



# Vampires

An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film

Jalal Toufic

Also by Jalal Toufic

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(Vampires)

An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film

*Revised and expanded edition*

Jalal Toufic



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*In memory of the amnesiac Jalal Toufic (not that he no longer exists, but that he was/is dead/undead then/now)*

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The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents. We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age.

H. P. Lovecraft, *The Call of Cthulhu*

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**Posthumous Introduction to the First Edition:**

Writing the introduction after finishing the rest of the book, my memory is coming back to me, and so at present I can give some indication in what context to place it.

Why write on vampires in 1992? It is precisely because vampire films and novels are back in fashion (Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* ...) that one should ask: why on vampires now, by what coincidence? How come what functions in the too-late and too-early mode is being written about now, when it has become fashionable? But isn't it characteristic of telepathy that it reaches the present of fashion by a too late of the too early or a too early of the too late?

Why write on vampires now, after an aphoristic first book, *Distracted*, 1991? Did the liberty of association allowed by the aphoristic facilitate the future clinamen toward the telepathic, toward what establishes the reign of free association? The aphoristic is what may lead one to the telepathic, but it is also what will allow one to resist it, since the aphoristic is what subsists. In the case of what is not aphoristic, any state is a transition toward what follows it, disappears, is sublated in what it leads to; but with the aphoristic the state is not a phase, not a transition. Hence *Distracted* is simultaneous with, not overturned by (*Vampires*), by what has to do with a labyrinthine temporality. It is because the aphoristic *Distracted* already resists itself that it can resist its double. But (*Vampires*) is being resisted in another way also, a bad way, a cheap way: why has *Distracted*, nine months after its publication, yet to receive its first review? Why is it that several months after its publication one could find only half a dozen copies of it in the Chicago metropolitan area? Is it also because the telepathic action between it and (*Vampires*) can be lessened the closer the *coincidence* of the two books? In which case, it will be reviewed and be more widely distributed only by the time (*Vampires*) gets published.

Why write on vampires at this stage in history? Were humanity to conquer death—and certainly we are moving in that direction,

whether or not only in an asymptotic way—it will suddenly dawn on it that the attributes of death, or pastiches or parodies of them, have become salient facets of life, for example:

— The virtual body in virtual worlds: a sort of astral body. Affect it, an image, and you affect the material body, equipped with sensors, in another locality: a reversion to image magic.

— Smart weapons that home in on their targets on their own; smart cars; smart houses, where once the “alarm clock rings in the morning, the curtains open, the shower starts, the coffee brews ...”<sup>1</sup>, and where doors open on their own at one’s approach, etc. These smart objects bring to mind the doors that open on their own in vampire films. Will we then be in a hypnagogic world?

The less rigid organization of the contents of (*Vampires*) was to eschew the restriction of the freer, more wide-ranging association that takes place in reaction to subliminal stimuli or to stimuli directed to a suppressed sensory channel (as in binocular rivalry): “In an experiment by J. Allison, subjects were to report changes in a neutral face when the words ‘sad’ and ‘happy’ were subliminally superimposed on it: some subjects were to do this under the condition that they should try to include only things which are related and fit together ... while another group was asked to be quite free and impressionistic ... do it in a free associative way ... the experiment showed that a cognitive structure which allows less logical, less differentiated elements can better permit the incorporation of new stimuli.”<sup>2</sup> But then why not try to organize (*Vampires*) more tightly once the spoils from the freer organization have been gained? Because the maintenance of the fragmented and disjointed ensures that the stranger, less probable ideas and connections are not canceled out: the consequence of using large time intervals is that most, if not all of the fluctuations in images and perceptions cancel out, one ending up having the gross approximation that normal perception is. One of the dangers of the editing stage is that as one gets more and more permeated by the normal

state, one is increasingly tempted to get rid of all the errors; whereas what should ideally happen is that one get rid of many illusions, since they reinforce the necessity of the unreal, while substituting in their place errors that break the necessity of both the real and the unreal. Therefore editing should stop before the end set to it by the normal state. To continue till the book is totally done is to already be addressing oneself exclusively to the living, to those in normal states.<sup>3</sup> It is a (*Vampires*) law that one must sacrificially interrupt processes until one reaches the point when it becomes manifest that there is no unfinished business, the point where one feels that what others consider to be an interruption does not interrupt anything. Such an interruption is thus not due to being in a hurried time (*Distracted*) and is different from the aphoristic one to be found for instance in *Distracted*: “[An aphorism] is interrupted by its own conciseness.” But the two abruptnesses echo each other, for both are related to death: the aphoristic to the suicidal, to death-as-extinction; the sacrificial to death-as-undeath and the attempt to do away with the indefinite cycle of redeath-rebirth.

This book could have been written in terms of chapters, the following ones: chapter 1: *Night and Day* [through matting]; chapter 2: *Night and Night* [through matting]; chapter 3: *Night for Day* [as in *Day for Night*]; chapter 4: *Neither Day Nor Night*.

#### Who Will Warn Us About the Warning?

Renfield says to Harker concerning the latter’s forthcoming trip to Transylvania: “And, young as you are, what matters if it costs you some pain—or even a little blood?” A warning that occults the real danger, even when it seems a prophesy revealing the worst that can happen. It is exactly when the character has a hint that something so terrible that it goes beyond anything he could have expected (or can expect) may soon happen to him that he tells himself *If only I had listened then*, precisely not to heed what the present situation should dis-

close to him: that the warning was misleading since it says that the worst that can happen is that he will lose a little blood, or even, since one can negotiate how little is little, that he will die from losing too much blood. The warning hides that the danger is not the cessation of life but madness and undead; hence it was an exaggeration hiding from him that no exaggeration could disclose the danger threatening him.<sup>4</sup>

#### **False Thresholds and Imaginary Lines:**

People who walk down stairs<sup>5</sup> without looking and yet do not fall (for instance, the old Lord Hidetora whom the enormity of the disasters that have befallen him puts in a trance as he walks down the steps in Kurosawa's *Ran*), or move around while conversing without looking at each other and yet do not bump into each other, trip for no apparent reason on smooth spaces. These trips are the sign that a threshold has been reached. The threshold of the vampire's lair in Dreyer's *Vampyr* is not at the door, but at the spot where Allan Gray trips; the threshold of the house of Maria in Tarkovsky's *The Sacrifice* is where Alexander falls off his bicycle. Hence caution is *precaution*<sup>6</sup> (in states of altered consciousness the same is the case with: *disposed* and *predisposed*, *occupied* and *preoccupied*, *monition* and *premonition*; probably one becomes a sage only when one no longer needs presages), in the sense that one must forewarn by *guessing* where the *false threshold* is and warning both about it and about being fooled by the apparent threshold.<sup>7</sup> Guessing should be taken here in the way it manifests itself in the experiments conducted by Larry Weiskrantz on *blindsight*: while patients who have lesions in the striate cortex or first visual cortical area were thought to be totally blind in the part of the visual field that corresponds to the damaged section, it turned out that they could still discriminate in that part visual events, when these began and ended, and their orientations. When asked how they could achieve these feats, the patients answered that they were guessing for they saw nothing.<sup>8</sup> These presentiments must be coupled to strategies of postponement,

otherwise one may be moving into the worst of prisons. Hence the absolute importance of *critical point*<sup>9</sup> (or near critical point) states, and *super-/under-* states (as in supersaturation and undercooling),<sup>10</sup> such as yoga. The continuity of karma, karma as continuity has to be disrupted by yoga, which must not itself be interrupted by lapses (the passage from life to death, or from the waking state to the dream state, must not happen in a lapse; the yogi has to penetrate lucidly states of consciousness that are inaccessible normally in the waking condition, for instance sleep). Any impurities, in the form of distractions, are proscribed: purity is necessary not on moral grounds but, as in supersaturation and undercooling, so as to delay the catastrophic phase transition, to have continuity where normally one would have a discontinuous jump. *Precipitously* renders the abruptness, the in the *bat of an eye* manner with which the precipitation occurs in a metastable, supersaturated solution due to the introduction of impurities. He knew that a threshold has been crossed and that an undercooling was going on, because he suddenly began to act with the utmost prudence although nothing noticeable had changed externally or internally (no extension of spectra and sensibility [as happens in far from equilibrium dissipative structures]), except precisely for the sense that the utmost prudence was mandatory now. Critical point and *super-/under-* phenomena, by permitting one state to go into another (it is said in Zen: when you reach the top of the mountain continue climbing), explore it (is the realm of no return a prison? Can, if not oneself, then at least what one was changed into [not stolen/replaced by] go beyond it?), without a sudden phase transition (the dissolve in film should mainly be used to denote the maintenance of a state beyond the threshold of a phase transition), maintain the possibility of coming back (the metastable memory one has then, rather than being the possibility of the evocation of what has been lived already—this, by the mere crossing of the point of no return, has been forgotten—consists in this reversibility).<sup>11</sup> Without the help of phenomena that permit one

to postpone the phase transition, one will not be able to go back to the other side. Not only do doors close irrevocably behind the person who enters the vampire's castle, he can no longer pass on a bridge, only under it: underpasses (vaults) everywhere. The bridge-turned-underpass is a secret passage (the castle of the historical Prince Dracula the impaler and the castles of vampires in films and novels are perforated by secret passages) through space to its secret, the labyrinth. If Herzog's Harker can return, it is because he loses his memory, becomes amnesiac, arrives in Wismar as another, as the vampire.

I have two ways to detect the threshold to the labyrinthine realm of undeath:

— My body, sensing the proximity and imminence of the threshold, and not fooled by my ongoing mental rationalization, performs a bungled action, most characteristically tripping, to provide me with time to deliberate if I want to go through with my one-way trip to the altered realm, given that at the threshold itself I do not have the chance to deliberate, to make a decision, since I am then and there entranced, thus have no will of my own, and find myself when I come out of the trance already to the other side of the threshold, “in” the labyrinth, always already “in” the labyrinth. Of someone who reaches the vicinity of the threshold without tripping, hallucinating or hearing a voice behind him and turning, I can deduce that he or she is totally lacking in intuition and is deaf to his body, or else that he is a spiritual master, a yogi or Sufi, who can cross the threshold without going through a lapse, and therefore can still make a decision at the threshold itself.

— Others tell me at a certain point that they can no longer progress and turn back and leave me. A realm that I alone can enter, that I cannot in principle enter with others is my death. Harker has twice to make a decision at a certain point: at the bridge where others refuse to progress (they know, or at least sense, that this is the point of no return), and at the door to the vampire's castle. It is the former

that is the real threshold. Therefore the real decision takes place at the bridge; at the door to the vampire's castle, it is already too late.

Mina was kidnapped and carried in the vampire's coach toward his castle. Harker, Dr. Von Helsing and three other friends formed a posse to free her and destroy the vampire. During the chase, his pursuers saw houses on both banks of the meandering river, and castles on both sides of chasms. No bridges joined the two sides. They were soon even more surprised by the plethora of bridges crossing only the ground. To Harker's: “By what perversion would one waste one's time constructing these useless bridges?” Lord Arthur Holmwood volunteered that since they were now in an older part of the world, they were to expect to encounter characteristics of aristocratic culture, one which does not place much importance and value on utility. They resumed their pursuit. Shortly, Mina could espy the posse. The distance between the coach and the pursuers gradually shrank, so that she began to feel a glimmer of hope that she might still be saved. Her hope intensified as the coach suddenly began to go over the same spot back and forth (from Harker's diary regarding his trip to Dracula's castle in Stoker's *Dracula*: “The carriage went at a hard pace along, then we made a complete turn and went along another straight road. It seemed to me that we were simply going over and over the same ground again; and so I took note of some salient point, and found that this was so”).<sup>12</sup> The coach must have reached an *imaginary line*. She could see the posse getting closer; a short while yet and they would reach her. But at that point the coach moved forward at full speed. As the pursuers approached the same spot at which the back and forth motion took place, she suddenly and inexplicably felt disheartened. Moments later, she saw the pursuers stop, then dismount. After much wasted time, they came to the realization that they would need to build a bridge in order to cross the ground on which the back and forth of the coach happened.

### Fascinated Motionlessness and Quantum Tunneling:

Doors either open by themselves or the vampire tunnels through them in dissolves (Browning's *Dracula*) or cuts. The dissolve or cut between two shots of the vampire, in the first of which he or she is far away, for instance at the end of a long corridor (according to the mirror, he or she is not at that location), and in the second of which he or she is next to the victim (according to the mirror, he or she is not at that location either),<sup>13</sup> may either indicate that the future victim of the vampire has just undergone a lapse or that the vampire has tunneled through the intervening space<sup>14</sup> ("I saw a female figure standing at the foot of the bed ... A block of stone could not have been stiller ... As I stared at it, the figure appeared to have changed its place, and was now nearer the door" [*Carmilla*];<sup>15</sup> in Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon*, the female protagonist changes location on the stairs without covering the intermediate space; in Browning's *Dracula*, Dracula tunnels through the spider's web without tearing it). Tunneling in vampire films, which is rendered possible by the uncertainty of the momentum (is the vampire moving or still?) or the position of the undead, applies not only in the case of doors (*Carmilla*), but also in relation to the space-time between two shots or between the planes of one shot. When tunneling is due to uncertainty of position, the point of view shot of the person looking at the vampire should be from the beginning a dissolve, rather than, as in Murnau's *Nosferatu*, beginning with one shot of the vampire in one position then dissolving to him now closer or farther.

One of the tolls for tunneling or teleportation, by means of which one moves through perceptible barriers, is that unexpected, invisible obstacles will spring up everywhere, resulting in motionlessness where there is no discernable barrier.<sup>16</sup> Many of these barriers will be objects that for no apparent reason cannot be removed, objects that put one in a trance,<sup>17</sup> depriving one of one's motor ability. So, with generalized teleportation, mobility will be inhibited no longer solely in

limit cases such as trance, psychotic episodes (Virginia Woolf's Rhoda: "Also, in the middle, cadaverous, awful, lay the grey puddle in the courtyard, when, holding an envelope in my hand, I carried a message. I came to the puddle. I could not cross it. Identity failed me. We are nothing, I said, and fell. I was blown like a feather. I was wafted down tunnels. Then very gingerly, I pushed my foot across. I laid my hand against a brick wall. I returned very painfully, drawing myself back into my body over the grey, cadaverous space of the puddle"<sup>18</sup>), and existential nausea (Sartre's Roquentin: "I saw a piece of paper lying beside a puddle ... the rain had drenched it and twisted it ... I bent down, already rejoicing at the touch of this pulp ... I was unable. I stayed bent down for a second, I read 'Dictation: The white owl,' then I straightened up, empty-handed. I am no longer free, I can no longer do what I will").<sup>19</sup> *Ça va?* How can things be fine when these motionlessnesses are happening?

Stanislavsky: "This moment is what we in actor's jargon call the state of 'I am' ... in the course of my fruitless [imaginary] walk through Famusov's house there had been one instant when I really felt that I was there and believed in my own feelings. This was when I opened the door into the antechamber and pushed aside a large armchair;<sup>20</sup> I really felt the physical effort entailed in this act. It lasted for several seconds; I felt the truth of my being there. It was dissipated as soon as I walked away from the armchair and I was again walking in space, amid undefined objects."<sup>21</sup> How can the undead feel and say *I am* when objects either cannot be moved at all,<sup>22</sup> or, more deleterious still, if they move on their own before him, if they have become automobile: coffin lids that open on their own and ships that steer their way on their own ("The ship [transporting Dracula] ... found the harbor unsteered save by the hand of a dead man!" [Stoker's *Dracula*]). That is why we often see in films of the undead someone quickly stretching his hand to hold fast static objects, for these can at any moment move on their own: the knife that slides on its own from the

loaf, and the key that falls after coming to a stop on one of the steps of the stairs in *Mesbes of the Afternoon*. The absence of obstacles resulting from the auto-mobility of objects is very detrimental to the unembodied or dissociated, for obstacles permitted them to become in focus: “When this sensation of dereality occurs while walking, I try to move over against a building or doorway until I become one again”<sup>23</sup>—a non-narcissistic hug of oneself.

When the object or movement is left on its own, it has the quality of being unstoppable, hence both the absence of the one who let go of it,<sup>24</sup> and the hypnosis of the one who is observing it or against whom it is directed.

