch it or do it, he saw the latter.

A traveling shot often instances a simultaneous forgetting and reminiscing—which of the two is underscored depends on the traveling shot's speed.

Were the very possibility of memory to cease to exist, there would be no difference between past and future.

It is because the chalk has been placed on the edge of the billboard table with no residual movement that it seems it was put exactly where it should be placed, and that somehow it has always been there (memory resides precisely in the residue). Being precise, hitting the target is so important to some people because it gives them, sensation-wise, something very close to this absence of memory: suddenly by hitting the target, it is not only divested from its spatial surroundings, but also from chronological temporality.

It happened for the first time around seven years ago, that is, over ninety years after the startlement of the film spectators, at the very beginning of cinema, on seeing the leaves move in a Lumière Brothers film: I was unsettled by the movement of the branches, and not in a film—the movement of branches occasionally induces an experience of a slippage of space.

When mildly drunk, I have the impression of an absence of the ether, and consequently that objects that are at an intermediary plane between me and other objects are the same distance to me as the latter. To be more precise, some objects are nearer to me than others, but this nearness is now a result of their thickness: a bulky

sculptural object attached to the wall is nearer to me not only than a poster attached to the same wall, but also than the man, thinner than the sculptural object, sitting at a table between me and the wall, and he himself is farther away than the fatter man sitting at the same table on the same plane in relation to me.

In mild drunkenness, everything is in-focus; the many straws in the cup are all distinct—yet one is drunk enough not to be able to count to ten.

In mild drunkenness, even water drops on a napkin may be viewed as stains, given that one does not project away from the present in that condition, does not consider whether they will persist or not.

While it may not be productive to paint when drunk, there are a lot of still lifes in the world in that state.

In mild drunkenness, there is an absence of time, and consequently there is an absolute separation between the liquor bottles on the shelf, for contiguity is due to particles from the bottles interacting in time. One can do nothing then but wait for a tipsy man or woman to knock the ostensibly timeless object accidentally, with the irreverence of the accidental.

When lightly drunk, I sometimes have the impression while looking at two beer glasses one of which is empty and the other full that I am seeing the past spatially contiguous to the present.

Mild drunkenness makes one cognizant of a layering of temporalities, while normally one perceives things to be slower or quicker in a general time.

When mildly drunk one notices that sometimes a movement or a phase of a movement occurs in a leisurely manner, in a suspended

state, freed to a certain extent from gravity. This suspended, leisurely mode of the movement affords the observer plenty of time to find blemishes in it, but in that state of drunkenness one finds nothing to correct: the incorrigibility of the billiard shot that missed; the incorrigibility and utter beauty of the exclamation gesture of disappointment of the billiard player; the incorrigibility of the placement of objects; the precision and incorrigibility of the wavering movements of the other tipsy persons.<sup>251</sup> When she walked by her movement produced violent air currents. All that is needed to sense this violence in the movement of others is to reach the state where the actions of people no longer have anything to do with one,<sup>252</sup> that is, the state where no movement empathy, of the sort that the audience has when watching a dance or listening to music, subsists—no accompaniment. There are certain kinds of movements, for instance those of Zen masters, that have already suspended our empathic participation (compassion has nothing to do with these empathic movements, cannot occur while they last); the Zen kōan “What is the sound of one hand clapping?” refers also to this suspension, each hand no longer accompanied by the hand of the watcher.<sup>253</sup>

Mild drunkenness is propitious to description for it minimizes the internal monologue, so that one has more time to attend to each object during the eyes’ pan. In a film, it would be instructive to superimpose during part of some pans the distracting images/thoughts/memories of the interior monologue (to make visible and audible why it is that one does not have enough time to observe attentively the passing objects), so that when the superimpositions are eliminated, the spectator would feel that the shot is leisurely

and hence that he can see many more of its elements.

One of the sections of the Euronews TV Channel is titled *No Comment*. Is it actually a No Comment one? One can accurately consider an episode or an image a *no comment* one if it suspends the interior monologue of the viewer.

One way of accepting the saying “a picture is worth a thousand words” regarding some photograph is to take it to mean that that photograph initially arrested the viewer’s interior monologue for the interval during which on average a thousand words pass through his or her mind. It is only such a picture that is worth subsequently writing a thousand words about.

A vow of silence should include the arrest of the interior monologue, one no longer talking even to oneself.

One frequently promises during prayer, for example that one will refrain from doing this or that, but every promise is a form of prayer: in so far as I am someone who has promised, *given my word*, I am henceforth mute even at the level of the interior monologue, which becomes suspended.

If one of the features of prayer is the suspension of the interior monologue, then in hell one cannot have such a suspension.

The first thing I noticed in Wenders’ *Wings of Desire* is the absence of the interior monologue in the case of the angels, in contrast

to its presence in the humans. The silence referred to in *un ange passe* is to be related not simply to the circumstance that being an immaterial entity, the floating angel does not make sounds, but also to the angel's absence of interior monologue. What happens to an angel when he falls? He acquires not only a material body but also an interior monologue.

I care less for the theatrical aside, which is all too often addressed to a human, all too human audience in the auditorium. I rather care for the *aparté* of the dancer, who while ostensibly dancing with the non dancer has already been projected, as a subtle body, into dance's realm of altered space, time and movement, a realm to which his or her seeming companion has no access; and for the *aparté* addressed to an angel—or, compulsively, to a demon. The asides addressed to an angel or a demon are portraits; one can view William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* (1973) as an attempt to render the portrait of the adolescent girl in the presence of demons. The angel withdraws definitively, abandons the human for good if the latter is completely engrossed in what he or she is doing, whether it be mundane, selfish, or demonic, therefore no longer addressing him in asides,<sup>254</sup> ones in which he or she has an angelic portrait. From this perspective, the angel would be a being that witnesses no one doing evil, since for him to continue to be in someone's "presence," the latter, whatever else he or she may be experiencing, including evil, has to be addressing him in asides, ones deserving of an angel. The portrait, often if not always frontal, is the result of an aside—to address an angel or a demon, or a writer, filmmaker/ videomaker or painter. Indeed one can view posing for a painter as

a protracted aside, one that goes on for hours, days or weeks. In the presence of an angel or demon, the writer has merely to receive and document, rather than create, the portrait manifested in the aside; but in the absence of angel or demon, the writer has to extract-by-creating the aside. Journalistic description of a character misses this aside that has to be received by means of creation, sticks to his or her biography. There is no portrait of and for the *human, all too human*, therefore no journalist will ever draw a portrait, least of all in his or her introduction to "interviews" in which he or she reduces his or her subject to one who is human, all too human. In moments of weakness, of wishing to be only human, all too human, we may flee those who acknowledge our aside to those who set it aside, for example journalists.

The angel, a messenger, an intermediary being, helps us maintain a distance toward this world as well as others, assists us in maintaining ourselves in a *barzakh* between them.

If, in Kubrick's *The Shining*, the writer Jack Torrance seems uninterested in playing with his wife and son (his manuscript is full with myriad recurrences of the sentence "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy"), it is that he has the apprehension of a more radical recreation, intuits that the latter should not be replaced by anodyne playing, for instance the kind we see his wife and his son indulging in as they throw snow balls at each other. When reality itself plays, then it is the writer Torrance, rather than his son (who does not accept the dead twins' invitation to play with them), who accepts to be part of that playing. We refused to lie, not

out of moralism, but because we had the apprehension that a more extreme lying would be obscured were we to lie; and lo and behold, reality began to lie, that is, behold nothing.

The fact that the dead characters in Abbas Na'ibandian's *A Modern, Profound, and Important Research in the Fossils of the Twenty Fifth Geological Era* do not find the people they are looking for does not necessarily indicate that the latter are not there; since these persons too are already dead, they are most probably undergoing doubling, with the result that the thief whom the woman cannot find at the location where she's been told to search for him may have been replaced by someone else, this implying that she could be meeting him in the guise of another. Indeed Khashagei, the POLITICIAN, is called "THIEF" by one of the other characters. Why do they enjoin each other to tell their stories? Each of the dead has to come to the realization that he must be dead, for instance by telling himself the chain of events that led him to where (?) he "finds" himself—the (un)dead also has to discover and identify his or her corpse (Billy Wilder's *Sunset Blvd.*, 1950).

Where he ostensibly exists, the revenant, being dead, does not see; but, contrariwise, where he, the revenant, ostensibly is not, the survivor has the paranoid feeling that he is gazed at and ascribes this gaze that haunts him to the undead revenant.

Those who have underwent death, for example schizophrenics and mystics, who die before dying, have the right to bury their own dead.

For the schizophrenic, every city is a City of the Dead.

The undead told him, "I will give you everything—everything you ever desired." And indeed when he consented, he gave him everything, everything he desired and desires—except that what he was given did not consist in a world, so that notwithstanding *everything*, he was *poor in world*. What good would it be for a man or woman to gain everything he or she desires but lose ... the world? (Cf. Matthew 16:26: "What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?"; Luke 9:25: "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?")

The dead are "poor in world" (to use a Heidegger term), hence can at most be matted on a world, with the consequence that those addressing them look at an angle to them.

With the virtual interaction of human actors with computer-generated images matted later into the frame (Robert Zemeckis' *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, 1988), actors in the West are more and more frequently undergoing an exile not only from the world but even from the customary artificial set, a monasticism. It is these actors, most of them working in Hollywood, that are the closest to the predicament of exiles from war-torn countries or countries under dictatorial, repressive regimes.

To describe the object or state (it is not really a matter of describing, but of hovering around the object like moth around light) so



accurately it becomes so dense that words are sucked into it, and what is elsewhere is left without words, bare, flayed.

When in extreme situations, writers *cannot* write; and in extreme situations others have the solitude of writers. Nonetheless, it is not when both are in extreme situations that writers and those who are not writers are the most affined; rather, it is when writers can write that they are the most related through writing to those in extreme situations, that they accompany them.

## Textual Notes

1. It was certainly the case that life was too short when *Over-Sensitivity*'s first edition was published, in 1996. Is it still the case at the date of publication of this revised edition, and, even more so, will it be the case a few decades from now? Terry Grossman and Ray Kurzweil write in their book *Fantastic Voyage: Live Long Enough to Live Forever* (2004): "Do we have the knowledge and the tools today to live forever? ... According to models that Ray has created, our paradigm-shift rate—the rate of technical progress—is doubling every decade, and the capability (price performance, capacity, and speed) of specific information technologies is doubling every year. So the answer to our question is actually a definitive yes—the knowledge exists, if aggressively applied, for you to slow aging and disease processes to such a degree that you can be in good health and good spirits when the more radical life-extending and life-enhancing technologies become available over the next couple of decades.... The goal of extending longevity can be taken in three steps, or Bridges. This book is intended to serve as a guide to living long enough in good health and spirits—Bridge One—to take advantage of the full development of the biotechnology revolution—Bridge Two. This, in turn, will lead to the nanotechnology-AI (artificial intelligence) revolution—Bridge Three—which has the potential to allow us to live indefinitely." If that is the case, then perhaps even thinkers, writers, and video makers can die before dying (physically), think, write, make videos *and live*!
2. In gratitude to Gavin for devising the perfect scheme for seduction, Scottie leads Judy, who, being the accomplice of Gavin in his murder of his wife, can betray Gavin, to her death—taking into account this factor of gratitude, Gavin devised the perfect crime.
3. Moreover, the incident in which Scottie followed the Judy impersonating Madeleine to the exterior of a hotel, saw her enter it then appear through the window of a room, but was told by the receptionist a few minutes later that nobody entered the hotel shortly before and ascertained for himself that the room in which he saw

Madeleine standing is indeed empty implies that any time he loses her from sight for however short a period, be it the few seconds it takes her to turn a corner or finish closing a door behind her, it is as probable that he will not find her at all as that he will find her a short distance farther, and consequently that *while spying on her, he, a private detective, happens to be there by accident*. This is another version of the fascinating illogical conjunction of knowledge and ignorance in the same person regarding the same matter.

4. The spells of unawareness, the trance states that *Vertigo*'s Judy-as-Madeleine appears to have are not truly seductive; to ascertain that, one has only to watch Hitchcock's *Marnie*, whose eponymous protagonist, who attracts the male protagonist largely because of the trance states that seize her when stealing or during a violent storm, nowhere has the intense seductiveness and fascination Madeleine exerts on the film spectator. For with spells, the traumatic knowledge is there though dissociated (implying this is one of the main functions of the scene of the hypnotic age-regression of *Marnie*). But in *Vertigo*, Gavin's wife Madeleine truly does not know that she, as impersonated by Judy, is being followed by the private detective Scottie.
5. Jean Laplanche, *Essays on Otherness* (London; New York: Routledge, 1999), 79.
6. Had someone brought a video of Pasolini's *Arabian Nights* to Nam June Paik and asked him to read the image in which the woman makes these signs, how might he have read it? *Reading an image* can mean reading between the lines: Paik said in the April 1979 issue of *Cahiers du Cinéma* that he does not really work with the 4 million cycles constitutive of the image information in a black and white TV, but with both the 50 (for Europe)/60 cycles (for the USA and Japan) of the vertical exploration and the 15,000 oscillations per second of the horizontal exploration.
7. It is symptomatic of how little the Lebanese's language has registered the disaster of the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon and of the later years of the civil war that in the song *Yā layl* (Oh night) by Ziad Rahbani, language seems not to have been affected by over seven years of electricity rationing: perhaps the idiom *Yā layl* should be

maintained but only if it is somewhat and somehow inflected to indicate this period of electricity rationing in civil-war Lebanon; otherwise, this absence of affection would be a forgetfulness of the present in the present.