When the undead did not tunnel through space but covered it in a continuous way, he did so in a somnambulistic manner, did not move while moving. In the somnambulistic ambulation, there is a doubling in the pedestrian, one part walking, going through motor movements; the other motionless, just looking while being transported, feeling it has no control on the walk (*to stand on one's own feet*: to think or act independently).<sup>25</sup> A separation of the two components occurs in *Vampyr* as Gray trips at the *false threshold*. Paradoxically, it is when the somnambulist sits that he or she gives the impression he or she is moving: the four people seated outside the house staring at the landscape in Hopper's *People in the Sun* give the impression they are in a moving train.

In *Mesbes of the Afternoon* and Robbe-Grillet's *L'Immortelle*, it is no longer the shots that are cut on movement but the scenes, while jump cuts proliferate within each scene. The undead's movement/gesture/utterance is smoothly continuous across non-contiguous spaces-times. The same would happen with the living were teleportation to become feasible.

*Muscle* derives from the Latin *mūsculus*, a diminutive of *mūs*, mouse. There is a proliferation of mice and rats in the infamous plagues of vampire films, as if people's muscles had slipped from them and were

moving around, leaving them to the paralysis of fear or the rigor mortis of organic death.

In Tarkovsky's *Nostalgia*, the pan from the wife in the foreground to the daughter in the middle ground to the mother in the background to the wife again now with her child in the distant background shows an instance of tunneling or doubling. In the same film, while Josephson opens a door to either side of which is empty space and crosses to the other side, the poet tunnels through the empty space—had Josephson tried to do the same he would have hit against space there. Having witnessed tunneling, I was not surprised to encounter doubling: the reflection that the poet sees in the mirror is not his but Josephson's; in turn, the latter is doubled by a mocking mime. In Tarkovsky's *Solaris*, the dead wife is doubled by replicas who assume that one can tunnel through a locked door, each time getting seriously wounded in their attempt to pass to the other side; the cessation of new replications coincides with one replica's learning not to try to tunnel through the door. In Antonioni's *The Passenger*, a film that deals with the doubling between Robertson and Locke, tunneling is present both in the form of the pan from Robertson and Locke standing still talking on the balcony to them continuing their discussion in the adjoining room, but with Locke now without a shirt and sweating profusely; and in the form of the tracking shot through the window bars. In *Vampyr* the tunneling of Gray, for instance in the shot where the camera pans from him standing still looking to a diminutive skeleton, to books, to a skull, then to him now at the other end of the room is concomitant with his doubling/dissociation.

In Roy Ward Baker's film *Vampire Lovers*, a shot of a veiled vampire is followed by a close-up of her face, although she did not lift the shroud. This edit must have been done from the standpoint of the dead, since they frequently experience such successful tunneling of vision through a veil. But what they complementarily experience is the tunneling through them sometimes of an actual curtain, if one

happens to be at the location where they ostensibly are (Francis Bacon's *Study after Velázquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X*, *Study for a Portrait*, *Study for Crouching Nude*, and *Head IV*), but more frequently of a hallucinatory curtain. This is the real shroud of the revenant: he or she is hidden by and imprisoned inside what is behind him or her.

Her face, with its pronounced oval shape, gives the impression she has a scarf around it. Had she put an actual scarf around her neck, this would not have deterred the vampire from attacking her, since his teeth can shred or tunnel through the scarf. It is the aforementioned impression that deterred him.

The clearest index in Wells' *Citizen Kane* of the extremity of withdrawal Kane has reached behind the "No Trespassing" sign and the bars that close his self-sufficient palace to others is that the camera, which elsewhere in the film can tunnel through a glass roof in a continuous movement from the outside of a nightclub to its interior, can enter his room only by simultaneously remaining outside: on the shot of the inside of his bedroom is superimposed the snow of the outside.<sup>26</sup>

One needs a Kierkegaardian leap to go from tunneling (a subatomic particle can have an extra amount of energy as credit out of Heisenberg's uncertainty principle and jump over the energy barrier) to the normal state, that of being stopped by obstacles too high to leap over in the traditional way.

#### Gaps:

The 28 October entry of Harker's diary in Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* reads: "We left London by train, and crossed the English channel that night in stormy seas. No doubt of the passage of the count's ship. He commands the winds, but we still have the advantage. By train we can reach the Romanian port in Varna in three days; by ship it will take him at least a week. From Paris, we traveled through the Alps to Budapest. The count must sail round the rock of

Gibraltar, where we had posted a lookout, and then on to the Black Sea port at Varna, where we will meet his ship and burn it into the sea. ... The count's ship sailed past us in the night fog to the northern port of Galatz." The pursuers mistakenly presuppose that the vampire moves according to the map, in a continuous space, gradually. But the vampire has no trajectory. The amnesia that befalls Herzog's Harker on his trip from Transylvania to Wismar is a consequence less of his traumatic stay in the castle of the vampire than of the absence of a continuous trajectory between these two areas.

In the aftermath of World War II, reality was in the image of the street in the Florence section of Rossellini's *Paisà* (1946): a space emptied by snipers' bullets and that can be crossed, at the risk of one's life, only with the help of a primitive dolly. Bazin: "The technique of Rossellini undoubtedly maintains an intelligible succession of events, but these do not mesh like a chain with the sprockets of a wheel. The mind has to leap from one event to the other as one leaps from stone to stone in crossing a river. It may happen that one's foot hesitates between two rocks, or that one misses one's footing and slips. The mind does likewise. Actually it is not of the essence of a stone to allow people to cross rivers without wetting their feet ..." <sup>27</sup> Can a living Marxist safely cross Bazin's river by means of one or more of Eisenstein's *pathetic leaps*? No, since such leaps occur within the confines of a model of dialectical organic progression, so that each would fail if the next shot is omitted: "The smallest part must be to the largest what the largest is to the set ... It is in that sense that the set is reflected in each part."<sup>28</sup> While Eisenstein's pathetic leaps are unable to cover such gaps, Vertov's Kino-eye can: "Now I, a camera ... free of the limits of time and space, I put together any given points in the universe, no matter where I've recorded them."<sup>29</sup> The gaps Bazin writes about do not allow us to understand the ones in vampire films. The woman in *Meshes of the Afternoon* who tunnels from one spot on the staircase to another, and who passes from house to beach

with one step can certainly cross a river even if the gaps between the jutting stones in it happen to be too widely spaced for a normal person to safely cross; but she is *stopped dead* by the freezing specific to the undead.

Bazin: "It is inconceivable that the famous seal-hunt scene in *Nanook* should not show us hunter, hole, and seal all in the same shot. It is simply a question of respect for the spatial unity of an event at the moment when to split it up would change it from something real into something imaginary ... [the scene in *Louisiana Story*] of an alligator catching a heron, photographed in a single panning shot, is admirable ..." <sup>30</sup> As long as the two parties within the frame are aware of the mortal threat one or both of them poses to the other, Bazin's qualified prohibition of montage is valid. In Franju's *Blood of the Beasts*, while the sheep readied for slaughter sense what is going to happen to them, a horse led to the abattoir occasionally blithely lowers its head to smell the ground, as if nothing could happen to it. It is then suddenly killed: <sup>31</sup> an accident. So strong is the horse's unawareness of the imminent deadly danger facing it that it imposes a specific kind of montage: the cut from the long shot of the horse insouciantly sniffing the ground to a close-up of it being shot. We have a law of montage here: every time two persons, or a person and a domesticated animal, are within a frame and one of them is totally unaware of the imminent danger she or he or it is in, there will occur a cut, whether the *sensitive* filmmaker wants it or not, between that shot and the shot in which that person or animal is killed. In the absence of a cut, we, the audience, will infer that we went through a lapse, and that the killed or seriously injured animal or person has been replaced within the shot by a double, that it is the latter that is killed or gravely injured or else that it is himself/herself that has been injured or killed by a double of the person or animal in whose presence he or she is, because his or her surprise is that of being eaten by a mimicry animal.

Bazin's "seamless dress of reality" cannot exist except where death has been reduced to organic demise. In the realms of undeath and madness, reality is, as in Robbe-Grillet's and Ruiz's works, full of gaps, or, as in Godard's *King Lear*, where the film editor stitches together the film pieces of two shots, full of seams.

#### Lapses:

In Stoker's *Dracula*, Harker loses consciousness as he approaches the vampire's castle: "I must have been asleep, for certainly if I had been fully awake I must have noticed the approach of such a remarkable place"; in Murnau's *Nosferatu*, Harker loses consciousness while leaving the vampire's castle. The frontier, the place of entry of the labyrinthine realm of undeath is inaccessible since hidden by the trance that seizes one there (*entrance n. 2*. A means or point by which to enter; *entrance v. tr. 1*. To put into a trance [*American Heritage Dictionary*]). <sup>32</sup> If someone who is not a spiritual master is not entranced at the entrance of a place, this indicates that the latter is not a labyrinth. The entry into and exit from the realm of undeath occurs in a lapse hence is missed. <sup>33</sup> With the exception of the yogi/Zen master, one is always already undead. <sup>34</sup> You can neither enter nor leave the labyrinth; and you've always been lost in it, that is you cannot be found there. Are you then ever in the labyrinth from which you cannot leave? On a map, a labyrinth is formed of one line that meanders on and on, twists and involutes, forming a fractal object with a dimension between one and two, with the following two consequences. First, the labyrinth is all border, hence one cannot be fully inside it: if one can hide in the labyrinth, it is not because one is inside the labyrinth, for the labyrinth maintains one on the outside (thus it has aura), but because it is in the labyrinth that one is lost. Second, lapses are sure to occur to one in the labyrinth since it does not have a dimension of 3, is not a full volume.

There can be no understanding of primitive cultures without

undergoing possession, for if understanding is a form of possession in the normal sense of the word, they in turn must possess us, in their way, or rather what possesses them must also possess us. We can include them in history and memory only if they can possess us, that is include us in amnesia, in lapses, in that which maintains outside. A true relation presupposes this unbalanced, equivocal (since it maintains the two meanings of *possession*) exchange. It is not accidental that the records (and, in the case of Armand Schwerner's *The Tablets*, the false records) we have of ancient cultures are interspersed with holes, lapses, are in the form of fragments, for what is primitive is more akin to the primary process, closest to the unconscious, itself full of lapses (a schizophrenic: "I turned around and did something and looked at my watch, and it jumped an hour and a half").<sup>35</sup> While in the case of the primitive, these lapses, holes, do not produce ambiguities but an absolute necessity for the one who undergoes them, in *The Tablets*, they induce a proliferation of interpretations.

Films about lapses in consciousness and disorientation are very important in cinema since cinema is itself largely made of changes of place and focus.<sup>36</sup> Walter Benjamin writes in "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction": "The work of art of the Dadaists ... hit the spectator like a bullet .... 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."<sup>37</sup> Classical cinema tries to occult such periodic change through smooth editing. These changes of focus and location and lighting should rather be foregrounded not merely in a structuralist, modernist investigation of the medium and specific art form that cinema is,<sup>38</sup> but also through a highlighting of films that deal on the level of content with reality as filmic. One would not forget to say *en passant* (but not too quickly) that bullets (or things with their speed: what causes amnesia in concussions is not so much the material that traverses the brain as its acceleration) have been the cause of many con-

cussions that resulted in amnesias, and hence in the creation in real life, and outside of all cinemas, of "changes of place and focus which periodically assail" the amnesiac (Nolan's *Memento*, 2000).

Marguerite Duras criticizes most filmmakers for a condescending attitude toward the spectator, which reveals itself for instance in their showing him or her all the successive stages of an action, as if he or she were a dolt who could not otherwise understand what was happening. Duras is only partially right in her insistence that the continuity in the portrayal of actions be dispensed with: a generalized habit of letting the spectator piece together what happened by projecting what was skipped makes it extremely difficult for the filmmaker to thwart such a projection, and thwarted it sometimes must be for in some cases nothing happened between the two shots forming the ostensible jump cut. Robbe-Grillet writes: "The duration of the modern work is in no way a summary, a condensed version, of a more extended and more 'real' duration which would be that of the anecdote, of the narrated story. There is, on the contrary, an absolute identity between the two durations. The entire story of *Marienbad* happens neither in two years nor in three days, but exactly in one hour and a half"<sup>39</sup>—to wit the existence of the man and the woman in *Marienbad* "lasts only as long as the film lasts."<sup>40</sup> Robbe-Grillet's general characterization is correct; nonetheless, I do not think that it is fully exemplified by *Last Year at Marienbad*. For the implication of structuring the film in terms of scenes—a scene is "a unified action ... that normally takes place in a single location and in a single period of time"—is that there is a narrative ellipsis between each two scenes, with the consequence that the spectator is not inhibited from filling it with a duration. The spectator can yet be inhibited from filling it with a duration in various ways: in case the characters can still be surprised, it suffices to make them startled and disoriented at the beginning of each scene, thus alerting the spectator that no time has passed between the two non-contiguous locations-times, and hence inhibit-

ing him or her from projecting any transition time between them, the diegetic world presented by the work lasting then only the time of the projection of the latter. In case the characters are not surprised by diegetic jump cuts, the transition from one sequence of shots full of jump cuts to another at a different location and time should happen by means of either a cut on movement (a paradoxical continuity at the level of the image), as in *Meshes of the Afternoon*, or a cut on the two consecutive parts of a continuous phrase uttered in sync (a paradoxical continuity at the level of sound). For instance, although shot 24 in *L'Immortelle* shows the woman and the man starting toward Beyköy and shot 25 shows them arriving there, Leila, who was saying in sync “You are a foreigner ... You got lost ...” in the first shot, continues her phrase in sync in the following one (the cine-novel is explicit here: “continuing her phrase”): “You have just arrived in a Turkey of legend ...”—this making it impossible for the spectator to project that any time had actually passed between heading toward Beyköy and arriving there. One particularity of such a situation is that the outside is no longer what belongs to a different location-time, since, through the cuts on movement and/or on consecutive parts of the same phrase, the diverse locations-times are no longer separated, but form one ensemble; rather, the outside is now inside the same location, so that while one no longer greets as one changes locations-times, one does so at the start of the second shot of each jump cut in the same location.

“Build up: 1. Dramatic cutting leading to a climax in the action; 2. the insertion of frames to designate a missing section or shot in the work print.” Everything after these missing sections, these blanks is experienced as a climax, as a surprise. One should have *sang froid*, though not during these hibernation-like lapses, but as one is suddenly out of them. How to start (begin) without starting (being surprised)? “How can the outstanding be abolished?” “Only by

abolishing the outstanding.” Was a satori produced by this koan-like answer? Only when the surprising, the uncanny is abolished is the unaccomplished, the overdue in the same movement also abolished. Only those who no longer ever get surprised can definitively short-circuit.

Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* begins with Harker’s stress on timing: “3 May. *Bistritz*.—Left Munich at 8:35 P.M., on 1st May, arriving at Vienna early next morning; should have arrived at 6:46, but train was an hour late. Buda-Pesth seems a wonderful place ... I feared to go very far from the station, as we had arrived late and would start as near the correct time as possible.” (Having passed the bridge, [Murnau’s] Harker is from then on always late, not reaching the door in time to open it himself: it opens by itself—he turns into a witness.) It continues with an emphasis on chronological time—what is chronology but timing, so that events that belong to the past should not arrive too late, that is in the future, and events that should occur in the present would not occur too early, in the past, or too late, in the future—through Mina’s editing of a history: the multiplicity of letters and journals by various protagonists, which are different angles on and fragments of what happened, makes possible cutting around the eternities and lapses of some characters to produce a smooth narrative. While the transition from chapter III to chapter IV (“Jonathan Harker’s Journal—*continued*”) and the transition from chapter I to chapter II (“Jonathan Harker’s Journal—*continued*”) each occurs after an explicit lapse—chapter III begins with “And I sank down unconscious” and chapter II starts with “I must have been asleep, for certainly if I had been fully awake I must have noticed the approach of such a remarkable place”—the underlined transitions (*continued*) from chapter II to chapter III, from chapter XIV to chapter XV, from chapter XV to chapter XVI, and from chapter XVI to chapter XVII don’t occur after a manifest lapse. The titles “Chapter XV, Dr. Seward’s Diary—*continued*,” “Chapter XVI, Dr. Seward’s Diary—*con-*

*tinued*,” “Chapter XVII, Dr. Seward’s Diary—*continued*,” “Chapter III, Jonathan Harker’s Journal—*continued*,” as well as “Chapter IV” (the beginning of chapter IV continues the diary entry from the previous chapter) are inserts/cut-aways (does the *continued* function as a dissolve?) implying the existence of lapses that otherwise would not have been sensed.