8. *Ibid.*, 158.
9. *Ibid.*, 255.
10. *Ibid.*, 169.
11. On one of his dates with Budūr, 'Azīz arrives early but falls asleep while waiting for her, who only shows up toward dawn and who then places a coin and a dagger over his body: an excellent messenger, in that even when he does not meet Budūr, he still returns with a message for 'Azīza to interpret—with the consequence that the two women have more interactions than 'Azīz and Budūr do. Having relayed messages from Budūr to 'Azīza even in the former's absence—her failure to show up at her second projected meeting with 'Azīz was itself a sign to be interpreted or translated by 'Azīza (her interpretation for the sake of 'Azīz: it is a test by Budūr of the sincerity of 'Azīz's love) and therefore a message—he later relays messages from 'Azīza to Budūr even after the former's death: just before dying of a broken heart, 'Azīza asked his mother to relay to him the following words to say to Budūr when he meets her again: "Fidelity is splendid, but no more than infidelity." It is frequently the case that the relation is between the one who proffers the *enigmatic message* (Budūr) and the one who translates it ('Azīza), the one who thought it intended for him being merely the messenger ('Azīz), a carrier the more efficient the less he understands what he is carrying—up to the limit case of not knowing that he is carrying a message. This has to do with the unconscious. If 'Azīz can still be a carrier at all after his castration by Budūr and subsequent awareness of the consequences of his previous actions, it is through a parapraxis, his unintentional dropping of the scroll so that his interlocutor, asking him to relate its story, learns about princess Duniyā—who hates men because she considers that they are unfaithful—and falls in love with her. It is thus fitting that the diegetic listener to this tale in Pasolini's adaptation, which, in my reading, largely revolves around the love of 'Azīza for Budūr, a

woman she has never seen, ends up searching for Dunyā, regarding whom he soon says: “I love her without seeing her.”

12. From a 15 July 1882 Nietzsche letter to Erwin Rohde: “Now I have my own study plan and behind it my own secret aim, to which the rest of my life is *consecrated* ... What years [since 1876]! What wearisome pain! What inner disturbances, revolutions, solitudes! *Who* has endured as much as I have?—certainly not Leopardi. And if now I stand above all that, with the joyousness of a victor and fraught with difficult *new* plans—and, knowing myself, with the prospect of new, more difficult, and even more inwardly profound sufferings and tragedies and *with the courage to face them!*—then nobody should be annoyed with me for having a good opinion of my medicine. *Mihi ipsi scripsi* [I have written for myself]” (*Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, edited and translated by Christopher Middleton [Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 1996], 187; cf. the letter Nietzsche wrote to Peter Gast ten days later: “In many ways, body and soul, I have been since 1876 more a *battlefield* than a man” [Ibid., 189])—does this medicine include what he wrote in section 60 of *The Gay Science*?
13. “On a visit to Rome in 1882, Nietzsche, now at age thirty-seven, met Lou von Salomé (1861-1937), a twenty-one-year-old Russian woman who was studying philosophy and theology in Zurich. He soon fell in love with her, and offered his hand in marriage. She declined” (Robert Wicks, “Friedrich Nietzsche,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* [Fall 2008 Edition], ed. Edward N. Zalta, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nietzsche/>).
14. Did Lou Salomé ever connect section 60 of *The Gay Science* to what Nietzsche wrote to her in a July 2, 1882 letter: “Now the sky above me is bright! Yesterday at noon I felt as if it was my birthday. *You* sent your acceptance, the most lovely present that anyone could give me now; my sister sent cherries; Teubner sent the first three page proofs of *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*; and, on top of it all, I had just finished the very last part of my manuscript and therewith the work of six years (1876-82), my entire *Freigeisterei*. O what years! What tortures of every kind, what solitudes and weariness of life!” (*Selected Letters*

*of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 185)?

15. (...) It is the possibility of a punctual time and bifurcating worlds that allows me to be interrupted by other thoughts/images/sounds, to be distracted by the multitude of things happening around me; that is, in the absence of (the possibility of) punctual time and bifurcation, none of the myriad happenings around me would be able to distract me.
16. Why did I fax the two letters to Amy? Is it because my letters are always *written*, and most people seem, for some reason, to feel that what is *written* has no urgency, so that my only way to imbue the two letters with (an extrinsic) urgency was to send them by fax?
17. Sent with the previous letter by priority mail on the fifteenth.
18. What is counterintuitive to common sense, for example that a photon has “both wave aspects and particle aspects” (Kip. S. Thorne), was discovered through that intuition that allows one to collaborate in an untimely manner with other creators, including future ones; in other words, what is counterintuitive to common sense, for example that the end result of the repeated passage of single photons through a double slit is an interference pattern, was intuited through untimely collaboration with other creators, including future ones [added for clarification in 2009].
19. Sent by priority mail on the fifteenth.
20. Sent by priority mail on the sixteenth.
21. Sent by express mail on the seventeenth.
22. *Approximate*: (*verb*): to bring near or close; (*adjective*): nearly correct or exact <an *approximate* solution> (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, 2009, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/approximate>).
23. (...) [Human but possibly also all] creation entails also reception [for example, from one’s untimely collaborators.] (...) I [can] create only if I am not totally wedged in chronological time. All writing is in this sense a collaboration (it is always a joy to write on, that is, collaborate in an untimely way with, solitary artists like you [...]). Writers do not need readers—publishers do; they need strangers for their writing to occur at all (*Distraction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 32-33 [updated edition and pages]), and writers and artists to inflect it [through untimely collaboration],

to be their enlarged intuition (were it not for this reception from strangers and artists, the writer's solitude would be too oppressive since he or she does not write in terms of a readership). How, from this perspective of viewing things, do we know that there is a future? We know that from our feeling that we still receive, from the continuing relevance of intuition in our work. Intuition is largely a sensibility to the future creation of others. The destruction of the future would be felt in the present by writers; if writers are avant-garde, they are that mainly through this collaboration with the future. Were the future [that still includes biological and/or artificial intelligence] to be abolished (through a nuclear conflagration, ecological catastrophe, etc.), then long before this happens, we will feel one of the main effects of such an absence: those close to the disaster in the future will to a large extent be unable to think properly since they receive from no one [who is not in their past], and we, who receive from them, will feel the effects of their reduced intuition and thinking, becoming increasingly less able to think, for increasingly less intuitive. Long before this disaster happens we will no longer be able to think it; this disaster will be preceded by this other disaster: our inability to think the disaster (and not only because of our being too steeped in the kind of temporality/technology leading to it). A writer publishes to develop his intuition [and sometimes so that others would ridicule what he or she wrote, so much is he or she at times apprehensive of what he or she is writing]. Intuition; or, being soberly "under the influence." (...) Some painters talk about painting in an intuitive manner and of not caring about what writers and thinkers (...) create in relation to their work; I do not think they are being accurate, since intuition is the sensibility that allows one to feel the constraints that come from the *creation* of future others in relation to one's work. (...) Creation is neither simply discovery (of the rule) nor simply invention (an exception that does not confirm any rule). The artist [or writer, or thinker, or filmmaker] has to sense the rule, (...) [in order to build "a universe that doesn't fall apart two days later" (Philip K. Dick), then invent] an exception to it, but an exception that confirms the rule—otherwise everything becomes pure invention, facile. This

is why virtual worlds will not replace art, for although by changing the parameters, we will come up with different rules and worlds, no exceptions that confirm them would thus automatically have been created. And madness, why [most often] isn't it enough? [It is most often not enough] because it (...) [comes up with] different rules and different worlds but most often fails to create the exception that confirms them. [It is repeatedly said, mostly by bad "writers," that] *a picture is worth a thousand words*; yet it is sometimes these thousand words that create [or collaborate in the creation of] either what the picture can *only then* convey better than them or another aspect of itself that is worth a thousand words that this time the writer does not have [it is then that a writer's initial speechlessness regarding an artwork, which is due to the suspension of the internal monologue induced by the latter, is followed by a writer's block] (...) Writing wants a response, not from the reader, but from the subject of the writing, which has *after the writing* to show that it is even richer than writing can convey, is worth a thousand words the writer then does not have.

24. Read "Voice-over-witness" in this book.
25. Jalal Toufic, (*Vampires*): *An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, revised and expanded edition (Sausalito, CA: The Post-Apollo Press, 2003), 36, 42-43, 126-127, 155, 340 (endnote 56); Jalal Toufic, *Distraction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Berkeley, CA: Tuumba Press, 2003), "Author's Note to the Second Edition" and 54 and 59; *Over-Sensitivity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Forthcoming Books, 2009), 82, 93, 96-101, 148, 204 (endnote 112), 215 (endnote 155), 216 (endnotes 157 and 158), 217 (endnote 164) [updated editions and page numbers].
26. Jalal Toufic, (*Vampires*): *An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, revised and expanded edition, 126, 136, 340 (endnote 56); *Over-Sensitivity*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 31, 97-100, 180 (endnote 29), 216 (endnote 161), 218 (endnote 168) [updated editions and page numbers].
27. Jalal Toufic, (*Vampires*): *An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, revised and expanded edition, 42, 75, 77, 94, 97, 101, 177, 188-200, 216, 218, 262, 348 (endnote 120), 361 (endnote 217), 364 (endnote 256), 366 (endnote 275), 372 (endnotes 302 and 303); Jalal Toufic,

- Diſtracted*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., “Author’s Note to the Second Edition” and 110-111, 126 [updated editions and page numbers].
28. Jalal Toufic, (*Vampires*): *An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, revised and expanded edition, 57-58 and 286 [updated edition and page numbers].
  29. Both this diegetic music-over and the Georgian voice-over doubling the minstrel’s speech in Turkish (...) make speech no longer totally entangled in the action but partially directed at the spectator, hence produce at the level of the sound a frontal address of the spectator that echoes the frontal view at the visual level, which does not always take the form of having the character facing or looking toward the camera (watching a Paradjanov film, you cannot identify with the character, who most of the time is looking at you), but assumes sometimes subtler forms: in *The Color of Pomegranates*, the successive pages of the illuminated manuscript continue to face us even as we hear the sound of the flipping of the pages; (...) the jump cuts between shots of the same person in profile, for example between two instances of someone’s ride on a horse from screen right to left, which produce a frontal view of the profile figure (...) With old writers, filmmakers and theater directors, sometimes instead of an increasing rigor in their work, we notice the appearance in it of a certain sloppiness; one should be discriminating as to whether the artist is really becoming sloppier or whether more and more of his or her work now is in the -over mode, gaining a wonderful liberty and nonchalance at the underlying level. (...) In the case of Paradjanov’s *The Legend of Suram Fortress* (1984), we encounter the aforementioned two kinds of sloppiness: one extrinsically imposed on the filmmaker and detrimental, the fifteen years of interruption in filmmaking (of which around five in prison) (...); and another one related to the -over mode, the one that does not get abolished in his next feature film, *Ashik Kerib* (1988), but amplified.
  30. [“Before a man studies Zen, to him mountains are mountains and waters are waters; after he gets an insight into the truth of Zen through the instruction of a good master, mountains to him are not mountains and waters are not waters; but after this when he really attains to the abode of rest, mountains are once more mountains and waters are waters.” *Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings of D. T. Suzuki*, ed. William Barrett (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1956), 14].
  31. Richard Foreman, *Unbalancing Acts: Foundations for a Theater* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), 46.
  32. This collaboration of the characters is already in evidence in *Pandering to the Masses* (1975), where the majority of the characters’ lines were “recorded by as many as four voices [those of the four principal performers], alternating word by word,” each performer repeating during the performance his or her lines uttered by the tape.
  33. People who indulge in this passing identification are common—aristocrats have the pathos of distance, they do not make the projective move of momentary identification with the other person.
  34. Distantiation can function as a phase toward the character-as-a-collaboration.
  35. Richard Foreman, *Unbalancing Acts: Foundations for a Theater*, 42.
  36. Jalal Toufic, *Diſtracted*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 28 [edition and page updated].
  37. Richard Foreman, *Reverberation Machines: The Later Plays and Essays* (Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press, 1985), 120.
  38. The ability of a character to ask a question and be part of the two or more characters answering it in *Penguin Touquet* (*Reverberation Machines*, 104, 109, etc.) turns out to be another way of understanding “one should speak only when also speaking to oneself. Only then is there a dialogue” (the epigraph of *Diſtracted*) (...). Whereas in this case what is elsewhere enriches, in other instances it acts as a parody. Those who intentionally parody are not subtle, since they disregard that one can always find somewhere an unintended parody of what one wrote or painted or filmed. (...). Hal Hartley’s use in *Theory of Achievement* (1991) of the framing, colors, and postures Godard uses in his later films but for contents and characters that are very close to ones that one associates with the early, youthful Godard is a sort of parody of my “youths who are older than their age” (“*Diſtracted* will most probably not be relevant to middle-aged people; it is for youths who are older than their age”).

39. Richard Foreman, *Reverberation Machines: The Later Plays and Essays*, 112.
40. It must be a sort of hysteria, of the psychosomatic kind, that makes me both usually not smell at all, but in the case of the vast majority of contemporary films and books smell shit. (...) In *Diſtracted* (...) most of the extraneous elements are present due to the absence of occasions for its solitary author to get rid in conversations of certain ideas that are merely intelligent but not necessary (...) (*Diſtracted*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 79-80 [updated edition and pages]) (...).
41. Both books had to deal with a deadline that is not imposed extrinsically but secreted by the work itself; such a deadline is one more factor contributing to the ever-widening solitude of many a writer. (...)
42. (...) [Rather, the entrancement] happens either through the victim's staring at the absence of (the vampire's) image in the mirror in front of which both she and the vampire are standing ((*Vampires*), revised and expanded ed., 115 [updated edition and page]), or by (...) [her ending up acceding to the illogical simultaneous presence (beside her) and absence (in the mirror in front of which she and the vampire are ostensibly standing) of the undead [Freud: "The governing rules of logic carry no weight in the unconscious; it might be called the Realm of the Illogical. Urges with contrary aims exist side by side in the unconscious without any need arising for an adjustment between them. Either they have no influence whatever on each other, or, if they have, no decision is reached, but a compromise comes about which is nonsensical since it embraces mutually incompatible details. With this is connected the fact that contraries are not kept apart but treated as though they were identical," *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, volume 23 (1937-1939): *Moses and Monotheism, An Outline of Psycho-analysis and Other Works*, translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey; in collaboration with Anna Freud; assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson (London, UK: Vintage, 2001), 168-169].
43. In the undead realm one's uncanny feeling that "every name in history is I" (from a letter Nietzsche wrote to Jacob Burckhardt at the onset of his psychosis, of his dying before dying) is countered by one's

feeling that all those one encounters are alien, an alienation resulting from the decomposition of the different composites of which each was composed while alive ("The living person is a composite ["I am Prado, I am also Prado's father. I venture to say that I am also Lesseps ... I am also Chambige ... every name in history is I"] that dissociates in death-as-undead first into separate subunits that are themselves composites ... then into elements, becoming alien. Each of us is common, not alien, both because each of us is a composite of all the others, even of those who lived erstwhile and who are long dead, and because each of us is part of the composite that constitutes the others. That is why we do not find others or for that matter ourselves alien, and that is why they too do not find us alien. In certain states of altered consciousness, though, we see the dead, people who have become not merely uglier, but alien, and that is because they are no longer composites (the withdrawal of the cathexis of the world)" [Jalal Toufic, (*Vampires*), revised and expanded edition, 173]. It is thus a realm where one encounters alternately the uncanny (Prado is strangely familiar ...) and the alien [clarification added in 2008].