*Dans le temps* one was always in time. No more; this *from time to time* is experienced literally by schizophrenics, epileptics, and people on LSD. Only occasionally do they return to *c’est le temps*, that is to the appearance of time. But *entre-temps* where are they? An epileptic: “It was about eleven o’clock when I put down my pen, feeling suddenly tired ... I made the tea, looked up at the clock—a strange chance—and saw that it was ten minutes past eleven. The next moment I was still looking up at the clock and the hands stood at five and twenty minutes past midnight. I had fallen through Time, Continuity and Being.”<sup>41</sup> When she tries to go to her bedroom, she realizes that she does not know which way it is. With the epileptic, the two meanings of *fit* exclude each other. Coming back to consciousness, the familiar is no longer so: the first degree of being lost is not yet recognizing a familiar place in the aftermath of a *petit mal*—*lost and found*, simultaneously. And the unfamiliar becomes strangely familiar (this often induces as much apprehension as when the familiar becomes unfamiliar): with many epileptics the aura that announces a fit/black-out takes the form of a *déjà vu* sensation (naming *aura* an “I’ve been here [or witnessed or done this] before” or a smell that is there without an object that would exude it, like a reproduction that is divested from both the painting and its location, i.e., what does away with the aura, would have interested Walter Benjamin).

“It [cinema] makes a molding of the object as it exists in time and, furthermore, makes an imprint of the duration of the object.”<sup>42</sup> Hence cinema preserves also the absence of time. It does so both by documenting epileptic fits (*petit mal* or *grand mal*) and trance, allowing

the one who underwent them to see what his body did when he was absent (Jean Rouch’s *Les maîtres fous*; Herzog’s *Heart of Glass*, during the filming of which all the actors except one were hypnotized); and by portraying in fiction films states where there is an absence of time during which the person is not unconscious (as for instance in Robbe-Grillet’s films [*Last Year of Marienbad* ...]). Cinema has to do much more with preserving this absence of time than with preserving time.

In films manifesting quantum effects, such as tunneling, one can reasonably expect the intermittences of interference patterns or of what is discrete, and vice versa. In Kubrick’s *The Shining*, Torrance tunnels through the locked larder door of the kitchen, and the child’s tricycle repeatedly passes over the alternating carpeted and bare sections of the corridors of the Overlook Hotel, producing a distinct alternation of silence and the sound of the wheels on the marble. The quantum world of Robbe-Grillet is permeated by intermittences that indicate interference patterns: on the cover of the 1965 Grove Press edition of the two novels *Jealousy* and *In the Labyrinth* and in *L’Immortelle* the author Robbe-Grillet and the heroine of that film respectively appear behind window blinds. With *Last Year at Marienbad*, one telling difference between the film directed by Alain Resnais and the elaborate and precise script by Robbe-Grillet is that the interference pattern in the opening section of the script (“at regular intervals, a lighter area, opposite each invisible window, shows more distinctly the moldings that cover the wall”) is not in the opening section of the film.

Lapses render the existence of those who suffer from them aphoristic only if additionally things and events are received by these persons.

In Bertolucci’s *The Spider’s Stratagem*, Athos asks two conversing men directions to get to the hotel. They begin arguing about which direction it is, pointing in opposite ways. “When you settle [which direction is the hotel] I’ll pass by again.” The second time Athos walks in the direction of the two arguing men, *there is a crossing of the imagi-*

*nary line* before he reaches them, so that we see him walking, in the exact same scenery, away from them, with the two still-arguing men having now exchanged positions, so that the one who was standing screen left is now screen right and vice versa. This indicates that Athos did not pass the two arguing men a second time.

A significant percentage of children experience epilepsy during their first seven years, mostly of the *petit mal* variety. The many *petit mal* episodes he suffered daily resulted in his seeing the world in time-lapse (time-lapse cinematography reproduces both the absence [skip-frame] and the convulsion [jerkiness] of epilepsy), so that everything was speeded up and he could follow more easily what was usually too slow to be perceived. When he became older and the *petit mal* episodes stopped, the world became slower.

The painter Andrew Wyeth portrays Helga in so many works—4 temperas, 12 drybrush paintings, 63 watercolors, 164 pencil sketches and drawings, etc.—in so many attitudes, positions, surroundings, moods that in the situations that have not been portrayed she is absent from herself.

Sometimes his talk is interrupted by a black screen then resumed at the same point with “As I was saying.” At other times, although the shot is not interrupted and none of those present cuts in, he keeps interjecting his talk with: “As I was saying.”

#### **Memorable Accidents:**

His car crash was a memorable accident not only because he still remembered it after so many years, but also because during it he saw a flash review of his life.

One day in 1906, a filmstrip jammed in Méliès’ camera. He managed to get the camera to function again and continued filming. At the projection of the reel, a horse-drawn tram suddenly became a hearse. An accident produced in the camera between a hearse and a horse-drawn tram both moving at rather slow speeds, hence

having enough time, even had their drivers found themselves on a collision course, to avert crashing into each other. A crash between their images. It is not accidental that that mixing of two things that had nothing to do with each other, which ushered editing, was related, as indicated by the appearance of the hearse, to death, the great intermingling.

#### **Sensitivity to Initial/Final Conditions:**

Whenever we deal with the unconscious, we find, as in any far from equilibrium (dynamical) system, an extreme sensitivity to initial conditions.<sup>43</sup> So it should come as no surprise that one of the most noteworthy characteristic of the state following death is the extreme sensitivity (and suggestibility) to initial conditions: here the final conditions of life, the initial conditions of death. Consequently, disciplines concerned with doing away with or at least having mastery over the Bardo state, for instance yoga, mention, among the “powers” that can be obtained through *samyama*, that of knowing the moment one is to die. Such knowledge would permit one to try to be in the best condition to deal with death: in meditation, hence detached from set (having complete control over one’s stream of consciousness and/or absolute detachment from it) and setting. The same emphasis on this last moment is found in fifteenth century Christianity: whereas in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries “the balance sheet is closed not at the moment of death but on the *dies illa*, the last day of the world ... [the great gathering] in the fifteenth century had moved to the sickroom ... The dying man will see his entire life as it is contained in the book, and he will be tempted either by despair over his sins, by the ‘vain-glory’ of his good deeds, or by the passionate love for the things and the persons. His attitude during this fleeting moment will erase at once all the sins of his life if he wards off temptation or, on the contrary, will cancel out all his good deeds if he gives way. The final test has replaced the Last Judgement ...”<sup>44</sup>

### Through the Unreflective Glass:

Once one passes through the unreflective mirror, whether suddenly as in Cocteau's *Orpheus* or gradually as in the dissolve in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking-Glass* ("The glass was beginning to melt away, just like a bright silvery mist. / In another moment Alice was through the glass"),<sup>45</sup> one either comes to the realization that one has been replaced by or is inhabiting the same mind with the double, as in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*: "But if I am not the same, the next question is 'who in the world am I? ... I must have been changed for Mabel!'"<sup>46</sup> or else one sooner or later encounters him or her as another body, as in *Duck Soup*. In *Duck Soup*, the character of Groucho Marx continues his attempt to ascertain whether the likeness he sees in the mirror-frame is his reflection or an impersonator even after momentarily and inattentively crossing to the other side. This shot, which is simultaneously one of the scariest and one of the funniest, i.e., one of the uncanniest, in cinema, deploys in a comic mode an array of features that pertain to the undead and schizophrenics, for example diegetic silence-over, and *thought broadcasting*: it is fitting that the impersonator, who in that scene knows every improvised movement the Groucho character does, is elsewhere in the film a spy. Should one ascribe the circumstance that the Groucho character looks only at his likeness rather than also at the other objects in order to decide whether he is looking at a mirror to narcissism? Or should one rather view this fixation as induced by the fascination and slow-wittedness that takes hold of one in such anomalous situations?

Freud writes about one of his dreams: "In mishandling my two learned and eminent colleagues because they were Jews [so is Freud] ... I had put myself [this active, in control perspective, when it is the other way round!] in the Minister's place ... He had refused to appoint me professor extraordinarius and I had retaliated in the dream by stepping into his shoes."<sup>47</sup> Be careful, he lets you step into his shoes

only because, like a Loa, he has stepped into you. And when you either leave the shoes behind intentionally (your intention is his lapsus) as incriminating evidence and the authorities imprison the other, either this indicates that it is the other, not you, who committed the act, or you will discover that you killed someone whom the other wanted killed, that you made a mistake and killed *the wrong man* (the attack on the Jewish colleagues); or forget, in a parapraxis, the other's shoes in a lecture or, like Cinderella, in a party, people will come looking for him, not you: for he will always give you what will lead to him, whether that be his shoes; your speaking a language you don't know: of the thirty-two schizophrenics who hallucinated in English in one hospital, sixteen could not speak in this language;<sup>48</sup> or having powers you do not normally have: Stan Brakhage saw an angry Maya Deren, who was into voodoo, pick up a standard-sized kitchen refrigerator and hurl it from one corner of the kitchen to the other.<sup>49</sup>

Across the entrance of the altered realm of body or consciousness, i.e., of the entrancing threshold that is missed, I may be replaced by a double, and so symptomatically Vincente Minnelli's musical *An American in Paris* begins, in quick succession, with three instances of mistaken identity. Telling us about himself and where he lives, the first narrator, an American painter, directs the camera up a certain building ("I live upstairs"); when it comes to a stop in front of a window through which we see a man and a woman kissing, he indicates, "No, no, not there: one flight up." The camera then resumes its ascent, coming to a stop at a new window just as a man lying in bed wakes up, looks at the camera and says: "Voilà!" The second narrator, a concert pianist, tells us that he lives in the same building; again the camera moves up the building, stopping at a window where a man is standing. The narrator's voice indicates: "No, that's not me! He's too happy." So the camera ascends to a different floor and now we see the actual second narrator. In the case of the third narrator, the known music hall star Henri Borel, who is on a visit to his old neighborhood,

the scene is shown from a subjective point of view shot so that the people greeting him greet the camera. He comments: "Everybody recognizes me." As the subjective camera comes to a stop in front of a street mirror and we see a young man enter frame to adjust his hat, we hear the narrator caution us: "No, no, that's not me! I am not that young." While many others will read these three instances of mistaken identity in a psychological way: the three people with whom the three protagonists are momentarily mistaken represent respectively what the latter yearn for: the first protagonist, love; the second, depressed, happiness; and the third, youth; I view them as foreshadowing the possibility of replacement by the double across the entrancing threshold to the altered realm into which dance projects the dancer, a projection that happens clearly in the ballet near the end of the film. In a subsequent scene, the solitary concert pianist assumes all the roles in a concert: the pianist, the conductor, the cymbal player, and the audience member who claps noisily at the end of the performance. Whether we are witnessing a doubling, i.e., whether any or all of these participants are the pianist's doubles, depends on whether the first moment of recognition of striking physical similarity, which intimates the possibility of doubling, is affected with a determined negation and sublated into the viewer's inability to discern whether the pianist and the others are identical-looking.

**What Does Not Resemble Me Looks Exactly Like Me/What Looks Exactly Like Me Does Not Resemble Me:**

If the encounter with the double happens when one loses either one's mirror image, or one's name, so that, failing to successfully interpellate oneself in the mirror, one's mirror image continues to have its back to one, there is no reason for one to see doubles only in people that others find extremely similar to one: in Fassbinder's film *Despair*, based on Nabokov's novel by the same title, the *astute* protagonist

finds a double who according to the other characters and to the film spectators does not resemble him, concocting a plot to use him to have a false alibi while committing a crime.

What I dread about encountering the double is both other people's failure to recognize the similarity,<sup>50</sup> and that my responsibility will be indefinitely extended (such an indefinite extension of responsibility is a trait of the unconscious). In Dostoyevsky's *The Double*, other people's strange failure to notice the uncanny resemblance between Golyadkin and his double when the two are together is conjoined to their mistaking his double for him when they are in different locations. Such recognition reinforces what is implied by the misrecognition, for if others keep ascribing to me the responsibility of reprehensible acts I never performed, this must signal that I have metamorphosed.

**Breathless:**

In pursuit, the vampire continued walking nonchalantly. One of the two friends fleeing him halted sooner or later: "I am out of breath." Instead of his friend's response, he heard the vampire's voice behind him: "I, too, am out of breath." He did not at first understand this remark. But then he was chilled by the realization that being a dead person, the vampire did not breathe. Even in winter one did not see any visible breath coming out of his mouth—only, somewhere nearby was mist or fog. The vampire had the sensation of breathing only when he heard Sufi ney sound or a Shakuhachi flute, for example in *Shika no tone*. If they don't wipe the mirror, living people cannot see their image in it in winter since their breath, visible then, hides the surface of the mirror. But, with the vampire, one encounters an inexistent mirror image hidden by inexistent breath.

**The Undead Has No Mirror Image:**

In Georges Franju's *Eyes Without a Face*, Christiane, a young woman whose face was deformed in a car accident, is to be given a transplant

of the facial skin of another woman. She enters the room where the latter is stretched anesthetized for the operation, and looks at her. At no point does Franju cut from a close-up of Christiane to her point of view of the face of the one lying anesthetized. Her point of view would have shown her her (future) mirror image. Later, the woman whose facial skin has been removed, and who is covered by bandages, manages to flee the room in which she was imprisoned and wanders through the house. I expected that she would encounter Christiane, who at present has her face, seeing then her (negative) mirror image. But the two women do not meet. It appears that one is witnessing in both these instances the impossibility of a mirror image. But this impossibility is a characteristic of the undead, specifically of the vampire. Is a certain logic leading me astray? Then I suddenly remembered that the film begins with Christiane's fake funeral, during which the disfigured corpse of another woman was buried in a grave with Christiane's name engraved on the tombstone.

The vampire has no mirror image even in the form of body-image, hence he does not and cannot have a *phantom limb*.

The French language felicitously links in the word *reconnaissance* reconnoitering, recognition and gratitude. The dead's *reconnaissance* in the undeath realm fails both because such a realm is labyrinthine, and because he or she no longer has an image, and hence can feel no sense of recognition. The living have here an occasion, and perhaps a duty, to *create* a valid portrait of the undead, one that he or she can gratefully recognize, one that is neither a portrait of him or her as he or she was while still alive, nor an ideal or demonic portrait.

#### **The Indefinite Poetry of Death:**

Does the circumstance that cinema gives a definite image to what maintains a wide latitude of abstraction in a verbal description make that medium more prosaic than literary prose? Not necessarily. This facet of the medium has produced a poetic modality in at least two forms:

— Literalizing what we take for figures of speech, through dealing with states of altered consciousness or body. Finally becoming sure of who his host “is,” the recently arrived young guest at Count Dracula's castle confronts him: “I can see through you.” The reverse shot shows the vampire smiling and then becoming translucent, his victim's vision tunneling through him, revealing the victim's mirror reflection with its back to him.<sup>51</sup>

— Undoing or suspending the tendency cinema has, when not abstract or deploying to excess the off-screen, of sooner or later showing, embodying, giving everything a determined image. This is clearest in films that subscribe to Moslem tradition's prohibition of the representation of the prophets recognized by the Qur'ān, the first four caliphs, and the Shi'ite imams (and not necessarily in the crude form this subscription assumes in Muṣṭafa al-'Aqqād's *The Message*); and those that deal with Judaism's prohibition of the representation of Yahweh (Straub-Huillet's *Moses and Aaron*). But definite embodiment in cinema is undone also in manners other than the all-or-non one of transcendent religions, for example through:

— Remakes. In remakes, the same character is played by different actors. Buñuel humorously and poetically made two actresses play the female protagonist of *That Obscure Object of Desire*, this making of *That Obscure Object of Desire* both the film and its remake.