44. On the long run, the disorientation of the entity haunting a place deprives us of our sense of orientation in it. Who or what haunts a place displays it to one as labyrinthine, as uninhabitable. I am still waiting for a film where, if at all, it is the infected victim of the vampire who displays all the powers vampire films usually attribute to the vampire—this revealing the victim to be still between life and death—while the vampire himself displays these as frailties and infirmities: (...) the appearance of his shadow on the left of the victim and looking to the right, while the vampire happens to be on the latter's right and looking to the left shows his mistaking right for left; his floating (as when Coppola's Dracula enters the room where Harker is shaving) reveals his uncertainty as to where exactly the floor is ...
45. Others too called Saddam Hussein Hitler: "Senator Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island, the Democratic chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, called Mr. Hussein 'the Hitler of the Middle East' and criticized Mr. Bush for not having moved earlier to forestall



an invasion,” *New York Times*, August 3, 1990.

46. Neither the Ba’th party and the Nazi party nor Iraq and Germany are interchangeable. Moreover, in terms of being the most racist and the most advanced technological and military power in a given region, Israel, rather than Iraq, plays that role in the Middle East.
47. The following is from the website of the UK’s security intelligence agency: “In June 1945, the Soviets announced—falsely—that Hitler’s remains had not been found and that he was probably still alive.

“This announcement caused a predictable flurry of ‘Hitler sightings’ across Europe. Allied officers sought to establish beyond possible doubt that Hitler had indeed died in his bunker. To that end, they interrogated various members of Hitler’s personal staff who had been with the dictator in late April 1945.

“The historian Hugh Trevor-Roper, who served as a British military intelligence officer during the war, used these accounts to investigate the circumstances of Hitler’s death and rebut claims that Hitler was still alive and living somewhere in the West. He published an account of his findings in 1947 in his book *The Last Days of Hitler*” (“Hitler’s Last Days,” <http://www.mi5.gov.uk/print/Page242.html>).

And the following is from chapter 1 of Ada Petrova and Peter Watson’s *The Death of Hitler: The Full Story with New Evidence from Secret Russian Archives* (New York: Norton, 1995): “The complete silence on the part of the Russians regarding what they had or had not found in the Reich Chancellery and the absence of a body—either Hitler’s or Eva Braun’s—did not convince many people. On the contrary, throughout the summer of 1945 the rumours that Hitler was still alive gathered pace.

“There were many sightings.... In July 1945, the US Office of Censorship intercepted a letter written from someone in Washington. Addressed to a Chicago newspaper, the letter claimed that Hitler was living in a German-owned hacienda 450 miles from Buenos Aires. The US government gave this report enough credibility to act on it, sending a classified telegram to the American embassy in Argentina requesting help in following up the inquiry. Besides giving basic information the telegram added that Hitler was alleged to be living

in special underground quarters. ‘Source indicates that there is a western entrance to the underground hideout which consists of a stone wall operated by photo-electric cells, activated by code signals from ordinary flashlights. Entrance thus uncovered supposedly provides admittance for automobiles.’ It continued that Hitler had provided himself with two doubles and was hard at work developing plans for the manufacture of long-range robot bombs and other weapons. The matter was taken sufficiently seriously for J. Edgar Hoover, then the director of the FBI, to become involved, although shortly afterwards he wrote to the War Department: ‘To date, no serious indication has been received that Adolf Hitler is in Argentina’” (<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/style/longterm/books/chap1/deathofhitler.htm>).

48. At the same time that these reports on a still living Hitler were being mentioned on TV, doubt should have been induced as to whether Saddam himself was alive, by for instance showing him on Iraqi TV meeting with the other members of the Revolutionary Council when it would have been quite clear that the tape was not new but had already been broadcast a week earlier (the readymade is used by dictators all over the Third World).
49. One cannot use radio or film as a device to reveal certain characteristics of death, and then discard the mediumistic and formal attributes, the radiophonic or filmic, for as in modern science, the measurement apparatus with which we observe a phenomenon that has to do with a realm that does not admit of negation, the unconscious/sum-over-histories of subatomic particles, affects the observed phenomenon, inflects it (in this respect science shows itself to be close to art, a domain where the form—in quantum physics, the measurement apparatus—influences the content). By using film to try to fathom death, the characteristics of death one will discover will be filmic; studying dying before dying through radio will reveal reality as radiophonic.
50. Quoted in Andrew McGhie and James Chapman, “Disorders of Attention and Perception in Early Schizophrenia,” *British Journal of Medical Psychology* 34 (1961): 105.



51. During his psychosis, he was so taken by the sound of one music instrument that he had to presage when it would cease, having then to literally leap like a trapezist to another sound. Thus fast-paced music made him anxious—exception: John Zorn’s music, which, for some reason, he continued to enjoy. Zorn’s music, for example *Torture Garden* and *Naked City*, averts the nostalgia embedded in any continuation of a process, whether toward its end or from its beginning. This music that begins and ends in the middle makes possible non-linearity (not merely as a mode of access to information—radical non-linearity will not be attained by merely having digital access to information). If following a clean cut with no desire for and no projection of further reconnection, the same music resumes, the two sections link in the listener without any interruption, making this music in abrupt blocks a music of continuity; what interrupts two sections between which a different piece is inserted is not the latter, but the more or less perceptible fade out at the end of the first and the more or less perceptible fade in at the beginning of the second.
52. A radiophonic functioning of the world is not restricted to schizophrenia, but is encountered also in other altered states of consciousness, for example in those cases of temporal-lobe seizure during which one hears songs and music that have no source in the location where one happens to be (for examples, see chapter 15 in Oliver Sacks’ *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat and Other Clinical Tales* [New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1998]). Comparing both experiential responses induced by electrical stimulation of the brain (“the times that are summoned most frequently are briefly these: the times of watching or hearing the action and speech of others, and times of hearing music.” Wilder Penfield & Phanor Perot, “The Brain’s Record of Visual and Auditory Experience: A Final Summary and Discussion,” *Brain* [1963]: 687) and music-inducing seizures to radio is not an example of confounding analogical thinking. On the contrary, it helps us to try to disentangle radio from an analogy—made by no one explicitly—to this prior biological “radio”—an analogy that condemns radio to try to achieve effects that pertain to this biological “radio” (“All media are extensions of some human

- faculty—psychic or physical. The wheel is an extension of the foot ... clothing, an extension of the skin; electric circuitry, an extension of the central nervous system” [Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium Is the Message: An Inventory of Effects*, produced by Jerome Agel (Corte Madera, CA: Gingko Press, 2001)]).
53. We will find it increasingly difficult to identify with the victim when in addition to having the point of view of the murderer, we are provided with that of the weapon itself through the *flying carpet* feature in computer simulation programs, which allows one to put oneself in the tank of one of the participants, or on a missile heading toward its target (Glenn Zorpette, “War Games,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 7, 1991), identifying also with the latter. Kevin Reynolds, the director of *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* (1991), a version where the aristocratic, Christian Robin accepts for brother an illegitimate son of his father and befriends a Moor, must have sensed a dangerous implication of such shots, for in the shot with the point of view of the arrow he had for target a tree, reverting to an objective shot from the side of the speeding arrow when the target was a human being. Is it at all surprising that this identification with weapons and other objects is concomitant with their becoming smart/intelligent? Already in the 1920s, Vertov’s “I am Kino-eye, I am a mechanical eye. I, a machine, show you the world as only I can see it.... I ascend with an airplane, I plunge and soar together with plunging and soaring bodies ...” (“Kinoks: A Revolution,” 1922) is concomitant with a smart camera, as is clear in his *The Man with a Movie Camera* (1929), where the camera comes out of its case, mounts the tripod, which then performs a series of movements on its own, while the camera’s winding mechanism revolves by itself, signaling that the camera is filming (the criterion for whether the camera is truly filming on its own, a true kino-eye, is that, as in Snow’s *The Central Region*, the absence of the filmmaker/cameraman behind the camera, that is, of human sight behind the viewfinder, not be felt as a lack that has to be countered by the presence in the film of an extra human sight, that of a film audience watching the sections of the film that were shot by the camera on its own, as in both Vertov’s film and Snow’s *Seated*

- Figures*, which contains large sections that Snow filmed without looking through the viewfinder).
54. Even when disoriented and anxious, the schizophrenic soon stopped asking (himself), whether by saying it aloud or thinking it, "What's happening to me?" for fear that the TV or radio program would at that point be interrupted by a special announcement in which he would hear about what is happening specifically to him.
  55. While laughter can be an appropriate and worthy response to the unbearable, sentimentalization or rationalization cannot.
  56. André Bazin, *What Is Cinema?* vol. I, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 96-97.
  57. André Bazin: "If the plastic arts were put under psychoanalysis, the practice of embalming the dead might turn out to be a fundamental factor in their creation. The process might reveal that at the origin of painting and sculpture there lies a mummy complex." Bazin, *What Is Cinema?* vol. I, 9.
  58. Once one acknowledges what is not detectable by oneself in what one is sending, but detectable by some others, one notices the proliferation of the intentionally not detectable in one's work: John Cage's 4'33" is one of the works listed in the credits of my *Credits Included: A Video in Red and Green*.
  59. It would be felicitous to complement the planned collaboration between different radio stations unbeknownst to the listener by their occasional broadcast of musicians who improvise their collaboration, for instance free jazz musicians.
  60. It seems that one way to get the academics with hygienic quotation marks to push for making available places to stay (and not shelters or prisons [more than 7% of people in jail in the United States have severe mental disorders (*Chicago Tribune*, September 10, 1992), and around three in ten prisons hold seriously mentally ill people who have not been charged with a crime (the percentage of such prisons is 81 in Kentucky)]), even if non-tenure, for the huge number of homeless schizophrenics and depressed people is by leaving the latter unsheltered by quotation marks.
  61. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban

- Development estimate for 1987, there were six hundred thousand homeless in the U.S., of whom the percentage of seriously mentally ill (schizophrenics and those with manic-depressive psychosis, etc.) was, according to studies by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) completed in 1986, 60% in Louisville, 56% in St Louis, 45% in San Francisco and Salt Lake City, and 25% in New York (the average is approximately 30%).
62. These incitements and prescriptions were written while having in mind a modest reception of this book. Should the book have a wider readership and influence, this quantitative limitation may dialectically change into a qualitative one, that is, a qualification. It is in this sense that I have a certain readership in mind.
  63. Here are two of the exceptional images of the 1991 Gulf War:
    - The images of Israelis and American soldiers in gas masks. By abstaining from using chemical and biological weapons during the war with the Coalition (possibly as a consequence of the Coalition's threat to retaliate by using tactical nuclear weapons in case the Iraqis used the aforementioned weapons), Šaddām Ḥusayn unintentionally contributed to editing one of the major images of the war, one coming straight out of the unconscious of Arabs: the Israelis and the American soldiers as extraterrestrial, alien, since the gas masks worn by them were not a response to any external cause—how shortsighted then, at the level of a logic of images, was Israel's reluctance to distribute gas masks to the Palestinian population (by 28 January only 20,000-30,000 had been issued)!
    - The sublime fires of the oil fields in Kuwait as seen in Werner Herzog's *Lessons of Darkness* (1992)—it was dishonest of Herzog not to have included Iraq as one of the producers of the film, since Iraq has paid billions of dollars for reparations for the fires of these fields. Regrettably, in the aforementioned film Herzog disregarded, did not hark to, and betrayed the majority of those who were in *the land of silence and darkness* (the title of his 1971 film regarding the blind-deaf), the Iraqi army units in Kuwait, whose radars were blinded and anyway could not detect the stealth fighters, and who could not see the American army units, equipped with night-vision

devices, attacking them at night.

64. Sometimes the performative of Duras, which does not reside only in the description she proffers but also in the question “You see?” makes Depardieu actually see; sometimes he sees only when he performatively answers “Yes.” Since this sight on Depardieu’s part is not imaginative, he, like Delphine Seyrig in *India Song*, although for a different legitimate reason, does not have to embody, enact through acting, this act of sight. That “*aucune répétition du texte*” (no rehearsal of the text) took place must have precluded Depardieu, an actor, from playacting that he is actually seeing in a quasi-hypnotic mode in his mind’s/imagination’s eye the episodes Duras is reading.
65. In *Hiroshima mon amour*, Duras does not establish an equivalency of the two traumas, the love story that ended in the death of the young French woman’s German lover in Nevers during Germany’s occupation of France, and the nuclear conflagration of Hiroshima: while the Japanese man asserts to the French woman on a visit to Hiroshima to act in a film, “You have seen nothing in Hiroshima,” notwithstanding her assertions to the contrary, when she addresses the Japanese man in the second person while reenacting the last hours of her love affair with the German in Nevers—up to and *including his death*—at no point does she then say to him: “You have seen nothing in Nevers.”
66. Thank God that *though seeing, they do not see*; in other words, thank God for actualizing a condition of possibility of the incarnation. Christ could incarnate because in the case of humans “though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear ...” (Matthew 13:13). Christ could incarnate because this peculiarity of people allows the coexistence in him, and despite his incarnation, of the visible and the invisible. The reason we do not perceive miracles is not necessarily that they cannot happen, but that even when they happen there is a component of them that is unbearable to see, thus affecting those around with a more or less pronounced inability to see. What Christ said to those who saw and heard his miracles, for instance to the parents of the dead child he resurrected (Luke 8:49-55), was understood prescriptively by Luke as a command not

to report to others what they fully saw and heard (“but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened” [Luke 8:56]), whereas we can understand it in a Spinozist manner—as descriptive of the aforementioned inaccessibility to sight: the miracle by which a blind person is turned into a seeing person is somewhat unbearable to see and consequently has something unseeable in it, and this affects its onlookers with a blindness, turns them into ones who *have eyes but fail to see* (Mark 8:18); the miracle by which the mute is able to speak is somewhat unbearable to hear and consequently affects those who heard the mute speak with a deafness, turns them into ones who *have ... ears but fail to hear* (Mark 8:18). The modern so-called medical miracles, which allow some people to regain a large part of, if not their full sight or hearing, are miracles only figuratively, not only because they have a scientific explanation and are repeatable by anyone who has the knowledge and the technological facilities, but also because they are wholly within the sight and hearing of the onlooker and listener. In this context, a witness is someone who seeing one of Jesus Christ’s miracles sees it (fully) and hearing it hears it (fully), with the consequence that Christ would not have instructed him or her following one of his miracles “to tell no one what had happened.”

67. The archeological image is a subject 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 ... they are again 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). It is also addressed in footnote 16 of my book *Distraction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 89-90.

68. While the world hides the disaster by continuing in its course, the disaster too, in its manner, hides the world. For example, the survivor of the Shoah might avoid all that may have an association to it: trains, etc.; and when by accident he or she sees a train, he or she doesn't see it but rather perceives the item associated with the concentration camp that it reminds him or her of, and has a flashback to the Shoah: thus even as he or she looks at the train, the latter is at least momentarily hidden from him or her.
69. "In quantum mechanics, empty space is not really empty at all but full of pairs of 'virtual' particles that suddenly spring in and out of existence. The particles appear in pairs because the vacuum contains no electric charge. So if a virtual electron, which has a negative charge, appears, then it must do so in conjunction with its antiparticle—a positively charged, virtual positron. In quantum mechanics, such perfectly anticorrelated states are said to be entangled, which means that the state of one particle completely determines the state of the other. Near the event horizon of a black hole, virtual particle-antiparticle pairs are being created all the time. Every now and then, half of one of those pairs falls into the hole and cannot get out to recombine with its partner. If the partner outside the hole has sufficiently high energy, it can escape the gravitational pull of the hole and thus create the illusion that the hole is radiating. Entanglement then demands that the partner that does not escape the black hole has negative energy. Because of Einstein's relation between mass and energy,  $E = mc^2$ , the negative-energy partner effectively has a negative mass, so when it falls into the hole it causes the mass of the hole to decrease," Seth Lloyd, "Almost Certain Escape from a Black Hole," *Physics World*, September 1, 2006, <http://physicsworld.com/cws/article/print/25728>.
70. On physical sonic black holes, see O. Lahav, A. Itah, A. Blumkin, C. Gordon, and J. Steinhauer, "A sonic black hole in a density-inverted Bose-Einstein condensate," <http://arxiv.org/abs/0906.1337>: "We have created the analogue of a black hole in a Bose-Einstein condensate. In this sonic black hole, sound waves, rather than light waves, cannot escape the event horizon."
71. Cf. Jalal Toufic, (*Vampires*): *An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, revised and expanded edition, 59, for an interpretation of Alma's knowledge of the specifics of Elisabeth's relationship with her son in terms of thought-transference.
72. Whereas people who gradually, through a process where identification played a major role, became similar, having the same tastes, the same habits, and similar memories are nonetheless not doubles, persons who are identical because of the erasure of any particular attributes, including memory, that may differentiate them, are doubles. Past a certain threshold in the process of doubling, were one of the two persons, or indeed both, to try to reach the documents that would fill in the gaps of his or her memory, and hence reintroduce a differentiation with the other, by some unexplainable concatenations of circumstances he will not be able to reach them.
73. In a somewhat similar manner, I, a mortal, thus dead even as I live, can receive from my amnesiac version in the undeath realm—where I find "myself" lost following a lapse—only through creative writing.
74. Charlotte Delbo, *Days and Memory*, translated and with a preface by Rosette Lamont (Marlboro, Vt.: Marlboro Press, 1990), 4. The SS militiamen's words to the prisoners quoted in Primo Levi's *The Drowned and the Saved*, "People will say that the events you describe are too monstrous to be believed," ended up applying to many a concentration camp survivor concerning the events he or she described, for example to Charlotte Delbo, who wrote concerning what she underwent, "It is all too incredible" (*Days and Memory*, 3).
75. In Duras' *Hiroshima mon amour*, the young French woman, whose lover in Nevers, a German soldier, was killed in the last days of Germany's occupation of France, tells her Japanese lover, whose country was traumatized by and his parents were killed in the nuclear conflagration of Hiroshima: "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 ... For my part I struggled every day with all my might against the horror of no longer understanding the reason to remember. Like you, I forgot."

76. “Nestor of Laranda, who was active between the reigns of Severus and Alexander, produced a version of the *Iliad* in which he avoided words beginning with the same letter as the book number.... Thus in book 1 of the *Iliad* (alpha, in Greek numeration) he did not admit any word that began with the letter alpha, and so forth. It was this style that was adopted by a close contemporary, an Egyptian poet named Triphiodorus, who may either have inspired or supplemented Nestor’s production with a lipogrammatic *Odyssey*.” David S. Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay: AD 180-395* (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), 193.
77. *Sometimes* no additional alteration of motion is needed to disclose this effect in the case of footage from the beginning of cinema, since the footage was filmed at a different camera speed (18 frames/second) than the one at which it is presently projected (24 frames/second).
78. Is the newsreel footage of the Red Army crossing Lake Sivash in the Crimea during World War II, specifically in 1943, in Tarkovsky’s *The Mirror* another such instance? Over these images, we hear the voice-over of Arseni Tarkovsky reciting his poem “Life, Life” (1965): “... On earth there is no death. All are immortal. All is immortal.... Reality and light / Exist, but neither death nor darkness....” *These* soldiers trudging in the muddy water while moving a canon and other supplies are not going to physically die since they are preserved as such in four-dimensional spacetime, but they are not on account of that immortal, since these soldiers, unlike everything else around them, are mortal, hence dead even while they live, more specifically while they cross Lake Sivash—unlike them, yes, all else, fish, microscopic biological organism in the water, etc., is immortal.
79. The three films are available for download on the website of the Library of Congress, respectively at:  
 — [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/h?ammem/papr:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(edmp+1761\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/h?ammem/papr:@field(NUMBER+@band(edmp+1761)))  
 — [http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/h?ammem/papr:@field\(NUMBER+@band\(edmp+1847\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/h?ammem/papr:@field(NUMBER+@band(edmp+1847)))  
 — [http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/papr:@filreq\(@field\(NUMBER+@band\(edmp+1594\)\)+@field\(COLLID+edison\)\)](http://lcweb2.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/papr:@filreq(@field(NUMBER+@band(edmp+1594))+@field(COLLID+edison))).
80. In *La Jetée*, why does Chris Marker have the time traveler to the past and the woman he encounters there meet in the Museum of Natural History, with its stuffed animals, and in an art museum with many of its statues more or less damaged, if not to maintain the notion that (at least some) things need to be preserved, that is, if not to provide himself, the spectator, and his protagonist with an occasion to forget about (relativity’s) four-dimensional spacetime, which is presupposed by the film since it is one of the conditions of time travel, but which can prove traumatic to those who fully realize it?
81. Memory is not a tenuous attempt to somewhat hold on to what has irremediably vanished, for were it the case that rather than being still there but unavailable, unreachable (other than through time travel), the past vanishes, there would be no memory.
82. This absence in *Back to the Future Part III* is all the more surprising due to the presence of all sorts of other elements of self-reflexivity: in 1885, Marty calls himself Clint Eastwood, stands in front of a mirror imitating De Niro in *Taxi Driver* ...
83. What would be an appropriate gesture regarding an artist who feels such kinship to my concept of the withdrawal of tradition past a surpassing disaster that he co-taught with me a seminar around it at United Nations Plaza, Berlin, from 31 January through 11 February 2007, and had earlier written, “I also realize that I read about all this somewhere else, most likely in one of Jalal Toufic’s books. I mentioned in our earlier conversation that I am likely to quote Jalal quite a bit in any exchange we have simply because I am not able these days to find my thoughts without passing through his words, books, and concepts” (Silvia Kolbowski and Walid Raad, *Between Artists* [Canada: A. R. T. Press, 2006], 6)? It is to dedicate to him this revised edition of the essay that introduced the concept.
84. Yet another manner of action at a distance was planned for *Credits Included: A Video in Red and Green*. While in Lebanon in 1992, I met with the director of Lebanese TV and proposed to him the production of a video to be broadcast simultaneously on two channels, TL1 (Télé Liban 1) and TL2, to investigate issues of telepathy in

a country where the long civil war induced both the isolation of the country *and* an exile from the local—the video’s two-channel broadcast version could have been also known as *Telepathy; or, the Exile from the Local*. He agreed to produce and broadcast the work. I informed him that I had to leave the country in one and a half months. He promised to provide the equipment shortly. I contacted actors and actresses, and scouted for locations. The program was to start at 7:00 p.m. Following the title, *Credits Included*, the audience would have seen the protagonist, Safa, sitting at Le Thé café. In the background, the placard with the inscription “Le Thé” would have been complemented by keyed-in space-time coordinates: Beirut, day and month of broadcast, 1993. There would have been no channel logo on the two channels. Safa would have looked sideways. A young woman sitting at another table would have been looking in his direction; her automatic *reaction* would have been to avert her look. He would have then looked at his watch: it would have indicated 7:01 p.m. He would then have written: “7:04 p.m. How can one be sure that what one is seeing is in front of one, that is, perceived in a normal way rather than telepathically? For instance, how can the TV spectator be sure that he or she is seeing what is being broadcast on the channel he or she chose rather than telepathically apprehending what happens to be broadcast on another channel (at the same time?)?” (*Credits Included* would thus have been a work that incorporates zapping—zapping against zapping). As he would have reached the middle of the last sentence, the spectator would have been able to hear the faint sound of a door opening and someone saying in a clear voice: “Are you videotaping this program for TV?” Safa would have finished writing the sentence, then he would have said: “Cut ... We will redo the shot. Come to think of it, this time I will say the words instead of writing them.” Safa would then have looked again at his watch: it would have indicated 7:04. While uttering the words, his voice would have been out of sync, this indicating possibly that it is issuing from another channel. In the same setting, he would have written: “How can I be certain that what I am seeing telepathically right now does not come from a later or a previous time, that is, how do I know that I am not

seeing the future or the past?” This logo-less shot would have been shown on the two channels at a different stage in the progression of each of the two tapes. Around a month after my meeting with the director of Lebanese TV, I received a phone call asking that we meet again and that I “explain” to him once more what the video was all about. I ended up shooting the video with no help from the Lebanese TV; unfortunately, *Credits Included: A Video in Red and Green* is presently a single-monitor video, and the above-described scene was cut out.

85. Were no books, paintings, and buildings to withdraw past a disaster, does that imply necessarily that that disaster was not a surpassing one? Is it possible rather that there was no withdrawal past the disaster not because the latter is not a surpassing one but because that culture, however much it trumpets its self-proclaimed “tradition,” does not really have a tradition? Yes!
86. Telegraphy, the medium through which one used to receive the news from the colonies, where most of the atrocities were committed, had for appropriate punctuation the symptomatic *stop*. Journalists now phone or use faxes; gone is the resonant *displacement* of the *stop* from the horrified reaction to an atrocity to the standard punctuation of the telegraphic medium.
87. By losing traditional music, we lose tradition to the second power, since this music, which enfolds an impersonal memory, is not just a component of tradition but envelops it. A society will never have a tradition if it remains at the level of history and does not attain to instances of impersonal memory—and its attendant possibility of impersonal amnesia. In Şerif Gören and Yilmaz Güney’s *Yol* (1982), this music, while in rhythm with the relatively slow movement of horseback-riding, functions as an almost instantaneous transport (the affinity the most advanced sector of the population feels toward this traditional music is not so anachronistic, but has in part to do with the almost instantaneous transposition performed by this music), so that Ömer arrives *twice* in his village, physically, by means of boat, then train, then bus, then feet, but also by means of this kind of music—with the attendant danger of double arrival: labyrinthine



imprisonment (Buñuel's *The Exterminating Angel*)—one cannot truly leave places to which one arrived doubly without having left in between, except if one accomplishes a double departure. The coexistence of many historical stages in developing countries is paralleled by the coexistence of many modes of arrival in these countries: in the case of the village, double arrival: one physical (the slow modes of transportation leading to the village are slowed even further by the frequent military checkpoints encountered in many regions of the South [*Yol*; Michel Khleifi's *Wedding in Galilee*, 1987; Maroun Bagdadi's *Little Wars*, 1982]), and one musical; in the case of the majority of the inhabitants of the city: a single arrival; in the case of the most advanced sectors of the city, who no longer fully belong to it, but are in interface with the rest of the “global village”: *generalized arrival* (Paul Virilio: “Currently, with the instantaneous broadcasting revolution, we are seeing the beginnings of a ‘generalized arrival’ whereby everything arrives without having to leave, the nineteenth century’s elimination of the journey [that is, of the space interval and of time] combining with the abolition of *departure* at the end of the twentieth, the journey thereby losing its successive components and being overtaken by *arrival* alone,” *Open Sky*, trans. Julie Rose [London, New York: Verso, 2008], 16).

88. Without for that matter becoming a teacher—one who teaches others lessons (“teach someone a lesson: punish or hurt someone as a deterrent: *they were teaching me a lesson for daring to complain*” [*New Oxford American Dictionary*]; “teach: to cause to know the disagreeable consequences of some action <I’ll *teach* you to come home late>” [<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/teach>])—in this sense most teachers are outside universities and schools.
89. One of the counterproductive consequences of the decade-long Arab boycott of Egypt following its Camp David accords with Israel in 1979 was that the other Arabs received the bad from Egypt—its soap operas, and its melodramatic, moralizing films, etc.—while being prohibited from going there and discovering in Egypt what resists the Egypt that was being exported to the rest of the Arab World (for example, Shādī ‘Abd al-Salām’s *The Night of Counting the Years*,

1969 ...). Thus, the reason I qualify my dislike of contemporary Egyptian culture is that it is mostly the bad, and sometimes only the bad in a culture that gets imported by other countries.

90. In his musical compositions for my *Credits Included: A Video in Red and Green* (1995) (“Credits Included (A Video in Red & Green),” *Filmworks IV: S & M + More* [Tzadik CD7310, © 1997]), my ally and friend John Zorn sampled sections from pieces of classical Arabic music performed by the Iraqi musician Munīr Bashīr.
91. I find it inappropriate that when a university department in the USA is to show an Arab film, even a Palestinian, Lebanese, or Iraqi one, the first person they think of asking to present the film in this period of multiculturalism is an Arab filmmaker or thinker, oblivious to the eventuality that the disasters that have befallen that area may have been surpassing ones, inducing a withdrawal of tradition, with the unfortunate consequence that an Arab filmmaker or thinker would be unable to access these films—other writers, scholars or filmmakers possibly can.  
Unlike in 1996, when I could access *A Thousand and One Nights* only through its adaptation by Pasolini, a filmmaker for whom this literary text was not withdrawn since he was not part of the community of the surpassing disaster that beset the Middle East, in my book *Two or Three Things I’m Dying to Tell You* (2005), specifically its section “Something I’m Dying to Tell You, Lyn,” I could access it directly. This would imply that *A Thousand and One Nights* was resurrected sometime between 1996 and 2005, and that it continued to be available following its resurrection notwithstanding the looting of the Iraq Museum and the sacking of the Iraq National Library and Archives and other Iraqi libraries in April 2003, in the first days following the US army’s occupation of Baghdad; and, since then, the hundreds of car bombs and suicide bombers targeting civilians; the widespread sectarian killings; the beheadings by the degenerates of al-Qā’ida in Iraq ...!
92. Anyone of the perpetrators of hostilities that result in a surpassing disaster is part of the community of such a disaster if he or she is sensible to the withdrawal that affects books, buildings, etc., in the



aftermath of such a disaster—he or she is a member of the community who should be condemned.