— The close-up when its tendency to undo individuation is not resisted by the filmmaker. Deleuze: “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).... The close-up is the face, but the face precisely in so far as it has destroyed its triple function ...”<sup>52</sup> In the great film of the close-up, Bergman's *Persona*, the complementary halves of the faces of Alma (played by Bibi Andersson) and Elisabeth (played by Liv

Ullmann) join seamlessly and indistinguishably into one face.<sup>53</sup>

— The over-turn, which results in the undead's having his back to the film spectator both outside and inside the mirror (Magritte's *Reproduction Prohibited*).

— The mask produced by the fear-induced swish pan or tilt of one's look.

The poetry of death is obviously not limited to the revelation of the figurative as literal in the undead realm, nor to the undoing of definite embodiment, nor to the surrealists' *exquisite corpse*. It also appears in that realm's frequent simultaneity of contraries: the simultaneity of stillness and movement: "I saw a female figure standing at the foot of the bed .... A block of stone could not have been stiller .... As I stared at it, the figure appeared to have changed its place, and was now nearer the door" (Sheridan Le Fanu, "Carmilla");<sup>54</sup> the simultaneity of being here and elsewhere, of appearance and disappearance: the undead was standing next to his guest, while also, as indicated by the absence of his reflection in the adjoining mirror, not being there;<sup>55</sup> the simultaneity of silence and music or sound: standing next to the vampire frozen in the coffin, and thus enveloped in diegetic silence-over, his enemies hurriedly discussed how to definitely kill him.<sup>56</sup> In a work of art, these instances of a simultaneity of contraries are poetic only when they attain to being aesthetic facts.<sup>57</sup>

#### **The Dance of Death:**

"Grace appears most purely in that human form which either has no consciousness or an infinite consciousness. That is, in the puppet or in the god" (Heinrich von Kleist, "On the Marionette Theatre"). Polished grace of what is both marionette and god, of the undead, whose bodies are as inanimate as a marionette, and whose minds dwelling in the Bardo state have the powers of a god, as they dance in Roman Polanski's *The Fearless Vampire Killers*.

I've seen the dance of death in the freezing of the undead Willis

in *Giselle* and in the spastic and convulsive jerks of a mortally-wounded man from Qānā in the aftermath of the Israeli massacre in that Lebanese village. On first hearing that there is a dance spot in Karantīna, the site of a massacre perpetuated in 1975 by Phalangist troops on the Palestinians who lived in the refugee camp there as well as on many Kurdish and Lebanese war refugees, I imagined a place reserved for dances that project a subtle dancer into a realm with diegetic silence-over, freezing, etc., characteristics of the undead realm, therefore for dances that reactivate the ancient connection of dance with death (*Giselle*, etc.), and in which the projected subtle dancers may dance, at least sometimes, with the revenants from the massacre. What did I actually find? A nightclub (!) by the "name" of B018. Notwithstanding that its tables, each with a flower, a candleholder, and a photograph of a legendary musician (Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Charlie Mingus, Charlie Parker, etc.), assume a votive appearance and are moreover designed to look like cemetery memorial stones, once the trendy music starts the youths who crowd the nightclub on the weekend move to it as they do in any of the other nightclubs in the city. Someone might try to justify having such a place on that spot by invoking the need to champion life in a country that has seen so much death. But if there is something that does not need a catalyst in order to continue, it is life, for *life goes on*. B018's architect, Bernard Khoury, would have had only to look at the grass that had already appeared on the presumed mass grave at the site of the massacre to ascertain that life goes on. Bernard Khoury should also have pondered Kubrick's *The Shining*.

#### **Here Lies and the Worldless:**

Michel Serres: "At the very site of reference lies death, which makes space something other than a homogeneous vacuum. Being-there is easily translated in the French language: *ci-gît* (*here lies*), ancient funerary formula. Here lies: that means here rests such or such, but

means at bottom: by the virtue of this or that dead, the deposit and source (*gisement*) of here appears. Death gives birth to the here or the yonder, I am born not far from where the grandfather dissolves. I locate myself by deposit and distance hence by keeping well away from death.”<sup>58</sup> But the ability of the dead to create reference and location is at the price of his or her being lost in the realm of the dead, a realm that undoes any map, any topography. This turning of the dead into the homeless (or more accurately of the worldless) can be seen in *Weegee's New York, 335 photographien, 1935–1960*, where photographs of dead people in the streets (in the section “Crime”: *Corpse with Revolver, Dead Man in a Restaurant, Dead Man in a Bar, Murdered While Playing Bocchia*) become (almost) indistinguishable from the photographs of the homeless (the charcoal or chalk outline on the ground of the crime scene reproduces the matte outline, intimating that the ones killed already belong to the absence of context, to the radical ubiquity, the homelessness that the matte institutes). The only difference is that the dead are recycled.<sup>59</sup> The last sentence has to be qualified, for *here lies* applies literally, as a curse, to vampires, and, as a blessing, to saints (of the forty-two saints who lived between 1400 and 1900, at least twenty-two are said to have remained non-decayed after their deaths): “Beginning with the thirteenth century ... we again find the funeral inscriptions which had all but disappeared during the previous eight or nine hundred years.

“They reappeared first on the tombs of the illustrious personages—that is to say of saints or those associated with saints.”<sup>60</sup> It seems natural and logical that the reintroduction of individual tombs should happen in the case of those corpses that don’t undergo dissolution into everything else.

#### **The Undead, Who Is Not All There, and the Mad, Who Died Before Dying:**

Baudrillard: “At the very core of the ‘rationality’ of our culture,

however, is an exclusion that precedes every other, more radical than the exclusion of madmen, children or inferior races, an exclusion preceding all these and serving as their model: the exclusion of the dead and of death.”<sup>61</sup> The confinement of the dead and the insane is encountered even in cosmology, where it applies to black holes, i.e., to *dead* stars that contain a *singularity*,<sup>62</sup> in the form of the event horizon and of Roger Penrose’s *conjunction of cosmic censorship*. Similarly, in horror and science-fiction films a sort of an automatic implicit quarantine takes place around the afflicted zone, an event horizon forming to shield the outside world from the singularity, the stricken town or city suddenly isolated from the rest of the world, and this through no plausible mechanism.

During the early Renaissance, a large portion of the madmen were put on the *Narrenschiff*, boats that carried the insane from town to town. Parallel to these ships of the mad is the ship of the dead, for instance the one around which revolves Raúl Ruiz’s *Three Crowns of the Sailor*; as well as the ones that transport Dracula to London, Nosferatu to Bremen or Wismar. An intertitle in Murnau’s *Nosferatu* reads: “The men little suspected what terrible cargo they were carrying down the valley.”<sup>63</sup> This though does not seem to have been the case with the men asked to transport Murnau’s coffin on their ship on their trip from the U.S. to Germany: “When the coffin had been put on the boat the sailors at first refused to sail with it on board. It was twice taken off the ship before they would agree.”<sup>64</sup> Was Murnau an undead?

Both the undead, and the mad, who died before dying, often use a language that the living find cryptic: thus Nosferatu’s letter to Renfield in Murnau’s film, and thus a schizophrenic’s “Recreat. Recreat xangoran temr e xangoran an. Naza e fango xangoranan. Inai dum. Ageai dum.”<sup>65</sup> Stoker’s Dracula asks Harker to help him speak English without an accent, for otherwise he would be scrutinized in England. Since the undead is “a stranger in a strange land” in any of

the living's countries, it is felicitous that foreign actors are often used in vampire films: Catherine Deneuve's accent in *The Hunger*; the accent of Lugosi in Browning's *Dracula*; the accents of Kinski and Gans in the English version of Herzog's *Nosferatu*. The vampire liked to wander in postwar cities such as Beirut, lingering at shattered shop signs, whose remaining letters formed incomprehensible words that resonated with his cryptic language.

In vampire films, while in the mental hospitals schizophrenics experience the infinity of holes in their skin or shoes, the *bleeding* of sounds into each other, and dissolution even as they live; the corpse of the vampire, a dead aristocrat with unfinished business, does not dissolve in the earth while in the coffin during daylight since he is frozen then, remaining impenetrable:<sup>66</sup> however much one may zoom in on the unwrinkled face of Kinski in Herzog's *Nosferatu* no pores are visible in it. Did the vampire actually bite his victim? Behind the vampire's closed lips there are no teeth, indeed no opening: his victim hears voices-over and blood oozes from his neck through stigmata.

#### Matte:

For horizon, the matte border.

The lower part of Magritte's *L'Empire des lumières* shows a nocturnal landscape and a house with its lights on (*day for night?*), while the upper part shows a diurnal sky (*Night for Day?*). At one point in Bill Viola's *The Reflecting Pool*, a nocturnal pool is surrounded by a diurnal landscape. It is unfortunate that no vampire film shows the trap Harker's wife sets for the vampire—retaining him till (her) dawn—backfiring on her, the vampire standing in a nighttime part of the frame while his victim is in a diurnal section of it (Picasso's *Sleeping Nude*, 1904). If such an encounter has to be shown without the recourse to matting, the shot would have to be filmed during the *blue hour*, the brief spell between the close of day and the evening when one gets a Magritte-like coexistence of day and night in separate parts

of the frame. While the vampire stands in the night and his victim stands in the daylight, there is the *blue hour's* minute of silence between the moment night birds stop making sounds and the moment day birds start making them (are the birds commemorating the victim's death?).

The photograph of Syberberg and Herzog on page 24 of *Syberberg* (*Cahiers du cinéma*, numéro hors-série, 1980), of both the one who does everything in a studio, even to the second degree, since the latter often remains vacant except of the *front projection*, hence does not become a set; and the fiction filmmaker who has an abhorrence of studio shooting, emphasizing filming in real settings (*Fata Morgana* was shot in the Cameroon; *Aguirre, the Wrath of God* in the Peruvian jungle; *Fitzcarraldo* in the Amazon jungle), which may at first seem anomalous, almost a matte photograph, is in reality not so. For didn't Herzog hypnotize his actors during the filming of *Heart of Glass*? And isn't hypnotism the absence or unsettling of context? "You move as if in slow motion, because the whole room you are in is filled with heavy water [in *At Land*, Maya Deren intercuts shots of her crawling on a table covered with plates to shots of her penetrating a thicket. A subtler effect would have been induced had she undergone the following self-hypnosis: 'You advance on the table as if you are penetrating a thicket'—thus dispensing with the thicket shots. The result would have been an *as if* that no longer has anything metaphorical about it, but has to do with an *I feel, I have the impression*. Were the film spectator though to get entranced by the shot or scene, he or she would be prone to actually no longer just have the feeling but to see the shot of Deren advancing in a thicket intercut or superimposed on the shot of her creeping on the table] ... Under water you can move only with difficulty, although your body has become very light. You drift. You don't walk." Hypnotism is a keying/matting before the latter was invented. This is very clear in hypnotic phenomena such as positive or negative hallucination, whether they happen during the

trance or posthypnotically: “You see your partner, but you look through him, as you look through a window”; during one of the hypnosis sessions Herzog conducted prior to the filming of *Heart of Glass*, one subject said in answer to an inquiry about what he was seeing, “And every night the trees disappear altogether, and only the sleeping birds remain.”<sup>67</sup> In *Heart of Glass*, the actors hypnotized by Herzog most often act as if the other person(s) and objects at the same location are not present there, but are to be matted later. This absence of context is achieved here not through video and film special effects (frontal projection, etc.) but through special effects (hypnosis) done with the psyche of the actor.

At some level, the immigration of the Jews to Palestine played itself as a matting phenomenon. For the land of Palestine to function as a matte, it had to be blank [it wasn’t: “the moment that Israel declared itself a state, it legally owned a little more than 6 percent of the land of Palestine and its population of Jews consisted of a fraction of the total Palestinian population”<sup>68</sup>] or else be portrayed as such: thus the Zionists’ motto “A land without people for a people without a land”; and “Golda Meir’s flat assertion in 1969 that the Palestinians did not exist.”<sup>69</sup> Jean Genet describes in his *Prisoner of Love* a game of cards he witnessed in which the participants, Palestinian fighters, victims of matting, played without any cards in their hands.<sup>70</sup>

In the near future, we will encounter a proliferation of activities that *seem* hallucinatory because they are only later complemented, by means of matting, with what they are responding to or trying to initiate. We are certain to also witness the proliferation of this phenomenon’s pathological version, which occurs when the first stage of the matting process is not followed by the complementary stage, and which will correspond to the *vacuum activities* of animals (an idiosyncratic form of miming), which occur in the absence of the stimulus that usually elicits the corresponding normal activity: canaries (*Serinus*

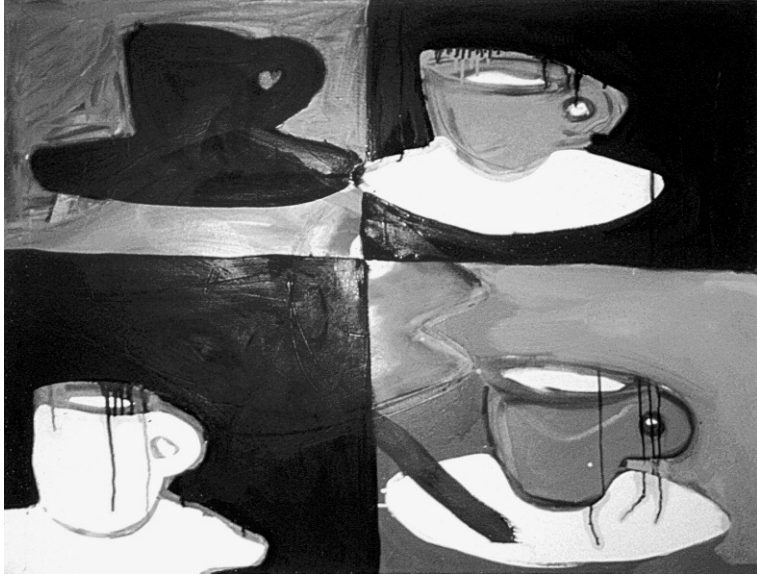
*canaria*) deprived of nest material will perform the movements of weaving material into a nonexistent nest; starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*) that have not caught flies for some time may go through the motions of catching and eating nonexistent flies. Similarly, in the final scene of Antonioni’s *Blow Up*, 1967, the photographer follows with his eyes an invisible tennis ball, fetches it, and then throws it back to the mimes who were playing a match with it.

During the rehearsals of *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, rubber figures of the animation characters were moved through the scenes in which they were to appear so that both the actors and the camera operator would know these characters’ exact trajectory. “Then when we shot the scene, we didn’t use the figure and the operator [and the actors] would have to imagine where the character was in relation to the dialogue, which was being delivered by an off-camera actor ...”<sup>71</sup> Matting, which does away with the aura, since it makes the far and the near as well as different temporalities intermingle, itself generates an aura, since the look of the person looking at the figure that is matted later is never centered but traces a circle of confusion. It is no longer only the cinematographer who experiences and knows how difficult it is to accompany someone in a pan, zoom or even a static shot (*Distracted*); the actor who has to interact within a shot with an element that will be matted later experiences and knows it as well.

In fine undead films, the frame has so much that comes at one *out of the blue* (of the matte).

Casey O’Connor’s painting *Basiv* is subdivided into four frames. The cup and its plate in the upper left frame, the background in the lower left frame and the background in the upper right frame are black. This black adds one more use to the very different usages of the black field in painting, which range from the abstract to the figurative (for example as the border of a radical closure in Francis Bacon’s work, etc.). What we’re witnessing in *Basiv* is the transplantation of (the first stage of) a process taken from film and photography,

matting, into painting. Now, a matte left blank is a haunted one but not by a revenant. What is fishy about *Basic*; what haunts as a *presence*? The fish that is not matted into the black, but appears at the corners where the four frames meet, most manifestly in the gray background of the upper left frame and the lower right frame, where two white spots form its eyes.



While many films resort to painted backgrounds to economize on set construction costs, very few make use of the impenetrability of such backgrounds in the diegesis, exemplarily by revolving around a trauma and hysterical characters. It is obvious in the scene near the beginning of Hitchcock's *Marnie* in which the eponymous protagonist visits her mother that the background of the street, most notably the conspicuous ship, is painted.<sup>72</sup> Marnie is returning to the site of what is refractory to penetration—a trauma: when she was still a child, she killed a sailor. The dissociation of the hysterical protagonist assumes

various modalities: her five different names (perhaps two of these are Cindy and Sherman), social security numbers, and hair colors and styles; her hypnoid states; her frigidity; her separation from the background, conveyed by Hitchcock through the use of obvious back projections during her horse-riding. In the scene in which she burglarizes her employer, the dissociation is displaced to the set: the screen is cut in half by the perpendicular wall of the office where the safe is, so that as we look at Marnie embezzling the money in one half of the frame while in the other half the maid cleans the other offices, it is exactly as if we are watching a multi-screen shot. This impression is reinforced by the circumstance that when Marnie closes the heavy door of the safe, the maid is not alerted by the sound, does not hear it. In the last shot, after the acting out, after reaching the trauma, Marnie and her husband drive into what was, at the beginning of the film, a painted background.