93. That resurrection takes time is in the case of humans partly because it requires arriving too late; see “Arriving Too Late for Resurrection” in my book (*Vampires*): *An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, revised and expanded edition, 215-227: “‘Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. Yet when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days’ (John 11: 5-6). The narrator of [Blanchot’s] *Death Sentence* writes: ‘I think in saying that, she was announcing that she was going to die. This time I decided to return to Paris. But I gave myself two more days’” (Ibid., 223).
94. To be more accurate, we have lost one kind of tradition; we may still encounter that other, uncanny tradition, the one secreted by the ruins in a labyrinthine time, often a time-lapsed one (“Ruins,” in (*Vampires*): *An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, revised and expanded edition). The fact that in the aftermath of my writing in (*Vampires*) (my doctoral dissertation by the same title was defended in 1992) about the ruined *Aswāq* being as old as Baalback (p. 36), major archeological discoveries of the Phoenician, Byzantine, and Roman Beirut were made in that area does not confirm my contention of the first kind of oldness, but resonates with it, layering oldness on oldness.
95. Nietzsche: “What I relate is the history of the next two centuries. I describe what is coming, what can no longer come differently: the advent of nihilism.” From an entry in the projected preface, dated November 1887-March 1888, to *The Will to Power* (Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will To Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale [New York: Random House, 1968], 3).
96. See my book *Distracted*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 32-42, on untimely collaboration.
97. My experience of collaborating in an untimely manner with Gus Van Sant was not a happy one. Had he heeded my suggestions, he would not have tried to do a remake of Hitchcock’s *Psycho* (1960) in which he reproduced each frame of the original largely in the manner of Hitchcock, but would instead have done a *Psycho* in the manner of Sokurov, so that the resultant film would have been:

*Psycho*, School of Sokurov (as *The Betrothal*, circa 1640-50, is by the School of Rembrandt). Such a programmatic film would have proved all the more appropriate when Sokurov went on to do a seemingly programmatic cinematic work, *Russian Arc* (2002), a 96-minute film videotaped in one continuous shot. Since Van Sant did not heed my suggestions for his remake of *Psycho* (1998), I made the video *Mother and Son; or, That Obscure Object of Desire (Scenes from an Anamorphic Double Feature)* (41 minutes, 2006), in lieu of the failed untimely collaboration.

98. Nigel Andrews, “Dracula in Delft,” *American Film* 4, no. 1 (1978): 33.
99. I’ll mention in passing that *Vertigo* was withheld from circulation for an extended period: it is one of five films to which Hitchcock had the rights and which he removed from circulation in 1973—while his lawyers negotiated new financial arrangements for their screening in theaters and broadcasting on television—and which were rereleased in 1983-84.
100. “The accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in 1986 was the most severe in the history of the nuclear power industry, causing a huge release of radionuclides over large areas of Belarus, Ukraine and the Russian Federation” (<http://www.iaea.org/Publications/Booklets/Chernobyl/chernobyl.pdf>; see also [http://www.who.int/ionizing\\_radiation/chernobyl/who\\_chernobyl\\_report\\_2006.pdf](http://www.who.int/ionizing_radiation/chernobyl/who_chernobyl_report_2006.pdf)). The loss of movies and more generally art attributed to the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in Godard’s *King Lear* is to be considered in terms of the immaterial withdrawal past a surpassing disaster rather than as a fictional exaggeration of the historical material damage.
101. What about for example Alexander’s house in Tarkovsky’s *The Sacrifice*?
102. Notwithstanding Tarkovsky’s empathy for his film’s protagonist, Alexander, there is a crucial difference between them. The fact that Alexander can burn his house successfully on his first try indicates that for him the disaster was not a surpassing one, that it was indeed averted (through his prayer?). By the time Alexander sets his house on fire, and as revealed by the parapraxis during the filming of *The*

*Sacrifice*, for Tarkovsky the house had become withdrawn, unavailable as a result of a surpassing disaster. From the perspective of their relation to the disaster, Tarkovsky and his protagonist Alexander do not belong to the same community, do not form a community.

103. Unlike the botched filming by Tarkovsky's crew of Alexander's burning of his house in *The Sacrifice*, the loss of a considerable part of the initial footage of *Stalker* (1979) due to a lab mistake remains extraneous to the released film.
104. In Michal Leszczylowski's *Directed by Andrei Tarkovsky* (1988; aka *The Genius, the Man, the Legend Andrei Tarkovsky*), Tarkovsky's wife informs us that "it was a tragedy for him ... He was crushed," and indeed we see a clearly frustrated Tarkovsky standing next to the cinematographer Sven Nykvist and his assistants on the location of *The Sacrifice* and saying: "The last thing I expected was for the camera crew to foul up." And yet despite Tarkovsky's reaction, the crew's bungled action reveals that Tarkovsky's wish and demand that the crew members not merely execute orders but be truly implicated in the film was actualized during the filming, for their bungled action here answers to the demands of the film. What Tarkovsky writes about the filming of *The Mirror* applies even better to the filming of *The Sacrifice*. "Camera-man and set designer were doing not merely what they knew how to do, what was asked of them, but in every new situation they pushed out the boundaries of their professional capacities a little further. There was no question of confining themselves to what 'could' be done, but of doing whatever was needed" (Andrey Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time: Reflections on the Cinema*, translated from the Russian by Kitty Hunter-Blair [Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1987], 38)—what was needed at that point was for Sven Nykvist and his assistants not to confine themselves to what "could" be done by them, but for the filming of the shot of the burning of the house to fail!
105. It could be that the surpassing disaster is no other than the subsequent appropriation: she is trying to resurrect the work from the surpassing disaster that her subsequent appropriation will inflict on it.
106. The deterioration in the standard of education caused by the

surpassing disaster, with the destruction of numerous schools, the high casualties among intellectuals, artists, and teachers, and the resultant increasing ignorance of the populace, etc., is certainly a significant contributing factor.

107. Luke 16:19-31. Did Jesus or Luke hear this "parable" from Lazarus?
108. Cf. Leonid N. Andreyev's "Lazarus" (1906) for an uncannier Lazarus, a Lazarus who is the last man. Had Jesus Christ—even the resurrected Jesus Christ?—encountered the resurrected Lazarus of Leonid N. Andreyev's short story, would he have cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" (My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?)? Is it possible that the eponymous "protagonist" of Blanchot's *The Last Man* once read Leonid Andreyev's "Lazarus"? Is it possible that Blanchot's narrator, who calls "the protagonist" the last man, has read Andreyev's "Lazarus"? Would that narrator refer to the Lazarus of Andreyev's short story and the man he had called the last man as the last men? It would be a misreckoning were he to do so, for "*last men* is not a plural of *last man*; the *last men* are described negatively and critically by Nietzsche in his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None*, while the *last man* is portrayed by Blanchot in his book with that title" (Jalal Toufic, *Undeserving Lebanon* [Forthcoming Books, 2007], footnote 45, page 105). Can such two men meet, for example can Blanchot's last man encounter the Lazarus of Andreyev's short story? Can they meet except in a thought experiment? I hope to be spared this thought experiment, for I have the dreadful apprehension that it will be the last man who will do it, that by the "time" someone does such a thought experiment, he will come to the (resigned?) realization that the most discerning of his acquaintances has come to consider him the last man.
109. This is by no means to rank the absolutely modern as better than the relatively modern, but merely to differentiate them.
110. Writing in relation to an artwork is not a commentary if it happens in the suspension, *induced by the artwork*, of the interior monologue.
111. Since the latter kind of dance has a tendency to project the dancer into a particular realm of altered space and time, a choreographer

who designs such a kind of dance would have to counter such a tendency if he or she wishes to maintain the dancers solely in the space and time where their physical bodies are.

112. The unsettling thing about Agnes de Mille's dance *Fall River Legend* is that dance already envelops in diegetic silence-over and freezes Lizzie Andrew Borden's father and stepmother—a condition that they will undergo in the realm in which their *future* murders will thrust them. Indeed, which is uncannier and seems more patently to the other side of death: (the subtle dancer) Lizzie facing the future murder weapon, the ax, while behind her her father and stepmother (as subtle dancers) sit frozen? Or her dance with the specter of her dead mother? It is certainly the former.
113. While it may have been coined to justify to the films' producers the anomalies that take place in such ballets and convince them to finance and then actually include such scenes in the film, the term "dream ballet" is prolixly inept since many of the dreamlike characteristics in these ballets, for example the direct, and often seamless connection of non-contiguous spaces-times, are ones that dance, therefore ballet, can produce on its own, with no recourse to dreams and the dream work. What we see in the ballet is neither a dream nor the images an entranced person would see, but rather what a subtle dancer is going through. The projection into dance's realm of altered movement, space and time is certainly not just in the mind but is a bodily one, albeit with a subtle body. Indeed, what happens to the subtle dancer affects the material dancer, who remains in the space-time where his or her physical body is.
114. Dance is a locus of the aura all the more since the subtle body it induces is one unit, indivisible into parts; it is impossible to go into close-ups of this body.
115. "Dance is not erotic. The supposed eroticism of dance is the result of the common urge to penetrate the aura of the dancer" (Jalal Toufic, *Distraction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 77).
116. Thus Nietzsche writes in the preface of his book *Ecce Homo: How to Become What You Are*, "In the expectation that soon I will have to confront humanity [myself included] with the most difficult

demand it has ever faced, it seems imperative for me to say *who I am*. People really should know this: since I have not left myself 'without testimony.' ... I only need to speak with some 'educated' person who happens to be in Upper Engadine for the summer to convince myself that I am *not* alive ... Under these circumstances it is a duty (albeit one that my habits and especially the pride of my instincts rebel against at a basic level) to say: ... *Above all, do not mistake me for anyone else!*" (Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, edited by Aaron Ridley, Judith Norman; translated by Judith Norman [Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005], 71)—"soon" enough by the reckoning of the living, he will mistake himself for everyone, writing, in a 5 January 1889 letter to Jacob Burckhardt, at the onset of his psychosis, of his dying before dying ("This autumn, as lightly clad as possible, I twice attended my funeral, first as Count Robilant [no, he is my son, insofar as I am Carlo Alberto, my nature below], but I was Antonelli myself"), "I am Prado, I am also Prado's father, I venture to say that I am also Lesseps.... I am also Chambige ... every name in history is I" (*Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 347). In Bergman's *Persona*, alarmed by her first, curt meeting with her new patient, the famous theater actress Elisabet Vogler, who has been hospitalized following her lapse into mutism, the nurse Alma reiterates her future plan, "I will marry Karl-Henrik and we will have a few children, whom I will raise. That is all determined. It is inside me. There is nothing to worry about"—in this film of the close-up, which according to Deleuze is both "the face and its effacement," since it undoes the three roles of the face ("Ordinarily, three roles of the face are recognizable: it is individuating [it distinguishes or characterizes each person]; it is socializing [it manifests a social role]; it is relational or communicating [it ensures not only communication between two people, but also, in a single person, the internal agreement between his character and his role]. Now the face, which effectively presents these aspects in the cinema as elsewhere, loses all three in the case of close-up" [*Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Continuum, 2005),

- 101]), within a short period by the reckoning of the doctor who lent them her villa on an island, she'll no longer be able to differentiate herself from her patient Elisabeth Vogler, protesting anxiously, "No! I am not like you. I do not feel like you. I am the sister Alma, I am here only to help you. I am not Elisabeth Vogler! You are Elisabeth Vogler! I would like to have? I adore? I do not have?" becoming a nothing (she instructs Elisabeth to repeat after her, "Nothing. That's it. That's the way it shall be. That's the way it would have to be")—to worry about.
117. "There is a mirror on the opposite wall; she is not contemplating it, but the mirror is contemplating her. How faithfully it has caught her image ..." Søren Kierkegaard, *The Seducer's Diary*, edited and translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong; with a new foreword by John Updike (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 20.
118. In the final scene of Orson Welles' *Lady from Shanghai*, the character played by Wells is shown passing in front of a distorting mirror before arriving in front of the Magic Mirror Maze. His distortions as well as the presumed ones of the other two protagonists function as dissolves to "inside" the mirrors. Indeed, soon, the three protagonists are no longer visible to each other outside the mirrors. To have each other outside the mirrors again, two of the protagonists shatter them with their bullets.
119. In George Stevens' *Swing Time* (1936), at first Fred Astaire's shadows dance in perfect sync to him, so that one thinks that they are dependent on him, then at a different rhythm, then do different movements, then leave him altogether. The "Alter Ego" dance in Charles Vidor's *Cover Girl* (1944), in which Gene Kelly's reflection detaches itself from the glass pane and dances with him, is to be criticized not for its somatization of a psychological conflict, but for giving a psychological interpretation of the relation of the dancer to "his" or "her" independent shadows and reflections.
120. Margot Fonteyn, the watersprite of Fredrick Ashton's *Ondine*, dances in wonder with her newly encountered shadow (a dance based on the *pas de L'ombre* in Jules Perrot's *Ondine*, 1843). The paradigmatic form of the *pas de trois* would be a dance of two subtle dancers with the similar or dissimilar unnatural reflection one of them has projected or encountered in dance's realm of altered body, space and time. The paradigmatic form of the *pas de quatre* would be a dance of two subtle dancers with the two similar or dissimilar material, dense dancers who projected them into dance's realm of altered body, space and time, but who themselves remain outside it.
121. The flip side of the circumstance that it is not uncommon for the subtle dancer projected by the dense, flesh-and-blood dancer into dance's realm of altered movement, body, space and time to be dissimilar to him or her (as well as for the subtle dancer and his or her unnatural reflection to be dissimilar) is that the flesh-and-blood dancer may come across weird similarities to another dancer: while sitting in front of a mirror applying his makeup in Carlos Saura's *Blood Wedding*, Antonio Gades (1936-2004) remarks how physically similar he is to the youthful Spanish dancer Vicente Escudero (1892-1980) and mentions that on moving to Paris and sending Escudero a postcard, he received in reply a letter informing him that he is living in the same apartment Escudero lived in for 20 years: 36, rue Boulanger.
122. The presence of many dancers all doing the same movements is not annoying if, as in McLerran's *Pas de deux*, these dancers are the result of a dancer's projection of extra reflections or shadows in dance's realm of altered movement, body, space and time (or if, as in Busby Berkeley's work, they enter into large-scale abstractions). It is therefore appropriate that when the modernist decompositions of movement in painting, à la Duchamp or the futurist Balla, or in photography, à la Marey, were made, none of them dealt with a dancer in the midst of his dance movement, since then they could have been interpreted as just stylizations of the dancer's projection of extra reflections or shadows in dance's realm of altered movement, body, space and time (McLerran's *Pas de deux*).
123. René Girard, *A Theater of Envy: William Shakespeare* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 185.
124. Whereas the ballerina Galina Ulanova gives the sensation that she hovers because the air is her element, Gelsey Kirkland (for instance

as the black swan in her *pas de deux* with Baryshnikov in *Swan Lake*) gives the aristocratic sensation that she remains in the air out of repulsion of the earth (with her, the impression of distance and elevation is produced mainly in the region of the feet).