#### The Right of Return:

It is one of the merits of Burhān 'Alawiyya's film *Kafr Qāsim*, 1974, to have shown that if there is an Arab community of which the Palestinians are a part, the implication is not, as many Israelis would like the world to believe, that Palestinian refugees ought to be settled in the Arab countries to which they had been expelled; but on the contrary, that the other Arabs have themselves been exiled by the Israeli occupation—and this not because between 1948 and 1967 the West Bank was ruled by Jordan and the Gaza Strip was administered by Egypt. Iraqis, Algerians, Yemenis, etc., have been exiled by the Israeli occupation. 'Alawiyya appears to be concerned with giving back to the voice-over as an exiled voice—for example the voice of Egyptian president Gamāl 'Abd an-Nāṣir during his 1956 nationalization of the Suez canal speech broadcast on radio and reaching the Israeli-occupied territories in Palestine—not so much the body, its source, as a land, a country, without which even when incarnated in a

body it remains a voice-over.

The Israelis may well discover that it is not enough to grant the right of return to living Palestinians (according to the UNRWA figures, as of 30 June 2000, the total for registered Palestinian refugees is 3,737,494, of which 1,211,480 are in camps; they are divided between Lebanon: 376,472 [of which 210,715 are in camps]; Jordan: 1,570,192 [of which 280,191 are in camps]; Gaza Strip: 824,622 [of which 451,186 are in camps]; the West Bank: 583,009 [of which 157,676 are in camps]; and the Syrian Arab Republic: 383,199 [of which 111,712 are in camps]),<sup>73</sup> but that they have to grant it also to the ghosts of so many unjustly killed Palestinians either in their fiction or in haunted houses or ones rumored to be haunted. We Arabs, with so many internally displaced and so many unjustly killed as a result of the civil wars in Sudan, Lebanon, and Algeria, and of the repression of the Kurds in Iraq, etc., have we shown an openness to the right of return in our fiction? In Lebanon, ghosts, revenants, are repressed not only in reality, but also, largely, in fiction. The Palestinians themselves have to accept the right of return of revenants, of specters with unfinished business, of those Palestinians unjustly killed in an untimely manner. I write in part so that the dead would not be withheld the right of return.

#### **Presence:**

In Altman's *Vincent and Theo*, Van Gogh is shown twice trying to paint the field with crows. The first time the *presence* of the birds is signaled by the fact that although none can be seen, both we, the spectators, and he hear caws, this inducing him to paint crows over the field. Later in the film, he stands again facing the field. Holding a gun in his hand, he walks straight ahead and fires, to force the crows to manifest themselves, to become visible, to no longer remain a *presence*. The need to materialize the invisible *presence* is in many cases conjoined to the need to etherealize the obscene and obstinate substan-

tiality of the object the hysteric sees. The hysterical presence of an object fills everything, whether the object remains self-similar, for example the indefinitely-approaching face Mark Vonnegut saw during the schizophrenic episode he underwent; or metamorphoses, for example the tree root in Sartre's *Nausea*. What interests the hysteric, and anyone who feels excessive, even absolute presence, in a TV/film/video image is that the intensification of its presence has as a limit the degree of presence we normally ascribe to a flesh-and-blood person, this shielding him or her from the sudden excessive presence that persons and objects can have: each at the limit can totally fill the universe, overspread even to the extent of annulling the fuzziness due to Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. Should one deduce from the reports of schizophrenic and hysterical persons that the uncertainty principle applies only in a limited realm?

Many of the shots at the beginning of Fassbinder's *Despair* start with an in-focus plane inhabited by nobody to then rack focus to the plane where the protagonist is positioned. Appropriately, the protagonist soon becomes dissociated and has a double.

The smooth long pans of Dreyer's *Ordet*, some up to ten minutes long, where the characters never block each other, i.e., never create any off-screen within the frame, although continuous at the level of on-screen space are often discontinuous at the level of the off-screen: we suddenly discover the presence of a person we were unaware existed in that location (it sometimes feels that Dreyer's characters, who do not look at each other but look in other directions [*Ordet*, *Gertrud*], are following with their eyes such *presences*). The beginning and next-to-last sections of *Ordet*, in which the off-screen is continuous, show people looking for someone, while in the other sections, where the off-screen is discontinuous, i.e., where we may and often do suddenly discover the presence of a person we had reason to think is not at that locality,<sup>74</sup> nobody is searching for someone.

**The Absence of Ether, the Vacillation of Dimensions, and Excessive Presence:**

In the absence of ether, a *whole* horse can be perceived in a close-up mode. The whole horse is then bigger and closer than itself and largely divested of the background, and thus can act as a switch between two settings. We are no longer confronted with the close-up that changes the normal into the terrifying (Eisenstein: “A cockroach filmed in close-up appears as fearsome on the screen as a hundred elephants in long-shot”),<sup>75</sup> but are submerged by the startling becoming-close-up of the long shot.

Ersatz distance: a father driving a small truck converses in walkie talkies with his child seated in its back in Wenders’ *Paris, Texas*. True distance is experienced when things are perceived as separated from one by glass (when the protagonist of *Meshes of the Afternoon* throws a knife at the man sitting by her side, his face is not wounded, but rather shatters into mirror shards) or by nothing. He was feeling disoriented, looked at the servant and ordered her to fetch something. She could not move. He turned to fetch it himself, but as he tried to walk, he suddenly felt a shock and fell to the ground: he had hit against nothing/space! He stood up and tried again to move, but once again he hit against space. Looking at the servant, he saw her staring in terror in a certain direction. Dread filled him. He looked in the same direction, and he knew he was seeing death: an old man holding a child by the hand and leaning to one side in a mannerist pose. True distance: during an LSD trip, one felt that people standing across a playground were so remote that the most appropriate manner to reach them is to send them letters or to receive letters from them. This latter radical distance caused by the absence of ether makes things not far but beyond, even this side of the horizon. It alternates with, or is furtively at times simultaneously an absolute proximity. No other experience gives one such a verification that gravity is a warp in *space*-time, something that mitigates a more radical fall. He was apprehensive that her face’s fall

would not come to a stop at his face, but would go further—but how? In apprehension, he closed his eyes. He felt her lips on his cheeks. He opened his eyes. And then it happened: her face fell toward his face until he saw a hologram of it “inside his head.”<sup>76</sup> Her joyful exclamation in reaction to his telling this to her—“You feel that close to me!”—felt extremely foreign to him. There is no *togetherness* in the absence of the ether. He said: “It is an emergent proximity in an etherless space.” Unheeding, she repeated: “You feel that close to me!” In Van Gogh’s *Road with Cypress and Star* (May 1890) two men drive a cart down a dirt path hemmed by a field, while overhead blue clouds in vortices plow the sky. A very tall cypress cuts the frame of the painting in two regions: one is day, the other night.<sup>77</sup> In the foreground, two pedestrians belonging to neither day nor night, too close, outside both. The woman who managed to maintain the vampire with her till sunrise discovered what she had sensed the moment she encountered him: he is too close, outside both night and day.

At dawn, the vampire felt the sun become very close (Badham’s *Dracula*), indeed fall on him in the etherless space.

He was drawn to the object by a faint sound that became clearer as he approached. Or, rather, he localized himself in the etherless space in relation to that object by how clear and loud the sound was.

As far as I can tell, my cat is no longer of a definite size. Sometimes, it appears to be perhaps as small as either a cockroach or a rat; sometimes, as maybe as big as a lion. Entering the living room—this term increasingly strikes me as inopportune to describe this etherless enclosure where I continue to die before dying—I heard the cat make the characteristic predatory sound she utters when she has discovered a fly and is ready to spring on it. She was looking in my direction. For a moment, I was uncertain whether she saw me as lilliputian or whether she had already seen a small fly in my vicinity.

Space comes to the fore in relation to time when it is etherless.

Due to the absence of ether, and thus of a distinction between back-

ground and foreground, he did not feel on seeing someone walking inaudibly at the other side of the playground that the reason he was not hearing any footsteps was because they gradually become fainter due to the distance; rather, he felt that that person's steps were soundless.

#### **Varying Spectra:**

Occasionally the undead would see people and things as they are perceived by living humans' spectra. But in general, he saw parts of the bodies as they appear under a microscope, with the magnification differing on various occasions. Thus he frequently could see the microbes in her face and the pores in her skin.

In our encounter with most things, living or not, and events, our reduced sensory spectrum plays an equivalent role to that played by low temperature in the case of hibernating animals: it forces everything that exists, including ourselves, to hibernate. Undeath, with its extreme extension of the spectra, is the return of the repressed. The bat that had just awakened from hibernation was roused again from yet another hibernation for the person perceiving it (telepathically?) had extended his spectrum by the intake of a psychedelic. The extension of the spectrum is very risky because the power of the entity with whom it might put one in relation may reside in that additional part of the spectrum.

#### **Telepathy:**

If the difference in temperature  $\Delta T$  between the upper and lower layers of a fluid is small, we observe thermal conduction, a movement of heat through collision of molecules from the lower, hotter layers to the upper, colder ones, which is then lost to the environment. But at a critical value  $\Delta T_c$ , there is an onset of thermal convection. Prior to  $\Delta T_c$  the fluid was sensitive only to temperature gradients, but at  $\Delta T_c$  it suddenly becomes sensitive also to gravity. "A physico-chemical system can therefore become sensible, far from equilibrium, to

factors that are negligible near equilibrium."<sup>78</sup> The same could be happening in states of altered consciousness (attained through non-sleep, fasting, drugs ...), these far from equilibrium states of the mind. This could help account for telepathy, the sudden ability to sense a stimulus that was in normal states either not sensed or remained at the level of transient perturbation, whereas now, due to the very large *correlation length*, it has long term effects on behavior.

Ellen is telepathic. She tries from Bremen to warn Harker in Transylvania. Before leaving there, Harker had told his friends: "Take care of her." How can those limited to the local take care of the *telepathic*? Harker might as well have said to them: "Take care of me."

In *Potemkin*, Eisenstein edits "immediately—without transition—" two close-ups of a woman, in the first of which her pince-nez is intact, while in the second it is smashed, her eye is bleeding and her mouth is open in a scream. Eisenstein locates the import of this kind of editing in being an example of "an artificially produced image of motion," giving the spectator "the impression of a shot hitting the eye"<sup>79</sup> (the actual impacting of the bullet against the face cannot be seen except if the collision is shot with a stroboscopic camera that works at a speed of less than a millionth of a second, the kind Harold Edgerton uses). Actually the import of this kind of edit is that it gives the impression of short-circuiting the lag of about 0.05 second between the time when the bullet actually hits the body and the time when, impulses from the injured pain nerve cells having reached the brain, awareness takes place that the body has been hit. The jump cut should sometimes be used to implement the telepathy that consists in removing the delay between a modification in the periphery of the body and the consequent awareness in the brain. It is then that cinema fully becomes what Walter Benjamin took it to be, a medium of shock.

A shot showing a looking telepath may be followed by a shot that, although showing what he or she is seeing, is no longer a point of view one, since it has nothing to do with his or her actual angle of

view, position or distance with regards to the object. Thus the standard cinematic term *point of view shot* should be replaced by another, more general one that can apply to situations such as near-death, in which some patients have reportedly been able to see what is going on at a section of the hospital room not directly accessible to their vision.<sup>80</sup> For the duration of the telepathic episode, the shot of the telepath's face is frequently followed by a superimposition of his point of view shot and the shot showing what he is apprehending at a distance. The resulting *double exposure* makes both images overexposed if each image is rightly exposed: when in a normally lit room, vampires speak of the "too much light" there, of "the madness of the day" (Blanchot); and does not produce overexposure only if the two images are underexposed. This double exposure also often renders the illumination sourceless and nondirectional (in cases where the main light sources in the two images are directed differently), as it is in hypnagogic, near-death, and psychedelic states. The vampire walked only in dark places so that the cumulative light would be right for each of the two images. When the second of the two superimposed shots is in the future, one can say literally that the future illuminates the present and vice versa.

Serenity requires the absence of perturbations not only from the present but also from the future. By changing fast enough, one may equal or exceed the *escape velocity* from one's personality, evading the telepathic permeability of the present to the future.

In Bruce Baillie's *Castro Street*, the air current caused by the passage of a train in one shot undulates the grass in another shot on which the first is superimposed, this creating a shallow depth where the two superimposed shots function as the different planes of one shot, with what happens in one affecting what is going on in the other although it has little to do with it (nothing affects one in states of altered consciousness as much as what is *neither here nor there*), without there being *interaction*, nothing that would have acted as a carrier between the two

shots.<sup>81</sup> But as a condition for this deployment of telepathy between unrelated shots, whether superimposed (*Castro Street*) or not (Murnau's *Nosferatu*), the planes within each shot must gain a detachment from each other (even the reflections in Bruce Baillie's films seem to be, might be superimpositions).

Freud did not include one of the relevant case studies, Foresyth's, in his paper "Telepathy and Dreams." This should not be ascribed solely to psychoanalytical *resistance*. At least part of the material that deals with telepathy must remain elsewhere, and only *affect from afar*. Thus these papers on telepathy are not just theoretical works about it, but are already an instance of it.

In *Persona*, one of the two people who will become doubles keeps totally silent, acting as a suction for the words of the other. But that is only a first movement, for the indirect transfer of thought which takes place via spoken words from Alma to Elisabeth is complemented by a direct one in the reverse direction, a *thought-transference*, a phenomenon which was accepted and experienced by a number of psychoanalysts, including Freud and Ferenczi.<sup>82</sup>

In the beginning scene of Rouben Mamoulian's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the camera is identified with Jekyll: people speaking to him look at it. Therefore, even when there's a reversion to the traditional system where the camera is at times objective, at other times subjective, the camera remains, even when in the objective mode, contaminated by Jekyll-Hyde, who thus can know about events that he did not see but the camera witnessed.<sup>83</sup> This should have been the reason why and the manner by which Hyde knows about the visit Ivy Pearson renders to Jekyll. Unlike Stevenson's book, in which the two personalities, Jekyll and Hyde, "had memory in common," Mamoulian's film should have been about multiple personalities with an amnesiac barrier between them, for this would have made it clear that the formal identification of Jekyll with the camera in the first scene is *the* source and cause of the memory he and Hyde have in common in the diegesis.

Unfortunately, this is not the case in Mamoulian's film.

One must be careful when trying to simplify, since if one removes too much, one ends up with a matte and hence telepathic overinclusion. The same reversal is encountered in yoga, which while making it possible to suppress the senses at will establishes a new power over them: the possibility of passing beyond their limits, in the form of telepathy, clairvoyance, clairaudience, mind reading, etc. Inversely, only what is telepathic is surrounded by a halo: felicitously, before 1959, the blue screen traveling matte technique produced a blue halo around moving objects and frequently also around motionless ones.

With the passage in 1999 by the Lebanese parliament of a law that legalizes the ongoing practice of wiretapping phone conversations (only the president, ministers, and parliament members are exempted), it seems that in Lebanon the only kind of two-way telecommunication that can remain untapped is telepathy.

#### **Parallel Montage:**

Death happens on two planes, the reality/life one and the undeath one. Archaic societies had a minimal differentiation and separation between the two, hence to them any death is willed. For us, there is a distinction between the reality/life realm, where death not only can be natural or accidental but most often is so; and the undeath realm. We know now that *precision bombing* was an imprecise term to describe much of what took place in the Gulf War, since only 7% of the bombs dropped on the Iraqi forces in Kuwait and on Iraq were precision bombs. While I am highly impressed by the precision of the Tomahawk missiles fired from ships offshore hitting their targets in Baghdad, I am much more impressed with the Jacob Maker-Zoltan Abbassid-Cain of David Blair's *Wax, Or the Discovery of Television Among the Bees* (1992) moving in the undeath realm from Cain's time through 1818 and 1919 to 1991 to fire at an Iraqi tank at the exact second it was being fired at on another plane,

that of reality/life: a parallel montage to reach the dead just in time to kill him specifically on the undeath plane just as he is being indiscriminately killed on the reality/life plane. Only someone who died before dying can achieve that precise registration of the two planes. In comparison to this preciseness, the utter sloppiness of the American Forces' precision, since while they are precise on one plane they remain indiscriminate on the other plane. I am grateful to those who demonstrated against the Gulf War, but also and above all to Jacob Maker-Zoltan Abbassid, who killed two specific Iraqis on the other plane. David Blair redeemed these deaths, by making them singular, and for that his protagonist, Jacob Maker, and perhaps he himself, had to go through *every name in history* [including Fat Boy (the first plutonium bomb)?] *is I*. Notwithstanding American president George Bush and much of mainstream Western media, Şaddām Ḥusayn is not Hitler,<sup>84</sup> but Jacob Maker, a flight-simulation programmer in 1991, *is* Zoltan Abbassid, who died in 1919.<sup>85</sup> In gratitude to David Blair, a kindred spirit, even if "in gratitude" were in a lapse to become "ingratitude," even if on the death plane we were to betray each other.

Concerning a state of altered consciousness in which one found oneself in the past following a lapse and/or realized that one has left across a lapse, the expression "I can talk or write about it because I've been there" is misleading since one is still there. It is in this sense too that writing is not about experience: the altered state of consciousness is not only separate from one by lapses at entry and exit, but is also still going on, has not yet coalesced into an experience. There is thus something anticlimactic about the passage from the state of altered consciousness to the normal state. Indeed the period that "follows" the one of altered consciousness is both later than it and simultaneous with it: a credit, in the form of a parallel montage, that may allow one to replace, at least partly, imposition in the form of thought-insertion, compulsions, obsessions, etc., by reception. The one without guardian,

in the guise of a lama or a shaykh; or of a *hidden observer*; or of a writer connecting, unbeknownst to one or to both, to what is occurring to the one in the realm of altered consciousness; or of this credit period, represents a danger to *invariance*. Should one promptly commit suicide, since it seems that only this will by the same movement end the terrible plight of the version of oneself in the often terrifying realm of altered consciousness that one entered and then left across lapses? But, it is possible, even very probable, that by committing suicide, one merely loses that version's possible refuge from such a realm. My mother calls me in New York from Lebanon because she had a presentiment that some harm happened to me or might happen to me if I am not very cautious. I tell her nothing of the sort happened to me. But perhaps the premonition is about the version of me in a realm of altered consciousness, about the amnesiac Jalal. Guilt may be a signal that one is being lax in one's assistance to the amnesiac version of one in a realm of altered consciousness, whom one is moreover unconsciously attacking. How can I help him? Except for lamas, Šūfī shaykhs, and other such spiritual masters, it is not oneself but one's writing that can be the guide and guardian of the amnesiac version of oneself in a realm of altered consciousness struggling against the double and thought insertion. One has to help with writing, with what is received, including from the amnesiac version of one, who feels that he is creating nothing, receiving nothing, but only resisting ideas and sensations imposed on him by the double. An interference has to be produced between one's version in a realm of altered consciousness and oneself as writer, with oneself as person as the go-between (a dangerous position, as is manifest in Joseph Losey's *The Go-Between*). One should continue receiving from one's version in a realm of altered consciousness as long as one considers that what is being received is not issuing from an entity completely lacking not only in any consciousness but also any negative feedback mechanism, that one's amnesiac version has not been completely replaced by the double. Some use their fiction characters

and/or their amnesiac version in a realm of altered consciousness as the experimental sample, while they as writers become the control sample. Other writers use their amnesiac version in a realm of altered consciousness as the experimental sample, and their fiction characters as the control sample (not in the sense that their characters are normal people, but that they become the amnesiac version's guides/reference/hidden-observer).<sup>86</sup>

One can withstand the uncanny awareness that an unfamiliar event one has just experienced has already happened to one in an absolutely identical manner. One can also report such an awareness to another person. But to become aware that it has never stopped happening is to realize by the same token that one cannot directly report it to another. The one who has such a realization senses that he can never leave the location where he happens to be; that he has always been in it; that if he goes out it would be as another person; and that his knowing that another has remained there is not a continuous knowledge that passed with him through the threshold but something that he has received indirectly from the one imprisoned there by eternal recurrence. Even when it seems to me that I have absolutely experienced eternal recurrence as the deepest, most intensely felt experience of my life or death, it is still only something that has been indirectly received by me from someone who is imprisoned by his *one* experience: the horrified realization that he has always been where he happens to be and that he cannot leave from that unlocked place. The present of the eternal recurrence is the aforementioned realization, which is itself, this realization, what recurs each time in relation to either the same or a different scene/moment. An indefinite number of moments of realization of the eternal recurrence—"Oh! I've always been here!"—hence of moments that are not and cannot be transitive to form linear time must both exist, as refractory periods, and be occulted—i.e., one has to be amnesiac about them: at each a bifurcation occurs—in order for linear time to be constituted.

*Am I Dreaming?* is a less apt formula for dissociation than Harker's reassuring words to Mina before he leaves to Transylvania in Murnau's *Nosferatu*: "Nothing will happen to me." Is what happens to him later really happening? Superficially, in Transylvania, "the land of phantoms," he encounters only what cannot be met but only hallucinated, phantoms, with the consequence that all that happens to him there did not actually happen. More importantly, and in accordance with the above definition of Transylvania, Harker himself turns there into a phantom, one to whom nothing will happen, everything having already happened to him prior to his death. It would seem that Harker's life has become a state of thanatosis. Notwithstanding this impression, the spiritual master knows that, as with the entranced person who is registering no pain in the hypnotized hand immersed in ice-cold water while his second hand is reporting out of his awareness in automatic writing an ascending intensity of pain, *nothing will happen to me* is all along *everything is happening to me*, including lapses and the absence of time (which undo the present, the *is* in *everything is happening to me*). Indeed, sooner or later, the subject explicitly invokes the help of a spiritual master/guide/reference, having experienced the inversion of *nothing will happen to me* into *everything is happening to me*.

#### Bad Reception:

There are many forms of the inability to receive:

— An inability to receive receiving, whether in the form of a dissociation in the *amnesiac syndrome* between the capacity to learn and the patient's knowledge that he learned anything; or of Freud's unconscious affect, which affect can be received only *après-coup*.<sup>87</sup>

— An extreme closing, a turning off. The schizophrenic often fights death-as-undead with thanatosis in the form of catatonia.

— A total opening in death, where not only everything penetrates us, but also where that which penetrates us is itself transgressing its boundaries and throwing up itself in us (this emergency one feels

when everything around one is emergent from itself). Do not the concept and validity of receiving lose their meaning in death, since everything penetrates us then?

It may very well be that much of what I am writing about the state of undead will be enacted later, but by then I will no longer be able to think about it, to utter it, no longer able to write. *Strange* is not so much a word, as the reverberation of words' withdrawal. The living mortal has the chance to utter what the amnesiac version of him or her in a realm of altered consciousness cannot; to receive what will later be imposed. There is a radical difference between the reception during the writing process of thoughts as presents at the end of a perforation of a wall (*Distracted*), and the imposition of even arbitrary ideas on one in schizophrenia, hypnagogia and death, when *inevitable* and *particular* (or else *irrefutable* and *particular*), the two different meanings of *certain*, become one: *dead certain*. Even the ambiguity encountered in the Bardo state concerning whether things are real or illusory is imposed. This imposition can take the form of either ideas associating on their own (feeling the approach of schizophrenia, Mark Vonnegut wanted to be hypnotized by a friend, to wit to lose control to him rather than to autonomous thoughts); or a doubling in the mind, hence be by a double in the mind. Eisenstein: "The material of the sound-film is not dialogue. The true material of the sound-film is, of course, the monologue ... How fascinating it is to listen to one's own train of thought ... How you talk 'to yourself.'"<sup>88</sup> Eisenstein maintains his inner monologue outside any possession, multiple personalities with no amnesiac barrier between them, or the double-inside-the-mind thematic. Let us sidetrack this "train of thought" and the "of course" off course. The material of the sound-film is the monologue from which oneself is ever in danger of being excluded. If the dead don't think, it is because it is now language or their double that does *all* the *associating*. Bazin: "While analytical montage only calls for him [the spectator] to follow his guide, to let his attention follow along smoothly with that of the director who will

choose what he should see, here [with depth of focus] he is called upon to exercise at least a minimum of personal choice. It is from his attention and his will that the meaning of the image in part derives.”<sup>89</sup> Montage is important in films about hypnosis, doubles, and/or undeath because it can impose on the spectator first one interpretation, then one or more other interpretations that enter in contradiction with the first, as in Robbe-Grillet’s cinema.

Can what has stolen any reception from one itself receive (for example one’s style)? In most cases, this is tantamount to asking: can a black hole receive a particular entity when it reduces everything to just mass, electric charge and angular momentum?

#### **Coincidences(?):**

We aristocrats, who value distance and hence prefer chance connections, are not unaware that there is no pure chance.

6/24/1990. I enter for the first time Waverly Café in Greenwich Village. The place is crowded with people placing orders. I look for a banana-honey muffin. There are none left under the tag. I ask for a bran muffin. The busy employee asks: “Did you say ‘Banana-honey muffin?’”

#### **Absence of Sitting (Except while Sleeping):**

She said to the vampire: “You’re short.” How imperceptive! Unlike Ancient Egyptian seated figures,<sup>90</sup> the vampire almost never sits (Browning’s *Dracula*), but either stretches out or stands: indeed, the height of the dining room chairs in Nosferatu’s castle in Murnau’s film is that of a standing man. He is taller than most people, for they sit frequently—how short is a sitting body! At a café, late at night, he looked on and on at the section “Sleeping” in *Weegee’s New York, 335 photographien, 1935–1960*: the only sitting agreeable to him is that of people sleeping in seated positions, whether in bars; in cafes; behind the wheel of parked cars late at night (chauffeurs); between nightclub

acts (performers); on park benches or in crowded night shelters for the homeless.

#### **Close-Up:**

In a cinematic close shot of a specific hand, while we can witness what is particular about that body part, we no longer perceive to whom it belongs, and where and/or when it is at that moment. Similarly when the hand becomes a close-up in hypnosis, for instance in hand-levitation induction, it no longer belongs to the subject both because it is no longer subject to his will but to that of the hypnotist; and because as far as the hypnotized subject can tell, it undergoes changes that render it different from his familiar hand: longer or fatter or more hairy. The close-up achieved in life through hypnosis or meditation (“See the vase as it exists in itself, without any connections to other things. Exclude all other thoughts or feelings or sounds or body sensations ... Let the perception of the vase fill your entire mind”<sup>91</sup>) can, as in cinema, act as a switch between two different times and/or locations—the hypnotist repeated: “Where are you now?”

#### **Ruins:**

All the mirages he saw in the desert were of ruins.

I along with my two siblings and my mother deserted the family apartment during the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon. Did this make the apartment a ruin? Yes, and not because it was severely damaged and burned during the last days of the offensive: even after it was restored, it remained a ruin. The usual explanation of why what was damaged during the continuing civil war was most often not fixed or replaced is that people were reluctant to spend a large sum on what could any moment be damaged again or totally destroyed. But should we not invert the way we consider what was taking place? It was because these houses had become ruins by being deserted that the war got extended until they began to turn explicitly into ruins, to man-

ifest their being already ruins. Maybe the refusal of the Bustrus family to sell their house (Jennifer Fox's *Beirut, the Last Home Movie*) was due less to their obstinate nostalgia to never part with it, and much more to an apprehension that were they to sell it, it may be more readily deserted in a situation of intensive bombing by those who bought it, this ushering and completing its becoming a ruin. Will we one day learn how to live in a place without dwelling in it, so that the act of deserting it would not turn it into a ruin?

“The places I showed in *India Song* were on the verge of ruin, they were unconvincing, people said that they weren't habitable. But in fact if one looked closely at them, they were not so uninhabitable ... In *Her Venetian Name in Deserted Calcutta* these places are definitely uninhabitable.”<sup>92</sup> True? False?

— False, since in war-devastated Beirut many people lived in houses even more destroyed than those shown in *Her Venetian Name in Deserted Calcutta*. The real uninhabitable buildings in Beirut were the ones whose construction was interrupted by the unexpected hike in the exchange rate of the dollar in relation to the Lebanese pound.

— True, since the actors of *India Song* do not inhabit the characters who inhabit these places. “In *India Song* the actors proposed characters but didn't embody them. Delphine Seyrig's fantastic performance in *India Song* came about because she never presents herself as someone named Ann-Marie Stretter but as her far-off, contestable double, as if uninhabited, and as if she never regarded this role as an emptiness to be enacted.”<sup>93</sup> One of the risks of such a performance that introduces the double is that it is now the film itself that has to be double, that has a double: *Her Venetian Name in Deserted Calcutta*. And if the appearance of the double signals imminent death, then the latter film is not so much the portrayal of the death of the people and places of *India Song* (“the swallowing up by death of places and people is filmed in *Her Venetian Name in Deserted Calcutta*”<sup>94</sup>) as the death of the previous film itself, of *India Song*. And “let the cinema

go to its ruin.”

Ruins: places haunted by the living who inhabit them. When the Lebanese installation artists Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige write in their introductory note to their piece “Where Were You Between this Dawn and the Previous One?”, “We have met, we have dreamt Sarkis, Aida, Samer, Madam Habra, Elia and the others. Through their accounts, we aim to illustrate two faces of reality, the one with destroyed buildings ... where thousands of people and refugees used to live and continue living, and the other one with a family house which has been left after the owner's death. Occupied uninhabitable areas, and deserted habitable areas,”<sup>95</sup> should we not take their “we have met, we have dreamt Sarkis ... and the others” as indicative of the sort of uncertainty regarding whether one is dreaming that besets one on encountering a specter?

The ruin is not desecrated by the vampire, since he is not really there while he haunts it, as shown by his failure to appear in the cracked mirror at that location.

One has to see the disintegration of statues and ornamentation to know that it is precisely because it contains its memory in itself that organized matter cannot recreate the present. And that on the contrary it is voices which disappear, which are over (voices-over in this sense also) almost instantly and hence have no memory (of their genesis and dissolution) that can recreate the present. From *India Song* to *Her Venetian Name in Deserted Calcutta*, while the buildings and material objects became older, the voices did not.<sup>96</sup>

How provincial 1992 Beirut would be were it not for its war and civil war ruins. Through becoming ruins, some buildings that were landmarks of prewar Beirut are now its labyrinthine zone. What is site-specific about Lebanon? It is the labyrinthine space-time of its ruins, what undoes the date- and site-specific.

The demolished house left its marks on the walls of the adjoining building.<sup>97</sup> In these houseprints, one witnesses the inside turned into

an outside. One can imagine a Cronenberg character living in an apartment facing such a wall who one day, on coming home from work, sees that the building with such a wall has been demolished: that same day symptoms of the drive to turn the inside outside begin to manifest themselves in him.

It is in war-damaged areas that the disjunction between the street and the buildings lining it become the clearest, and this even when the street framed by the destroyed buildings is filled with bomb-punctured potholes and burned, overturned cars, for while buildings can become ruins thus labyrinths, streets cannot.