125. We encounter this distinction in Nabokov's *Despair*: to one side, the fickle wife betraying her husband with another, dissimilar man; to the other side, the husband encountering the dead ringer, no longer able to differentiate between himself and a dissimilar man.
126. According to "The Death of Orpheus" in Book 11 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, following Orpheus' physical death, "His ghost flies downward to the Stygian shore, / And knows the places it had seen before: / Among the shadows of the pious train / He finds Eurydice, and loves again; / With pleasure views the beauteous phantom's charms, / And clasps her in his unsubstantial arms. / There side by side they unmolested walk, / Or pass their blissful hours in pleasing talk; / Aft or before the bard securely goes, / And, without danger, can review his spouse." I do not believe it is the case, since for me the over-turn is a peculiarity of the undeath state. After his mortal dismemberment by the female Bacchanals, Orpheus, now in Hades, repeatedly turns to face his wife, each time discovering that he is still facing in the same direction, away from Eurydice! What the gods of the underworld told Orpheus, not to turn to face Eurydice while still in Hades, the realm of undeath, but to do so only once he reaches the world of life, was a disclosure of a peculiarity of the underworld, the over-turn, which he misunderstood as a moral prohibition, the same way, according to Spinoza, God's revelation of the nefarious effect the apple would have on Adam was falsely interpreted by the latter as a divine moral prescription against eating it: "'Thou shalt not eat of the fruit ...': the anxious, ignorant Adam understands these words as the expression of a prohibition. And yet, what do they refer to? To a fruit that, as such, will poison Adam if he eats it .... But because Adam is ignorant of causes, he thinks that God morally forbids him something, whereas God only reveals the natural consequence of ingesting the fruit .... Now, all that one needs in order to moralize is to fail to understand. It is clear that we have only to misunderstand

a law for it to appear to us in the form of a moral 'You must.' ... Adam does not understand the rule of the relation of his body with the fruit, so he interprets God's word as a prohibition ..." (Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, translated by Robert Hurley [San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988], 22-23).

127. "At a certain moment of his performance he [the Kabuki actor] halts; the black shrouded *kurogo* obligingly conceals him from the spectators. And lo!—he is resurrected in a new make-up. And in a new wig." Sergei Eisenstein, *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, ed. and trans. Jay Leyda (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), 42.
128. While the terms *freezing* and *immobility* are rather interchangeable in my writing on dance and death, I tend to use the term *immobility* when I wish to contrast this condition to motionlessness, which remains a variety of motion; whereas I tend to use the term *freezing* for its association with cinema's freeze frames (an association that frequently induces one to ask on encountering frozen people: "Am I in a film?"), which are the genetic element of motion; and with frozen stars (aka black holes), whose event horizons may be the only place in the world (or, to be more precise, at the world's limit) where one encounters, from the reference frame of an outside observer, immobility: "There remained the issue of what to call the object created by the stellar implosion. From 1958 to 1968 different names were used in East and West: Soviet physicists used a name that emphasized a distant astronomer's vision of the implosion. Recall that because of the enormous difficulty light has escaping gravity's grip, as seen from afar the implosion seems to take forever; the star's surface seems never quite to reach the critical circumference, and the horizon never quite forms. It looks to astronomers ... as though the star becomes frozen just outside the critical circumference. For this reason, Soviet physicists called the object produced by implosion a *frozen star*" (Kip S. Thorne, *Black Holes and Time Warps: Einstein's Outrageous Legacy* [New York: W. W. Norton, 1993], 255); "Windbag, watching Goulash from a spaceship safely outside the horizon, sees Goulash acting in a bizarre way. Windbag has lowered to the horizon



a cable equipped with a camcorder and other probes, to better keep an eye on Goulash. As Goulash falls toward the black hole, his speed increases until it approaches that of light. Einstein found that if two persons are moving fast relative to each other, each sees the other's clock slow down; in addition, a clock that is near a massive object will run slowly compared with one in empty space. Windbag sees a strangely lethargic Goulash. As he falls, the latter shakes his fist at Windbag. But he appears to be moving ever more slowly; at the horizon, Windbag sees Goulash's motions slow to a halt" (Leonard Susskind, "Black Holes and the Information Paradox," *Scientific American* [April 1997]: 55).

129. The perception of freezing/immobilization is an *out of this world* encounter. Regarding the freezing of the astronaut and his or her accompanying animal at the event horizon of a black hole (aka frozen star) from the reference frame of some external observer, the latter would feel that the frozen human and animal at the event horizon are *out of this world*, in the informal sense of *extraordinary*—they are moreover so in the literal sense when taking into consideration that in the reference frame of the astronaut or animal or object on a spaceship, he or she or it exited this world by crossing the "gateless gate" of the event horizon. Concerning the immobilizations he or she witnesses in death's or dance's realms of altered time, movement, body and sound, the mortal witness or the subtle dancer feels *out of this world*.
130. Unlike the choreographed fight in which José was murdered, this dance is not just a stylized rendition of what is a mundane movement in the diegesis.
131. The permeability of life and death made possible by dance is enhanced by dance films' fields of intense monochromatic colors (Saura's *Tango* ...), which function as sucking "shallow depths," as a sort of Chroma key making possible overlaying and keying.
132. The inhomogeneity of space in classical and modern dance is to be located not so much in the conventional importance given to center stage and to the frontal position—an inhomogeneity that remains extrinsic; but in dance's direct, and often seamless linking of non-

contiguous spaces (the ballet of *An American in Paris*).

133. Walter Benjamin: "From an alluring appearance or persuasive structure of sound the work of art of the Dadaists became an instrument of ballistics. It hit the spectator like a bullet, it happened to him, thus acquiring a tactile quality. It promoted a demand for the film, the distracting element of which is also primarily tactile, being based on changes of place and focus which periodically assail the spectator." "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 220-223.
134. Must a choreographer include a freezing in order to have these extraordinary movements? Obviously not, but then these extraordinary movements remain stylizations, rather than diegetic.
135. At *Blood Wedding*'s ceremony, the characters momentarily stand motionless purportedly for a photograph. Are they doing so in order not to appear blurred in it? Rather, in this particular instance, their motionlessness denotes that they are frozen since at no point do we see either the still-camera taking the photograph or the resultant photograph (but rather a freeze frame in the opening and closing credits sequences).
136. It is felicitous that this unnatural backward movement, allowed by the freezings, coexists in this short film with a natural backward movement as a woman revolving in circles around another dancer lets go of his hand and finds herself pushed backward by the generated centrifugal force.
137. Were the dancer also at one point during his or her backward movement to do a pirouette, we would have the elegant coexistence of two dance characteristics that the less refined can try to link causally, but that actually coexist without one being the effect of the other: the ability to move backward with no hesitation is made possible by immobilization since it is actually a backward in time motion; the ability to be double-faced (Deren's *Choreography for a Camera*) is a result of the pirouette as both an approximate rendition of the over-turn and a countermeasure to it.
138. Having one of the main dancers be a rather forgetful character would

underline the difference between a psychological memory and the actual return to the past that dance can make possible.

139. Then why don't her parents and her younger self see her? It is because of dance's frequent introduction of the dancers into superimposed, but separate spaces.
140. Taking into account that one observes many of the characteristics I associate with dance's realm of altered movement, body, space and time in Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* (codirector Alexander Hammid, 1943), is it at all surprising that she went on to make explicit dance films, for example *A Study in Choreography for Camera* (1945) and *Ritual in Transfigured Time* (1946)? No.
141. The circumstance that his filmic adaptation *Oedipus Rex* (1967) begins before Oedipus kills his father and marries his mother implies that Pier Paolo Pasolini was not interested in the oracular modality as such in that film. Through the oracle, fate masquerades as something pertaining to the future. But, actually, the attempt to alter fate is an attempt to alter not the future but the past; that is why fate narratives, for example Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, start after what was proffered in the oracle had come to pass, and then report the fateful oracle.
142. If the actual function of applause is to snatch one out of the trance into which the performance has cast us, then it would be a sign of failure were one to applaud at the end of the performance of one of Richard Foreman's early plays, which had programmatically tried to eschew and resist the audience's entrancement.
143. For double feature, one can show a musical such as *Easter Parade*, with its immobilized dancers who do not turn their heads to accompany the dancing couple's lateral movements, and Hitchcock's *Strangers on a Train*, with its tennis match scene in which the spectators repeatedly follow with their heads the tennis ball as it goes back and forth between the two players.
144. This would be an instance of foreshadowing either by an illusion or by something that can be explained away. In *Persona*, the film spectator, slightly jarred by the repetition of part of the news footage of the self-immolation of a Vietnamese monk, can hypothesize that

running out of images to accompany the anchor's commentary, the TV editor opted to repeat part of what had already been shown; then we get a real repetition, one that we cannot honestly dismiss: the scene of the diegetic comment on the child's photograph is repeated twice.

145. Those who die before dying require neither dance nor faith to witness mountains walking (Dōgen: "Preceptor Kai of Mt. Dayang addressed the assembly, saying, 'The blue mountains are constantly walking....' The mountains lack none of their proper virtues; hence, they are constantly at rest and constantly walking. We must devote ourselves to a detailed study of this virtue of walking. This saying of the buddha and ancestor [Daokai] has pointed out walking; it has got what is fundamental, and we should thoroughly investigate this address on 'constant walking.' ... Although the walking of the blue mountains is faster than 'swift as the wind,' those in the mountains do not sense this, do not know it" ("Mountains and Waters Sutra" [*Sansui kyō*], in *Treasury of the Eye of the True Dharma*, Book 29, trans. Carl Bielefeldt); or mountains moving in general: "Junayd's answer to the enthusiastic Nūrī, who objected to his sitting quietly while the Sufis performed their whirling dance, is famous: 'You see the mountains—you think them firm, yet they move like clouds' (Qur'ān 27:90)" (Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975], 181).
146. Pierre Klossowski, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, translated by Daniel W. Smith (London: Continuum, 2005), 19.
147. According to Deleuze, "the job of [film] criticism is to form concepts that aren't of course 'given' in films but nonetheless relate specifically to cinema... Concepts specific to cinema... They're not technical notions ... because technique only makes sense in relation to ends which it presupposes but doesn't explain. It's these ends that constitute the concepts of cinema. Cinema sets out to produce self-movement in images, autotemporalization even: that's the key thing... But what exactly does cinema thereby show us about space and time that the other arts don't show?" (Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin [New York: Columbia University



- Press, 1995], 57-58; cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975-1995*, edited by David Lapoujade; translated by Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina [Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2006], 289: "cinema puts the image in motion, or endows the image with self-movement"—but, very dear Deleuze, what about dance? Deleuze seems in the aforementioned quote to overlook what he himself wrote in the second volume of his book on cinema about a movement of world made possible by dance (!): "Musical comedy is the supreme depersonalized and pronominalized movement ... what counts is the way in which the dancer's individual genius, his subjectivity, moves from a personal motivity to a supra-personal element, to a movement of world that the dance will outline" (Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, 58, and more generally 57-59).
148. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and Nobody*, translated with an introduction and notes by Graham Parkes (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 36.
  149. *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 221.
  150. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and Nobody*, 257.
  151. It would have been interesting had we in addition witnessed the following situation: the initial cinematic immobilization by means of a still-frame is imposed on both the movement of Astaire and Vera-Ellen and the diegetic immobilization of the other dancers, so that once the non-diegetic freezing is discontinued, the former resume their dance, the latter remain immobile.
  152. How can two dancers dance a *pas de deux* with seeming insouciance amidst other dancers frozen in tableaux, when one or both of the partners may, at any moment, be enveloped by the diegetic silence-over and, like the others, become frozen (something we witness in the "dream ballet" of *Oklahoma!* as the women raised in the air by their male partners suddenly freeze, their hands dangling rigidly to their sides)?
  153. "Could anyone rightly call this cinema silent, which was always accompanied by music from the outset—the Lumière Brothers' very

first screening at the Grand Café in Paris—not to mention the sound effects created live in some movie houses? ... Film characters were quite chatty.... How did spectators know that the characters were speaking? By the constant movement of their lips, their gestures that told of entire speeches whose intertitles communicated to us only the most abridged versions.... This is the reason for using the term 'deaf cinema' for films that gave the moviegoer a deaf person's viewpoint on the action depicted." Michel Chion, *The Voice in Cinema*, edited and translated by Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 7-8.