Suddenly one comes across a bas-relief in a war-destroyed facade, and it is as if one has made an archaeological find. But it is not really an *if*: such objects are truly, albeit possibly transiently, archaeological. The war-damaged city center is, at least transiently, part of the archaeological sites of Lebanon—as much a part of them as Baalbak, which is through its colossal structures (mainly temples) one of the most impressive examples of Imperial Roman architecture, and which contains the Mameluk mosque of Ra's al-'Ayn and the remains of a medieval city. In 1992, Dīma al-Ḥusaynī, then a fifth-year architecture student at the American University of Beirut, went, as part of an excursion by her class, to the destroyed city center, before the sandbag barricades were cleared and the area officially opened. The duty to look at the buildings from an architectural perspective and to position them within a mental map while the different regions were being mentioned (“This was Sūq at-Ṭawīla. This was Bāb Idrīs ...”) entered into conflict with the emotional reverberation of these names, and the second-generation memories, imbibed from her parents, they elicited. The too-many stimuli with which she had to deal during the excursion left the whole episode in abeyance, making it very difficult to take stock of what occurred. Later, in her home, she tried to recall what she saw. Instead of the destroyed, deserted city center, it was the city center of the memories of her parents, the colorful, populated city

center that sprang to her mind. It was with difficulty that she could recall the destroyed city center and superimpose it on the prewar city center. This corroborates that there is a very old past that the present of ruins itself secretes, for indeed in that case it is natural that it would be more difficult to remember the destroyed city center, which is maybe as old as Baalbak, in any case older than the 1940s, than to remember the city center imbibed through the memories of the parents, hence which belongs to the 1960s, 1950s, 1940s. It was only by the third or fourth visit to that area that she really felt that the destroyed city center was the reality—what facilitated this realization was her noticing the presence of refugees in some of the destroyed buildings.

Those who are reconstructing Beirut's Central District under the banner and motto “Ancient City of the Future” are oblivious that ruins secrete and exist in a past that is artificial, one that does not belong to history, was not gradually produced by it. All discourse on authenticity implies a suspicion toward, and prepares the ground for an attack on recent ruins, accepting only ancient “ruins,” archeological “ruins,” many of which while not restored are probably no longer ruins, no longer labyrinthine in their temporality and space.

One can preserve a war-damaged or crumbling building, but no one has any control over whether it will remain a ruin. I am fascinated by how and why war-damaged or crumbling buildings turn from ruins, with their idiosyncratic, often labyrinthine temporality, to that of more or less precisely datable structures in chronological time. The work of the American architectural firm SITE, for example Best Forest Building (Richmond, Virginia, 1980), where a forest seems to invade the building; and Indeterminate Façade, where a stack of bricks cascades through an indent in the façade, never achieves this idiosyncratic temporality, thus fails to produce ruins (and specters). While some of the war-damaged buildings had become subsumed again in chronological time, many were still ruins, and thus their

destruction was as irreverent as would be that of the archaeological ruins of Baalbak: because ruins exist in an anachronistic, labyrinthine temporality, they are instantly ancient. The physical destruction of severely damaged buildings to construct others in their place is sacrilegious not because they are eliminated as ruins: a ruin cannot be intentionally eliminated since even when it is reconstructed or demolished and replaced by a new building, it is actually still a ruin, that is, contains a labyrinthine space and time, this becoming manifest at least in flashes. Such physical destruction is sacrilegious because of the brutal unawareness it betrays of the different space and time ruins contain. It exhibits the same brutality that was shown during the war. The demolition of many of the ruined buildings of the city center by implosions or otherwise was war by other means; the war on the traces of the war is part of the traces of the war, hence signals that the war is continuing. We can detect whether a certain war-damaged building is a ruin by whether it is haunted (or reported to be haunted—is there a difference?), or induces fantastic or horror fiction. Whether Lebanon would be hospitable to the undead depends on whether some of the numerous war-damaged buildings are still ruins, with an anachronistic temporality.

Judging from what happened in Beirut's war-devastated city center, even ruins, thus labyrinths, can be bought and sold! Were the system that is presently in power, the capitalist one, to maintain its hegemony far into the future, then I project that even black holes, which while not psychological—except in bad horror films and novels—are spiritual, as is indicated by their temporality that is not limited to the chronological but is often labyrinthine, and which do not belong to the universe but border it, will be bought and sold by the universe's denizens.

Sometimes I have the apprehension that the reconstructions in Beirut's Central District are not real, that one day I may actually see them the way the protagonist of Kenji Mizoguchi's *Ugetsu Monogatari* (1953) perceives the exquisite mansion as a ruin on finding out that

the lover he meets there is actually a revenant; or the way, toward the end of Kubrick's *The Shining* (1980), Torrance's wife witnesses the hotel her husband was brought in to maintain as a ruin;<sup>98</sup> or the way in Herzog's *Nosferatu, the Vampire* (1978) the shots of Harker's trip and then visit to Nosferatu's castle are intercut with shots showing the castle as already a ruin. For as long as there still are war-damaged buildings in the Central District, one of the areas most severely damaged by the fighting during the civil war, such buildings will still evoke a counter to the enormous weight of the myriad concrete buildings that are being constructed in the rest of Beirut with no regard for urban planning. But some measure will have to be devised to counter and alleviate the effect of satiation by positivity that will happen when the whole of the damaged city is reconstructed or built anew. One such measure is to project at night, Krzysztof Wodiczko-wise, life-size images of destroyed buildings over at least some of the reconstructed ones. Another measure is to start screening on the day when the last building has been reconstructed the aforementioned three films twenty-four hours a day somewhere in Beirut, for example at the war-damaged Grand Theatre—until the images have so deteriorated that one sees only grains on the TV screens in the cinema vestibule or endless scratches on the film screen. I predict that when war-damaged buildings have vanished from Beirut's scape, some people will begin complaining to psychiatrists that they are apprehending even reconstructed buildings as ruins. While the imagination of disaster for a city such as Los Angeles, which has not already been reduced to ruins, is that of its destruction, exemplarily in an earthquake,<sup>99</sup> for Beirut it is fundamentally that of its revelation when reconstructed as still a ruined city.

While as physical structures doomed to reconstruction or demolition or slow deterioration, ruins quickly give us the impulse, if not the urge to preserve documents of them in photographs, video, or film, they nonetheless basically instance an architecture implicated with

fiction. For while I can reach certain facets of reality, explore them without passing through fiction, or psychosis with its attendant hallucinations, this revealing these subjects as documentary ones even if they are shot in fiction films; I cannot do so with ruins. There has to be a relay between documentary and fiction whenever dealing with ruins—or else a documentary on ruins has to continue with interviews with or a section on psychotics. Fiction has to reveal to us the anomalous, labyrinthine space-time of ruins; and, in case no ruins subsist for the ghost to appear, to supplement reality as a site of return of the revenant. In postwar countries, fiction is too serious a matter to be left to “imaginative” people. The ghost is often fictional, not in the sense that he is merely “1. a. An imaginative creation or a pretense that does not represent actuality but has been invented. 2. A lie” (*American Heritage Dictionary*); but in the sense that one of the main loci for his appearance is fiction, whether novels, short stories, films or videos. It is too dangerous after a civil war or a war, which produce so much unfinished business, for there to be no ghosts both in reality (haunted houses) and in fiction that builds “a universe that doesn’t fall apart two days later” (Philip K. Dick)—the current virtual absence of novels and films about revenants in Lebanon is one of the signs of a collective post-traumatic amnesia.<sup>100</sup> We are yet to witness the proliferation of a horror literature of ghosts and the undead (fiction may thus bring about a catharsis for the revenant and an exorcism for the living); or to hear many more stories about ghosts in Beirut once its Central District is inhabited, and not as now still largely unoccupied mostly because of the recession. Were neither of these eventualities to happen, then this would be a further instance of a post-traumatic amnesia, this time that of those who died prematurely and unjustly in the war.

#### Undone Circles:

In a state of altered consciousness, midway in a circular path, one

suddenly felt that there is a drastic distinction between the left and right paths, one direction becoming the good one, the other the evil one.

#### Labyrinth:

Both the man in the painting’s foreground and the diegetic painter in its background have their backs to the spectator. With some strain, the painter is turned toward the foreground figure, observing him in order to add the final touch to a canvas on which we see a representational rendition of his model also from the back! Although a straight line can be traced from the painter in the background to the figure in the foreground to the spectator, the two 180° over-turns undergone by the foreground figure, one away from the spectator he was facing and one away from the painter doing his portrait in the background, do not add up to 360° or cancel out, do not return him to his starting position: a labyrinthine circle.

The real labyrinth in Kubrick’s *The Shining* is not the physical maze in the grounds of the hotel, but the book Jack Torrance is writing, made of the same phrase *occurring* on and on, a writing in circles, a recurrent return to the same point (would the book’s title be the same phrase?). It is because Torrance is already lost in the labyrinth of the book that he is unable to find the exit of the physical maze. Fleeing his murderous father in the latter, Danny retraces his steps backward, at one point jumping to the side and hiding behind one of the hedges, so that his father, following his steps, sees them cease—beyond is virgin snow. Danny, who is telepathic and clairvoyant, is not dealing with a labyrinth, since he deals with a linear, although reversible, time: he sees the linear future and the linear past; and since at no point while retracing his steps backward does he either see or have the apprehension that he would witness them end abruptly.

The closed door of room 237, and the locked larder door of the kitchen, where Jack Torrance is imprisoned by his wife, are found

open, although none of the living occupants of the hotel performed the act of opening either. This does not necessitate resorting to the hypothesis that someone dead opened the door, but can be accounted for by the circumstance that we are dealing with a labyrinthine structure, where the inside is outside—and vice-versa: it is easy to overlook the circumstance that the *overlooking* shots of the credits sequence that begins *The Shining*, showing Jack Torrance's drive up to the Overlook Hotel, are part of the hotel.

One of Milton Erickson's induction methods, the *confusion technique*, which he uses when faced with the conscious interference or resistance of the subject, entails confusing the subject so much ("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* ...")<sup>101</sup> that he ends up complying with any leading statement ("Drop into trance") that would extricate him or her from the confusion. In Stoker's *Dracula*, the coach driving Harker to the castle keeps for a while going back and forth over the same spot, only then proceeding to the castle. Nosferatu says to Harker, "Enter of your own free will," only after the latter has been disoriented spatially by the back-and-forth episode and temporally by the lapse he had just undergone at the approach of the castle, and no longer knows where and when he is.

Omens and warnings almost always refer to the apparent threshold. There is a *false threshold* to the labyrinth: prior to it one is outside the labyrinth, *past* it one has always been in the labyrinth and can thenceforth be outside it only through it. The threshold between a nonlinear, labyrinthine time, for example that of the undead realm, and the mostly homogeneous one of conscious life functions as a

delimiting boundary only in homogeneous segmented time, thus is a one-way threshold.

Near the beginning of Roman Polanski's *The Fearless Vampire Killers*, the professor puts the skis on in the wrong direction: a crossing of the *imaginary line*. In Zemeckis' black comedy *Death Becomes Her*, the undead Madeline Ashton momentarily wanders with a 180°-dislocated neck: an over-turn. In *The Spider's Stratagem*, to the question of Athos' son about his father's three closest friends: "Dead?" Draifa answers: "Dead—no, they're alive," and she continues about the main enemy of his legendary father with the cunning phrase: "He doesn't live ... he rules." The reader of Dostoevsky's *The Double* may notice the even slyer usage of the metaphorical to hide the literal: "more dead than alive,"<sup>102</sup> and "He had no more life in him."<sup>103</sup> Warning that concerns the reader or spectator and not only the character: be cautious about the fact that you are noticing these warnings and omens of the labyrinth in the guise of jokes, parapraxes, and metaphors, since, unfortunately, such foreshadowings continue to occur even after you are already in the labyrinth, seducing you into both thinking that you are not yet in it and into continuing to interpret them rather than revert to an eclipse of meaning. With respect to a labyrinth, the only time when you don't need the warnings is when you don't notice them, since one notices these warnings only in the labyrinth. When lost, not only in space and time, but also in one's mind, one should stop following signs and landmarks, above all disregard the subliminal, what one glimpsed fleetingly at the edge of one's vision, or had a presentiment of, or vaguely sensed. An eclipse of meaning should occur.

If memory is supported by a spatial mapping (Frances Yates' *The Art of Memory*), then in the labyrinth one has an erroneous and defective memory, or else no memory at all.

The labyrinth unsettles the one "in" it, so that either he or she becomes explicitly lost to the lost others there, or else, as with the

vampire, who while at a certain location does not appear in the mirror there, even when he or she is apparently in a certain zone of the labyrinth, he or she is not in it. To be in a place without being in it (as is made manifest by one's absence in the mirror there), and vice versa: while not being in a place, to be in it—is this not a good definition of haunting? One is never fully in the labyrinth, but haunts it.

The pursuers of the undead soon separate from each other, usually by first dividing at some crossroads into two groups ostensibly to maximize their chances of finding him. If it happens that there is a pregnant woman among them, she will not encounter the undead until either she aborts her fetus from fear or some other shock, or else gives birth, whether prematurely or not, to her baby only to get separated from him. Why is it one encounters the ghost or the vampire alone? Why is it that when one is with others he or she does not appear? Is it necessarily because he or she is a subjective hallucination of the witness? Rather, it is because the ghost or the vampire belongs to the labyrinthine realm of undeath, a realm where people are lost, including to each other.<sup>104</sup> Therefore, the ghost of Hamlet's father, who is seen by Hamlet in the company of Horatio and two guards, does not really belong to the undeath realm. It is a different matter with the ghost in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Lucius responds to Brutus' offer that he sleep with: "I have slept, my lord, already." Brutus: "... And thou shalt sleep again; / I will not hold thee long ..." (4.3). Lucius plays music for a short time and falls asleep; it is then that the threatening ghost of Caesar appears to Brutus. We can be lost together in a homogenous space; not so in a labyrinth, where we cannot be together and consequently cannot be lost together. Now that he was lost to the others, the vampire appeared to him. He began running but failed to evade his undead pursuer although the latter was walking nonchalantly. This failure confirmed the space to be a labyrinth.<sup>105</sup> The circularity of time may still spare the pursued from the result of the circularity of space: he is still fleeing the vampire who has already

caught him; the pursued asked himself then: "Was my fatal encounter with the vampire a dream or a hallucination?" If a community can win over the vampire, it is not because each of its members can deploy his or her expertise and knack in their communal fight against the undead, since in the labyrinth, they are lost to each other and so "confront" the vampire alone; but because their different fragments of narrative (letters, ship logs, diaries, etc.), each of which does not and cannot form a unified narrative, allow the intercutting of a smooth story and consequently the establishment of a map. The letters, ship logs, and diaries reaching someone from the various people who have encountered the vampire alone in the labyrinth are a form of telepathy<sup>106</sup> (the tele- mode truly comes into its own only when the separation between messenger and recipient is a labyrinth, the message then reaching the recipient notwithstanding that the messenger was lost and will remain lost in the labyrinth). It is thus fitting that it is the telepathic Mina who assembles them. It is only once the edited chronological narrative and the map that goes with it have been established that a communal encounter with the vampire can happen.

In *The Spider's Stratagem*, the farewell Athos receives from the only other passenger to leave the train on which he arrived at Tara in the beginning shot of the film marks the temporal threshold beyond which there is no return: Athos should have at that point left henceforth labyrinthine Tara.

It is impossible to leave the labyrinthine realm of undeath. This impossibility can take several forms. I may not be able to physically leave: in Kubrick's *The Shining*, Torrance is fatally frozen in the snow in the physical maze that is part of the labyrinthine hotel. I may lose consciousness at the border, whether in the manner of Harker in Murnau's *Nosferatu*, who falls unconscious as he lets go of his too short rope dangling from the very high window of the otherwise closed castle; or, more frequently, by becoming entranced, so that not having any recollection of having crossed the border, I cannot be sure

that while outside the labyrinth, I, or a version or component of me, am not still inside the labyrinth. Or else, while it may initially seem to others that I left the labyrinth, shortly enough discountenancing indications signal that it is another who left it: thus in Herzog's *Nosferatu*, while it seems that Harker succeeds in leaving Nosferatu's castle, it shortly becomes manifest, through his failure to recognize his fiancée, his dreadful repulsion by consecrated wafer, his two fang-like teeth and his remarkable palor, that the one who left the castle is actually the vampire.

Death is not an issue out of the labyrinth.