154. Thus, at the beginning of Fokine's *Les Sylphides*, the four principal dancers remain frozen while the corps de ballet starts to dance to Chopin's *Nocturne, Opus 32, No. 2*.
155. John Cage, *Silence: Lectures and Writings* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 8 and 152 respectively: "There is always something to see, something to hear. In fact, try as we may to make a silence, we cannot. For certain engineering purposes, it is desirable to have as silent a situation as possible. Such a room is called an anechoic chamber, its six walls made of special material, a room without echoes. I entered one at Harvard University several years ago and heard two sounds, one high and one low. When I described them to the engineer in charge, he informed me that the high one was my nervous system in operation, the low one my blood in circulation. Until I die there will be sounds. And they will continue following my death. One need not fear about the future of music"; "Silence, like music, is non-existent. There always are sounds. That is to say if one is alive to hear them." Oh, my dear Cage, in so far as, a mortal, you were already dead even while you lived, you should have intuited that there is (diegetic) silence-over—it appears that you were not a good enough listener!
156. John Cage: "Formerly, silence was the time lapse between sounds, useful towards a variety of ends, among them that of tasteful arrangement, where by separating two sounds or two groups of sounds their differences or relationships might receive emphasis; or that of expressivity, where silences in a musical discourse might

- provide pause or punctuation ..." *Silence: Lectures and Writings*, 22-23.
157. John Cage: "Where none of these [see previous note] or other goals is present, silence becomes something else—not silence at all, but sounds, the ambient sounds ... These sounds (which are called silence only because they do not form part of a musical intention) may be depended upon to exist" (Ibid.). Clearly, I do not agree with the unconditional assertion "may be depended upon to exist": taking into consideration diegetic silence-over, in death and dance these sounds can no longer be depended upon to exist.
158. Which choreographer didn't at least once consider having all his or her dancers frozen while the music played by the diegetic musicians continues, intuiting that diegetic music-in is insufficient to counter and safeguard against diegetic silence-over, which covers and silences such music? The dancers themselves cannot counter the diegetic silence-over by singing, tap dancing, or clapping castanets, varieties of music-in, but end up in next to no time immobilized.
159. Rainer Maria Rilke, *Sonnets to Orpheus*, translated and with an introduction by David Young (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), 3.
160. Rainer Maria Rilke, *Duino Elegies and The Sonnets to Orpheus*, translated by A. Poulin, Jr.; foreword by Mark Doty (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2005), 85.
161. The concordance that, in the undeath realm, Orpheus attempted vainly to achieve by his repeated turns, that of his gaze and of his wife's gaze, happened gracefully when it came to his singing and playing music, in the form of the synchronization of his music-in and song-in with a diegetic song-over and music-over.
162. John Cage, *Silence: Lectures and Writings*, 13-14: "One enters an anechoic chamber, as silent as technologically possible in 1951, to discover that one hears two sounds of one's own unintentional making (nerve's systematic operation, blood's circulation) ..."
163. Rainer Maria Rilke, *Sonnets to Orpheus*, translated by David Young, 3. In some translations, we read "animals" instead of "creatures of stillness" (the latter is how Stephen Mitchell too translates the

- German original [in *Ahead of All Parting: The Selected Poetry and Prose of Rainer Maria Rilke* (New York: Modern Library, 1995)]). Are there actually animals in the undeath realm? With the exception of very few sorts, the ones who have self-recognition in the mirror, for example chimpanzees and orangutans, animals are neither mortal nor immortal but merely organisms whose life physically comes to an end at some point in time.
164. The clapping hands that do not touch each other and that appear to be moving backward in both Martha Graham's *Appalachian Spring* and De Mille's *Fall River Legend* do so not, or not only, as a stylization, but as an effect of diegetic silence-over, which by right should in next to no time freeze them.
165. The arresting thing in paintings of dancers (Degas, Toulouse-Lautrec, etc.), as well as in the vast majority of photographs of dance (with their jumps arrested in midair, blurry images implying movement, etc.) is that most often they try to induce the sensation of movement, but rarely attempt to render the freezing, which is what would appear to be the most affined with photography.
166. In "Make 'em Laugh" in *Singin' in the Rain*, a number designed by Donald O'Connor and Gene Kelly, Cosmo tries to jump into a backdrop showing a corridor, bumps against it and falls back to the floor: a gag showing what happens when you mistake yourself for a dancer and assume that you too can create space.
167. Sometimes the reason a dancer has the impression that other dancers have suddenly appeared or disappeared is, rather, that he or she was frozen while they gradually moved toward him or her from another location or gradually moved away from him or her to another location.
168. Ersatz dancers may move all over the place, but they remain in the location where they ostensibly are; contrariwise, even while moving in place, dancers are projected, as subtle dancers, elsewhere, in dance's realm of altered space (dancers' ability not to bump against each other even in constricted places is another indication that what undiscerning onlookers mistake for one space is a superimposition of spaces). Whereas the unifying element for ersatz dancers is

the homogeneous space in which they all are, what is common to dancers, who while dancing together have each been projected into a different branch of dance's realm of altered movement, body, space and time? It is both that one dancer's immobilization can function as a condition of possibility for the other dancers to achieve all manners of extraordinary movements, such as time-lapse motion, slow motion, etc., and that the same music-over, which provides safe-conduct, is accompanying some, if not all of them in the various spaces in which they have been projected.

169. It should be obvious that the solitude of the subtle dancer may or may not be conjoined to a solitude of the character who projected him while dancing.
170. *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?
171. Though an echo of the unworldly elsewhere from which they issue, thus auratic, they are often themselves without an echo.
172. 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 sound track 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.
173. 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.

174. David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon*, third, enlarged edition (New York, NY: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 72.
175. *Ibid.*, 34.
176. 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!
177. 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.
178. 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, such as Hitchcock's *The Birds*; 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.'"
179. 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.

180. Not all instances of the Capgras syndrome are the consequence of radical closures; some have other, psychiatric reasons.
181. Kurosawa could as legitimately have made the spectator in the museum enter into Van Gogh's *Portrait of Joseph Roulin* (1888), *La Berceuse* (1888), or *Portrait of Dr. Félix Rey*, 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.
182. He may unconsciously “forget” to close some opening in the house to rationalize how the birds managed nonetheless to enter.
183. 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.
184. Jack Finney, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978), 118.
185. The vampire provides another example of the nonchalance of the pursuer during a chase. The undead walks unhurriedly although the one fleeing him is running as fast as he can, for the undead knows that he can (quantum) tunnel through space (“for the dead travel fast” [Bram Stoker's *Dracula*]), or else that the labyrinthine space in which his victim is entangled will make the latter return again and again to the same spot, losing his lead.
186. Jack Finney, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, 202 and 206.
187. Similarly, that the words “*je ne vois rien autour du paysage*” (I

see nothing around the landscape) linked to the man in Magritte's *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.

188. 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 copresence applies. In Lewin's 1945 film version of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 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 him and his portrait; or Gray is shown from the back while his portrait faces the camera; or Gray faces the camera while his portrait doesn't because the camera is placed behind and to the side of the painting; 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 painting of a dissimilar figure.
189. In a number of Robbe-Grillet novels, the use of the first person narration, with its personal pronoun I, which is a verbal shifter, is not to allow a shift from one narrator to another, but rather 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 ages, manners of speaking, utterances and other characteristics associated with the latter names. Were “he” (?) to accomplish this, he would be able to leave the radical closure.
190. The following circumstances allow the presence of *diegetic* extras in film: the behavior of *unreality* in a cinematic manner, a condition

that one can encounter in the undead realm, and that makes possible duplications (the repeated scene in Bergman's *Persona*); the irruption of unworldly entities in a radical closure (for example, the unworldly Haris that irrupt on the space station in Tarkovsky's *Solaris*); the permeability of universes through time travel in the multiverse. Leos Carax's *Bad Blood* and Billy Wilder's *Irma la douce* present two additional examples of *diegetic* extras. In Billy Wilder's *Irma la douce*, once the fictive British Lord *invented* and impersonated by the Jack Lemmon character is reported, by the one who followed him and saw his clothes and walking stick floating in the river, to have been murdered, but then, in front of the police, comes back to life, that is, once the impersonation touches on, tampers with, death, we have a double, an extra body, discovering that the exact body that was invented exists—the British Lord appears at the wedding of the Lemmon character, in the final shot of the film. I recommend the following double feature: Billy Wilder's *Irma la Douce* (1963) and Alfred Hitchcock's *North by Northwest*. *Irma la Douce* can be viewed as an intertextual supplement to *North by Northwest*: *Irma la Douce*'s ending implies that one day Roger Thornhill, who works in an advertisement agency; who was mistaken for the fictive intelligence agent George Kaplan, a non-existent decoy created by the Central Intelligence Agency to divert suspicion from their actual agent; and who as George Kaplan is then seemingly murdered in the presence of many onlookers by that actual agent to divert suspicion from herself, may one day come across a man who has short sleeves and dandruff and who turns out to be no other than George Kaplan!

191. Are the people outside the house also in a radical closure, one whose event horizon is between the fence and the house's entrance, the point where the child who runs to fetch his balloon comes to a stop and retreats?
192. *Autobiography of a Schizophrenic Girl*, with an analytical interpretation by Marguerite Sechehay (New York: Grune & Stratton Inc., 1979).
193. In Robbe-Grillet's *Les derniers jours de Corinthe* (1994), we encounter a coexistence of the autobiographical with irruptions

of (an unworldly) Robbe-Grillet, as when at one point he uses the first person narration, which until then was exclusively linked to the autobiographical section, in the fictional, Corinthe section, until then narrated in the third person singular. This irruption of the author in his work is often preceded or followed by the irruption of the fictive character in the autobiography: Henri de Corinthe, this Robbe-Grillet character who undergoes doubling, immobilizations, lapses, etc., 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).

194. 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*).
195. I consider that physicists working on black holes would find it inspiring to study paintings, films, and novels dealing with radical closure. The implication of considering the black hole as a radical closure is that beyond the event horizon but before reaching the singularity, where due to the infinite warpage of spacetime the laws of physics no longer apply, anomalies to these laws would probably begin to appear and would be experienced by the astronaut who crosses the event horizon of a massive black hole. 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, 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.

196. 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 showing 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 snow in the sky is an unworldly or diagrammatic irruption due to a radical closure.
197. 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.
198. 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*, edited by 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 the borders of a radical closure—in which, incidentally, an unworldly night may irrupt—even during the day (*L'Empire des lumières*)!
199. 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.
200. 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 (hence the presence of theatrical drapes in *High Society*, 1962).
201. 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.

202. 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).
203. For a more traditional form of external memory, one can, if one suffers from fear of flying and wishes to keep his 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.
204. "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.
205. Statues that seem broken, with some limbs missing, are not to be automatically interpreted as actually incomplete, despite the additional temptation to do so when we see them in the midst of dilapidated buildings; they may be ahistorical fully-formed unworldly entities that irrupted in a radical closure (Magritte's *The Light of Coincidences*, 1933), in which case the dilapidated buildings would be the result of the accelerated rise in entropy in such closures. By placing the *Venus of Melo* (anon., Musée du Louvre, Paris), with its missing arms, in a context of radical closure (*The Brass Handcuffs*, 1936—the title was provided by André Breton), Magritte produced the most seamless and inconspicuous sort of restoration.
206. Alain Robbe-Grillet, *For a New Novel* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1989), 152-153.
207. Part of the fascination of Francis Bacon, a radical closure artist, with photographs can probably be ascribed to the instantaneity of the



- capture they allow.
208. *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon*, 148.
209. 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. We find here one possible specific reason of the disjunction between the title and the subject of the painting in Magritte's work—one that echoes the disjunction between model and painting in a radical closure.
210. "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." *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon*, 63 and 65.
211. Is he doing so with the professor in the Zone of Tarkovsky's *Stalker*?
212. *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon*, 141.
213. For another script it would have been appropriate to offer Francis Bacon to direct, see my book *Forthcoming*.
214. I am sure that were Bacon the one who filmed the bathroom scene in *Body Snatchers*, he would have very quickly detected that it would be wrong to give the *sosies* an extraterrestrial but worldly origin, treating them instead as unworldly entities that irrupted in a radical closure.
215. *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon*, 148.
216. 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

- ... in short, 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."
217. Or that begin with a historical vampire and end with the propagation of the contagion by another historical vampire, that is, show no progress in the destruction of the vampire.
218. The events of Murnau's *Nosferatu* are precisely dated, 1838, but the vampire himself is an ahistorical creature that irrupted fully formed, something confirmed later as he appears from the glaring light just outside Harker's bedroom rather than from the hallway.
219. Herzog's *Nosferatu* had to accomplish a double historicizing: reinscribe in history a film, Murnau's *Nosferatu*, withheld from it by the surpassing disaster of the Nazi period, and move from the unworldly, therefore ahistorical figure of the vampire in the earlier film to a historical one.
220. "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.
221. As the French woman is described by her Japanese lover in Duras' *Hiroshima mon amour*—but in *L'Immortelle* such a description becomes literal.
222. "Between 1949 and 1964, Magritte made seventeen oils and ten



gouache versions of *L'Empire des lumières*,” [http://www.christies.com/LotFinder/lot\\_details.aspx?intObjectID=5138353](http://www.christies.com/LotFinder/lot_details.aspx?intObjectID=5138353) (accessed on October 25, 2008).

223. Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Angélique ou l'enchantement* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1987), 38.
224. Concerning a radically different problematic of verbatim repetition, see my reading, in this book's "Credits Included," 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 what was withdrawn past a surpassing disaster.
225. With Robbe-Grillet, we have the case of a novelist and filmmaker who deliberately constructs a radical closure, where, as in Magritte's *La Clairvoyance*, what irrupts does so outside his will, fully formed; but whose diegetic protagonist attempts to resist the temptation to go along with the tendency of the events created through his performative narration to get rid of him as a creative narrator, to reduce him to solely a protagonist *within* the narrative. The performative's danger to freedom is not only that, as in the case of a promise, it may be binding for the future, but also, in the case of performative narration, that it secretes at one point a quasi referent. Robbe-Grillet's *The Man Who Lies*, a film where we see someone maintaining himself in the present through a constant performative recreation of himself, confronts the protagonist and the viewer with an idiosyncratic past: the codex's photograph of Boris' meeting with Jean, a photograph that chronologically predates the time of the narration but was secreted by the latter, and a meeting that applies within only one of the conflicting versions of their relationship (only a petty liar would view such photographs as confirming one of the conflicting versions as the true one and reducing the others to lies or to imaginations); and with an idiosyncratic future: opening the codex at the pharmacy, the protagonist sees photographs that show events we will view later. Creation bumps against this byproduct that it cannot control, this idiosyncratic, excessive quasi referent, while invention doesn't. It is this excess in relation to what I fabricated that indicates that there

is a creation, that I am not only inventing but also receiving—with the caveat that that from which I am receiving does not necessarily always antedate what I am creating! Normal lying is different from performative creation both because for it to remain undetected, it merely has to maintain consistency, and because it maintains the belief in a referent that preexists it. The test of success of the performative creator is not the absence of logical contradictions in his narration—these contradictions can certainly be accommodated more or less easily by the one who keeps performatively creating himself—but the ability not to believe in the quasi referent his performative narration secretes and get sucked by the (relatively) closed world it implies—only if Boris believes the codex's photograph of his meeting with Jean as evidence would the film's title, *The Man Who Lies*, really fit the protagonist; otherwise it would be another Robbe-Grillet misleading title, like *Last Year at Marienbad*. The protagonist as performative narrator must maintain the openness of the performatively created universe, resist its tendency to close back on itself by getting rid of the creator, exemplarily by reducing him to only a protagonist in the diegesis. The characters and settings of the world in progress may resist and disobey the writer (Resnais' *Providence*), partly due to the influence of the unconscious, partly because every creation is also in part a reception from some untimely collaborator(s); in turn, the (performative) creator has to resist the closing of the created world—the thoughtful/literary/artistic work tends toward totally separating itself from the creator—to maintain the thoughtful/literary/artistic work's potential for resistance; in turn, the thoughtful/literary/artistic work resists the reader/spectator (*Distacted*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 146); in turn, the reader and the spectator have to resist the thoughtful/literary/artistic work (the latter allows one and teaches one to resist, first of all itself)—only subsequently can they use the thoughtful/literary/artistic work in their resistance. 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 watched at the beginning of *Last Year at Marienbad*, sucks the protagonist-creator further and further into

the world he is 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 with Resnais in *Last Year at Marienbad* worked perfectly, despite the discrepancy between the temporalities and the kinds of worlds implied in the works of the two artists, because Resnais' world and temporality in that film is an intrinsic dangerous temptation that threatens the work of Robbe-Grillet: the universe of Resnais takes place once the protagonist allows what was 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 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 photograph of the meeting of Jean with Boris is both an ahistorical, unworldly irruption in a radical closure and/or the secretion of the aforementioned residue in any genuine performative creation (in addition, one can possibly view it as indicating the [quantum] collapse of the multiple versions-qua-possibilities into one actuality), and in both it does not belong to the chronology in which we will be tempted to place it: in one case it is an unworldly entity that irrupted fully formed without genesis; in the other it was secreted by the protagonist's performative narration but then retroactively antedates the latter.

226. 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?
227. Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Recollections of the Golden Triangle*, translated from the French by J. A. Underwood (New York: Grove Press, 1986).
228. David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis*

*Bacon*, 24.

229. 1935, oil, 18 x 25 ½ in., Collection Robert Strauss, London; 1949, gouache, 14 x 17 7/8 in., private collection, United States; 1956, gouache, 15.3 x 17.8 cm; 1965, gouache, 29.8 x 45.2 cm, Collection du patrimoine culturel de la communauté française de Belgique.
230. Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Recollections of the Golden Triangle*, 88.
231. Quoted in John Russell's *Francis Bacon*, revised edition (Oxford University Press, 1979), 105.
232. 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 Magrittes in relation to their "models" and try to inscribe these differences intrinsic to many Magrittes in their own relationship to them.
233. 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.
234. Jalal Toufic, *Distraction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 82.

235. This detachment of the vision from the one staring occurs also in hypnosis. Entranced people are somewhat sightless but induce a detached gaze, often from a different angle or angles—hence in a film one should not show the object of the gaze from their point of view. The stare of the entranced, who appear to have imploded and thus to have almost the closure of objects, does not so much objectify the others around as subjectivizes certain objective shots. In cinema, when dealing with entranced people, the conventional shot/reverse shot is therefore to be replaced by an asymmetrical situation, one without reciprocity. What would be irrational in the presence of entranced people is not one's impression that one is being gazed at (in a consequent film, one would indeed be gazed at by the aforementioned impersonal subjectivized objective shots), but rather the projective ascription of this depersonalized gaze to the entranced persons around, thus misplacing the direction from which one is being gazed at.
236. *Heart of Glass* relays Herzog's vampire film, *Nosferatu*, in another manner as well: the red that Herzog did not manage to achieve in *Nosferatu*, he attains in *Heart of Glass*: few films have hallucinated red (in Herzog's film, that of ruby glass) as intensely.
237. Was this materiality of Dracula's shadow somewhat foreshadowed? The red mantle Dracula is wearing in his first meeting with Harker extends for such a long distance behind him that, in the absence of the normal shadow in the case of the vampire, it functions as his shadow. In the same concise scene in Coppola's *Dracula* we have in quick succession the two other aspects of the separate shadow: 1) Exteriorization of drive (is this a good interpretation, since the "whole" "world" of Dracula is the unconscious-come-to-the-surface?): while Dracula speaks to Harker, his shadow begins to strangle the latter, his rival for the love of Mina (were we to cinematically decompose/analyze the strangling movement of Dracula's shadow, would we discover that it is ambivalent due to an optical unconscious [the one referred to by Walter Benjamin in "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility": "It is through the camera that we first discover the optical unconscious, just as we discover the

instinctual unconscious through psychoanalysis"], the sort we observe in Godard's *Slow Motion*, where the decomposition of the movement of a hug discloses a wrestling, this minimizing the uncanniness of the double [isn't the double so uncanny because he gives the impression that his movement is not ambivalent?]). 2) Labyrinthine space: behind and to the left of the seated Jonathan finalizing the sale, one can see the shadow of Dracula; as Jonathan finishes signing the papers and turns toward the left to speak to Dracula, both he and the film spectator discover to their consternation (and to the film spectator's aesthetic delight) that Dracula is standing to his right.

238. Since it is easy to forget when viewing an animation film that puppets and dummies are not moved by an internal will and impulses, we are reminded of this in Brothers Quay's films: explicitly in *Street of Crocodiles*, where initially the puppet has a string attached to his hand; implicitly in their other films, where the filaments traditionally connected to the puppet are displaced to lines in the wallpaper and to ticklish hair (*Rehearsals for Extinct Anatomies*), to the threads of the perspectival representation (*Anamorphosis*), and to the many ropes moving on pulleys in *Street of Crocodiles*.
239. See my book (*Vampires: An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, revised and expanded edition, 113-114 and 352 (footnote 138), in relation to the confirmation by *Until the End of the World* (1991) of the impression of "point of view shots between us" in one of the scenes of Wenders' *The Wrong Move* (1975).
240. The closing of doors on their own behind the victim in vampire films is both a foreshadowing of his entrance into the regime of fascination and a sign that he already entered that regime of automobility, where things, sounds, and words move or link on their own. These trance inducements are one of the most beautiful sites of foreshadowing, for they are foreshadowings that coincide with what they announce (the hypnosis).
241. That Apu deposits the small child a little further away from the tracks rather than taking him to his mother reinforces the aforementioned sensation of absence, almost of loss.
242. Some works of art and literature perform not only an anamnesis of

what did not enter awareness, what was dissociated by the automatic self-hypnosis, the anesthesia that takes place in extreme states and that allows us to continue to act (for instance, not feeling that one is wounded until the battle is finished), but also an untimely recreation that does not leave what was dissociated in the future of the initial event, but allows the two to be simultaneous (Arnulf Rainer's over-scratches and over-drawings).

243. Kathy Acker, *My Mother: Demonology* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1993), 99.
244. *Ibid.*, 108-109.
245. *Ibid.*, 114.
246. Something one may expect once one notices the frequent undifferentiation of characters (already the first chapter, titled "My Mother," about the mother but narrated in the first person is preceded by: "My mother spoke:"), which incites a sacrifice to reestablish differentiation.
247. The limitation of René Girard's theory of sacrifice and the double is that it does not take into account that those implicated in the situations he is dealing with are mortals, who are dead while alive, and therefore that this matter concerns not only the life of the community but the undeath realm also. The sacrifice can end the doubling, the crisis of indifferenciation, only because, paradoxically, the one sacrificed can be possessed in death by a double, in specific by the one whom he replaced as victim. The efficacy of the (sacrificial) substitution of one mortal by another in stopping indifferenciation in life is made possible by the generalized substitution and indifferenciation in undeath.
248. This is not to say that we are necessarily in writing in a just universe, where every substitution would be reversed.
249. *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, vol. 1, Book 3 (Knowledge), no. 110. The Sufi Ibn al-'Arabī distinguishes between what should and what shouldn't be interpreted in a dream in which the prophet Muḥammad appears: "Taḳī b. al-Mukhallad, the Imām and author of the *Musnad*, heard that the Apostle had said, 'Whoever sees me in sleep has seen me in waking, for the Devil cannot take my form upon himself.' ... The

spirit of the Prophet appears to one in the form of his body when he died, albeit unaffected by decay ... which form Satan is unable to assume, as a protection from God for the recipient of the vision. Thus, whoever sees him in this way accepts from him all he commands or forbids and all he says, as he would accept his precepts in this world according to whether the sense of the words is explicit or implicit, or in whatever sense they are. If, on the other hand, he gives him something, its [form] is a matter for interpretation." Ibn Al 'Arabi, *The Bezels of Wisdom*, trans. and introd. R. W. Austin, pref. Titus Burckhardt (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 100-101.

250. Nietzsche: "Forgetting is no mere *vis inertiae* as the superficial imagine; it is rather an active and in the strictest sense positive faculty of repression." Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale/*Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kaufmann; edited, with commentary, by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 57.
251. In the sober state, one has to train oneself to look for very brief intervals: one then notices that many gestures are not adapted to the situations in which they take place (I wager that the reduction of everything to the efficient will never be total); that they would be more appropriate in a different situation (as long as we remain focused on progression, we will be hypnotized by it and will not perceive this inadequacy). While in the sober state, we usually do not really look at gestures as interpret them, glossing over the inadequacy of the gestures to the situation, the one in a state of altered consciousness, for example mild drunkenness, projects to the situation from *looking* at the gestures. One of the interesting things about many altered states of consciousness is that they make our perception discontinuous: since one sees only snatches, one has to construct a scenario as regards where these snatches could best fit; the idiosyncratic problem of the one in an altered state of consciousness is that he is often too logical while life isn't, and that he reasons as if people were good actors in real life, when they aren't—even if we factor in the unconscious.
252. Can one achieve this notwithstanding one's mirror neurons?
253. One is not an observer unless one sees what is going on in its freedom;

a real observer can follow linkages that are not causal.

254. Beyond the issue of the rightful hierarchy of angels (Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels, Angels?), we tend to have two figures of the angel: the angel as overwhelming (Rilke: “Who, if I cried out, would hear me among the angels’ / Hierarchies? and even if one of them pressed me / suddenly against his heart: I would be consumed / in that overwhelming existence. For beauty is nothing / but the beginning of terror, which we still are just able to endure, / and we are so awed because it serenely disdains / to annihilate us. Every angel is terrifying” [*Duino Elegies*, trans. Stephen Mitchell]) and the angel as discreet, the guardian angel. One of the main tasks of the guardian angel is to shield the chosen from the overwhelming presence of the other angel. Did an angel appear to prophets or other humans on mountains? Yes, Jibrā’īl (Gabriel) appeared repeatedly to Muḥammad on Ḥarā’ (aka Ḥirā’), a mountain to the north-east of Mecca, and commanded him initially: “Recite! In the name of thy Lord who created, created the human being from a blood-clot. Recite! And thy Lord is the Most Generous, who taught by the Pen, taught the human being what he knew not” (Qur’ān 96:1-5). But the aforementioned question is not the most pertinent one when it comes to the relation of angels to mountains. The angel can appear in the form of a man: “Gabriel came to the Prophet while Um Salama was with him. Gabriel started talking (to the Prophet) and then left. Then the Prophet asked Um Salama, ‘Who is he?’ ... She replied, ‘He is Dihya’ [al-Kalbī: a handsome man amongst the companions of the Prophet]. Um Salama said, ‘By Allāh, I did not take him for anybody other than him [Dihya] till I heard the sermon of the Prophet wherein he informed us about the news of Gabriel ...’” (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Book 61, no. 3634 [Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2002], 662; cf. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Jīl, 2005), 995-996/ <http://www.usc.edu/schools/college/crcc/engagement/resources/texts/muslim/hadith/muslim/031.smt.html#031.6006>); but the angel can also appear in other forms, for example a mountain. Was that then a guardian angel who appeared to Moses in the form

of mountain Ṭūr (aka mount Sinai)? And did Moses have, through God’s Mercy, by means of the angel-as-mountain an aside from a sight “no one may see ... and live” (Exodus 33:18-20: “Then Moses said, ‘Now show me your glory.’ And the LORD said, ‘... No one may see me and live’”)? “Moses ... said: My Lord! Show me (Thy Self), that I may gaze upon Thee. He said: Thou wilt not see Me, but gaze upon the mountain!” “Gaze upon the mountain” would here mean: have an aside at the angel in the form of the mountain. “If it stand still in its place, then thou wilt see Me. And when his Lord revealed (His) glory to the mountain He sent it crashing down. And Moses fell down senseless. And when he woke he said: Glory unto Thee!” Unless this event happened in ‘*ālam al-mithāl*, the world of Archetypal Images, then, in the absence of any mention in the Qur’ān of God’s restoration or recreation of the mountain, or any report of such a destruction in human chronicles or any geological records of a historical destruction then reformation of the mountain, we are to assume that what was crushed was not mount Sinai but a guardian angel that assumed its guise. Since the aside addressed to the angel produces a portrait, as Moses looked, in an aside, at the angel-as-mountain, away from the Face of God, the result was two portraits, that of God seen by the angel, and that of Moses in his aside to the angel—in addition to these two portraits, I suggest the following title for a third “portrait”: *Portrait of the Angel as a Mountain*.

## Visual Notes



*Poštvar Lipograms 1 (2000)*





*Pošwar Lipograms 2 (2000)*





Credits Included

A Video in Red and Green

Jalal Toufic



Jalal Toufic is a thinker and a mortal to death. He is the author of *Diſtracted* (1991; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2003), *(Vampires): An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film* (1993; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2003), *Over-Sensitivity* (1996, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., 2009), *Forthcoming* (2000), *Undying Love, or Love Dies* (2002), *Two or Three Things I'm Dying to Tell You* (2005), *'Âshûrâ': This Blood Spilled in My Veins* (2005), and *Undeserving Lebanon* (2007). Several of his books are available for download at his website: <http://www.jalaltoufic.com>. He has taught at the University of California at Berkeley, California Institute of the Arts, the University of Southern California, and, in Lebanon, Holy Spirit University; and he currently teaches at Kadir Has University in Istanbul.

Jalal Toufic is one of the best writers working in America today.

**John Zorn**

(from his blurb for the first edition of *Over-Sensitivity*, 1996)

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**Jalal Toufic**

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