#### **Transit Visa to the Labyrinth!**

The title of a May 2001 workshop organized by Lebanese video-makers Mahmoud Hojeij and Akram Zaatari, for which they invited seven persons from four Middle Eastern countries and from various fields (cinema, video, graphic design, etc.) to come to Lebanon, join two Lebanese, and make, along with these latter, each a one-minute video by the end of the workshop, was *Transit Visa*. Doesn't postwar Lebanon have anything labyrinthine about it? If it does, does it make sense to have a transit visa to it? Does it make sense to have a transit visa to a labyrinth? Isn't it impossible to leave the labyrinth? Doesn't the whole notion of having a transit visa to Lebanon imply that notwithstanding its war-damaged, ruined buildings it is not a labyrinth? Will the title of my coming, first feature film be *Transit Visa to the Labyrinth*? The film's three protagonists have to do with problematic vision: the filmmaker of *Phantom Beirut*, Ghassan Salhab, since his tracking shots from a moving car are not followed by reverse subjective shots, therefore do not indicate vision but the condition of possibility of recollection in Beirut; the video artist and producer Walid Raad, whose doctoral dissertation was (*A La Folie*): *A Cultural Analysis of the Abduction of Westerners in Lebanon in the 1980s*, who has come from New York to Beirut to produce a video on hostages, and

who on his visits to Hamra Street has himself blindfolded so as not to witness the unsightly urban fabric; and a vampire, who was intrigued enough by the video images of both war-damaged and reconstructed buildings sent to him by a Lebanese real estate agent to come to Lebanon, and who, dead, has no vision. When soon after arriving in Beirut, the vampire was asked: "Why did you come to Lebanon?"<sup>107</sup> he answered bluntly: "For ruins and blood ..." "I can understand that one would come to Lebanon for its war-ruins; but why would anyone come to Lebanon in 2002 for blood? The war and civil war have ended a decade ago!" "Like most Lebanese, you are overlooking the yearly ten-day commemorative event 'Āshūrā'. In a letter a writer sent me from Lebanon, he wrote: 'During 'Āshūrā', one again feels that one's body is a *jasad* (in Arabic *jasad* means "the body, with the limbs or members, [or whole person,] of a human being, and of a jinnee (or genie), and of an angel ..."; and *jasida* [aor.; *jasad*, inf. n.] means "It (blood) stuck, or adhered, *bibi* [to him, or it]; and it (blood) became dry").<sup>108</sup> Moreover, and as I was saying before you rudely interrupted me, I came to Lebanon also because 31.7% of the population in this country is under the age of 15 according to the latest United Nations' Human Development Report." The vampire tries to find his territory in this foreign city—while knowing that the dead are in a labyrinth, therefore unsettled, in permanent exile. On first meeting his employer, the agent was surprised: for some reason, he expected him to be older. Oddly, he found himself having this expectation at each of his subsequent meetings with the vampire. A few nights later, the vampire visited with him seven war-damaged buildings. He was not satisfied with any of them. But then he suddenly asked to see the interior of the reconstructed building that faced the last of these. Once inside it, he told the agent that he wanted to buy it. The agent exclaimed: "But you specified that you wanted a ruin! I don't think you should so quickly lose hope of finding what you wanted, a ruin." As the agent finished saying this, he saw in a flash



Jalal Toufic, Beirut

Walid Raad, New York:

I arrived in Lebanon on 10/23/1999. I was initially struck by the unsightliness of the nondescript architecture in much of Beirut. Almost all of those among the inhabitants of that city whom I encountered told me I would get habituated not only to the bad manners of its drivers but also to its architecture. One of them even volunteered: "You have to see not only the beautiful but also the ugly, otherwise you will never have the possibility of acceding to the abject and the sublime." "The ugliness of the majority of the buildings of Beirut is not of the sort that allows one to continue to see it: it is unsightly." When after a while I no longer complained about the latter, they thought that indeed I had gotten used to it. I began instead to nag about my new inability to write. My eyes were oppressed by the relentless mass of unsightly architecture and the constrictive arrangement of space, and so each time closed a little more. My initial impulse to use close shots to extract from these nondescript buildings something to see vanished. There came a day or night when my eyes had almost closed completely: "Though seeing, they do not see." (Matthew 13:13). Then, momentarily, light, which no longer served to illuminate anything, rather than as usual making things visible while remaining itself unseen, became visible for itself, shone and glared with an unmitigated brilliance. Did this brilliant light complete the blindness of the eye from overexposure? No. On 12/5/1999, there occurred for the Nietzschean and Deleuzian writer that I am a kind of minor reversal of Platonism: my eyes opened again in the magnificent Jeita Cave. After being oppressed for weeks by the lack of empty space in the city—the pavements occupied and the parkings jammed by vehicles, and the narrow roads often blocked by cars disregarding the one-way signs—to see empty space even inside a mountain! I felt again the desire and ability to write. I realized then that my writer's block was merely a symptom of my inability to see, and became aware how crucial vision is in my writing even when I am not addressing cinema or art or dance. Maybe with time, I would have resumed writing even without such an opening of the eye in the Jeita Cave, but my writing would have had to have changed radically, become linked to another sense: touch? Or would I, who does not smell except when people point out a scent for me, now smell (and consequently better remember)? I am considering starting a service in this country infamous for its hostage-taking that, for a reasonable fee, would provide incognitos who place over the passenger's eyes on his or her arrival to Beirut's international airport a blindfold to be removed only once he or she is in his or her apartment. It certainly would not be to simulate the conditions of hostage-taking in much of what used to be West Beirut, but so as to spare its users blindness on encountering so much unsightly architecture. What is preferable: that people see again at the risk of the resumption of a civil war to destroy so much revolting architecture? Or that they continue to be blind in the midst of the unsightly architecture?



At the airport, Walid Raad, the videomaker of *The Dead Weight of a Quarrel* Hangs, 1996-1999, and the producer through the Atlas project of *Hostage: the Bachar Tapes* (English Version), 2000, is approached by two men who place blindfolds over his eyes and put him in a car and drive him to the Union Building at Spears Street in Sanayeh. There, he thanks the two men, pays them a hefty tip and then ascends to his apartment. "In Beirut, I drive and walk only in Achrafieh, the Central District, and the Sodeco area." "Do these areas not include some ugliness?" "Yes, but not unrelenting unsightliness. When I have to move to another area, Hamra for example, I call the Blindfolds service, which was started by my friend Jalal Toufic. Why don't you too put blindfolds when in Hamra Street?" "Since as a film sound person I can see when there is sound, be it ambient—I can actually see better then—but not when there's the artificial silence that forms as one places one's hands over one's ears, I do my errands in Hamra Street ears covered." "What about you?" The addressee of this question, a writer, did not answer the question. Raad wondered how come being exposed to such unsightly architecture did not blind this visionary author? He later discovered that that person is a vampire, one who, as dead, did not see what was in front of his open eyes. Once, when he had to attend a meeting of an artistic association at the Hamra apartment of Saleh Barakat, the owner of the gallery Ajyal (General Affairs), the entire mobile staff of the Blindfolds service, two employees, happened to be sick. He tried hard to devise a way to go to the meeting without being affected by a loss of the ability to see as an effect of the unsightliness of the architecture. He ended up calling me for any suggestions. My recommendation was to walk there while videotaping all along the way with a camera having a black and white viewfinder, so that the act of seeing and therefore its consequences on him would be delayed till the viewing of the shots in actual color, and to later not looking in color footage, but tape over it. And that is indeed what he did. He walked to the meeting in Hamra while taping with a video camera, at several points even crossing from one side of this street with no traffic lights to the other while still looking through the black and white viewfinder. Then he gave me the tape. I taped over it my students' discussion with him following the premiere of *Hostage: the Bachar Tapes* (English Version) at my Video Art class at Université Saint-Esprit de Kaslik (USEK). "I now shoot two kinds of things: what I intend to possibly use in a video; and what I shoot with a black and white viewfinder precisely so as not to be exposed to the unsightly (shooting with a film camera would also do the trick, since in cinema, especially if one is not an excellent cameraman, vision happens truly only once the negative footage is developed, so that it suffices not to develop the negative—unfortunately, shooting in film is too expensive)." The wives of several of the artists who used the Blindfolds service soon developed a fetish for that contrivance: "I want you to fuck me with the Blindfold on."



one of the rooms as a ruin and the vampire as a very old man, and then the room appeared again in mint condition and the vampire again a youth. The vampire said: “Where are you now?” and the ostensibly reconstructed house appeared again as a ruin, with a few yellowish, rotting papers strewn on the floor. The agent picked up the closest to him. It showed the living room. He picked up a second photograph. It showed him in the building. He screamed: “But, I’ve never been here before!” While he was picking up a third photograph, the vampire remarked: “The moment you enter the labyrinth, you’ve been there before.” The agent let go of the photograph he had just glimpsed, uttered a scream and fell unconscious: the photograph showed him lying on the floor, blood on his neck. Several nights later, feeling a powerful urge to sustain himself on blood, the vampire went out in search of a prey. He took with him a wind-up toy as a bait, placed it on his table in the café and then started looking at a book full of reproductions of Hans Bellmer’s doll works. Around an hour later, a woman came and sat on the chair next to him. Notwithstanding his repulsion by the stench of pubescents, in the unavailability of a prepubescent the drive for and addiction to blood was simply too strong to resist. He was on the point of engaging in a fascinating conversation with her to lure her to his lair and attack her, but quickly desisted as he espied a prepubescent girl enter the café. Fifteen minutes later she approached him, and asked him if she could play with the toy. He thought that courtly love (*amour courtois*) can still exist—towards prepubescents. When he looked at a prepubescent, he could feel the prepubescent’s irreplaceability without the latter having to pass through death. If we continue to be irreplaceable once we reach puberty and can reproduce sexually, it is no longer from a biological standpoint, but in the Christian marriage—once we understand *till death do us part* to imply following the spouse to the undeath realm and being parted from him or her by the labyrinth there; and, more generally, in that as mortals we are already dead (even as we live):

while people can fatally sacrifice themselves for me, i.e., lose their lives for me, no one can experience *every name in history is I*,<sup>109</sup> i.e., my replaceability in death, in my place. The vampire asked the prepubescent girl: “What is my name?” “I don’t know. I will call you ‘M.’” “Hum, why ‘M?’” “Because you are a Mister.” “What is your name?” “Elsa.” “Elsa, the abbreviation of ‘Mister’ is ‘Mr.’ not ‘M.’<sup>110</sup> I will give you the toy if you successfully parse these sentences for me.” He opened the entry *al-mushtabāt* (The Desired Female) in Muḥammad ‘Alī al-Tahānawī’s *Mawsū‘at kashshāf iṣṭilāḥāt al-funūn wa-al-‘ulūm* (Encyclopedia of artistic and scientific terminology): “‘*inda al-fuqahā’ imra’a yarghab fīhā al-rijāl wabiya bint tis’ sinīn wa ‘alayh al-fatwa. Wa ‘an al-shaykhayn anna bint khamis sinīn mushtabāt idha ishtubīyat mithlubā. Wa ‘an Muḥammad anna bint thamānin aw tis’in mushtabāt idha kānat ḍakḥmah kamā fī al-Muḥīṭ kadhā fī Jāmi’ al-asrār*” (“In the opinion of the [Moslem] jurists, she is a woman craved by men while a girl of nine years—this is the decision of the law respecting this matter. And in the opinion of the two Shaykhs, a girl of five years is desired if she is desired in like manner. And in the view of Muḥammad, a girl of eight or nine is desired if she is large, cf. both *al-Muḥīṭ* and *Jāmi’ al-asrār* [The compiler of secrets]”).<sup>111</sup> She started to do it. When she finished, he told her: “Notwithstanding that you made two mistakes, here’s the toy.” He gave her the wind-up toy. He then opened his notebook and jotted down: “While I tend to agree with what Jalal Toufic wrote in *Distracted*: ‘To let the house crumble until there remains a wall. A wall cannot be demolished. The one who tries to demolish it turns into a normal person, becomes himself a wall. To perforate the wall. The dangerous necessity of becoming a rat ... Perforation should go on until one reaches the most terrible, best hidden of all walls: one’s teeth. The teeth themselves must get perforated, become ones through which the universe circulates’; I would, fetishistically, except the uneven teeth of prepubescent girls.” He looked up at her to see her uneven teeth again. He discovered that she had already broken the

toy. He liked that they were metaphysicians and theoreticians, these prepubescents: “The overriding desire of most little brats, on the other hand, is to get at and *see the soul* of their toys ... On the more or less swift invasion of this desire depends the lifetime of the toy. I cannot find it in me to blame this infantile mania: it is the first meta-physical stirring ... He [the child] twists and turns the toy, scratches it, shakes it, bangs it against the wall, hurls it on the ground ... finally he prises it open ... But *where is its soul?* This moment marks the beginnings of stupor and melancholia” (Charles Baudelaire, “The Philosophy of Toys”).<sup>112</sup> He looked at the works in front of him in the book and saw the same pattern of disjointed limbs. He felt erotically aroused. On some excuse, he got her to come to the reconstructed war-damaged house he had purchased in the Central District, and placed his lips on her neck, and felt first the warmth of her skin. He then sucked her blood. Satiated, he let go of her. But then as he glanced at her again and saw the blood still seeping from her neck, he again felt aroused. He licked the line of blood flowing down her neck until he reached her nipple; he bit her there and licked the blood that jutted out.<sup>113</sup> Since in the unavailability of a prepubescent the drive for and addiction to blood was simply too strong to resist, a fortnight later he sucked the blood of a woman. A few nights thenceforth, she told him: “Yesterday night, on seeing a man walking alone in the street, I had the compulsion to drink his blood, i.e., I already saw myself attacking him. It appears that in compulsion, one is late not so much in relation to one’s plan but to the action itself, so that it is no longer an issue of deciding whether or not to do it, but of catching up with what one somehow has already started doing. And indeed, I threw the man to the ground, leapt over him, and sucked his blood. *The moment of his death escaped me, really, because even at that moment, and even after—yes I can say even after—I can say I could not find the slightest difference between his dead body and mine. I could find only resemblances between this dead body and mine!*”<sup>114</sup> “Then you have seen nothing since then,

nothing.” “You’ve given me *the malady of death*.” “Would you like to go to the premiere of Jalal Toufic’s video *The Sleep of Reason: This Blood Spilled in My Veins* at Madina Theatre or would you prefer to stay ‘here’ and read?” They opted for the premiere. While waiting for the film to begin, he said to her: “I am relieved that Beirut is not as crowded as I thought it would be.” “Given that you are frozen still during the day and are aroused only at night, I do not find it surprising that you would find Beirut, or for that matter any city, not crowded.” “I was worried that the seemingly empty Central District would be even more crowded with revenants than the rest of Beirut is with living people.” During the scene of the butchering of animals at a slaughterhouse, many people left. Following the video, the vampire overheard one person then another remark that the video was unbalanced. He became clearly annoyed. When she asked him why he was so annoyed, he answered: “I have noticed that the majority of spectators are not sensitive enough to the uncanniness of certain statements, for instance to the two epigraphs that open the video: ‘On the authority of Hudhayfa and Abī Dharr, may God bless both: The Apostle of God, may God bless and save him, would say on going to bed: “In your name, O God, I die and live;” and would say on waking up: “Praise be to God, who hath revived us after putting us to death, and to Whom is the Resurrection”’ (narrated by al-Bukhārī, in *Al-imām an-Nawawī, Gardens of the Righteous*) and ‘Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up (John 11:11),’ either because they take them figuratively; or because they implicitly, unconsciously correct the author, substituting for the strange original statement what they think the author must have meant (to most spectators of *Hiroshima mon amour*, Duras must not have really meant: ‘You have seen nothing in Hiroshima. Nothing,’ but something along the lines of: ‘[Given that you are a foreigner and/or that you were not in Hiroshima during or in the aftermath of the nuclear explosion, etc.,] you have seen very little in Hiroshima’—they actually think that one

of the great authors of the twentieth century was unable to write exactly what she felt should be written); or else because they have gotten used to the institutionalized interpretations of these by now canonical statements. If one is not sensitive enough to the uncanniness of its two epigraphs, then the eruption of a traumatic real in the video, namely the protracted slaughter of the animals, especially of the second cow, would indeed eclipse the other sections, including those in which the uncanny statement(s) appeared, thus giving the spurious impression that the video is unbalanced. I fully excuse and condone people's leaving the cinema during the slaughter of the cow, but I would have liked to also see at least one spectator leave on reading the video's epigraphs, John 11:11 and the tradition regarding what the prophet Muḥammad used to say on going to bed and on waking up." Unable to find any good dancers in Lebanon, the vampire went to see a musical whenever one was playing: this night, one of his favorites, Vincente Minnelli's *An American in Paris*, was showing in a cine club. Unfortunately, during the projection, he was annoyed by the persistent conversations and comments of many of the Lebanese spectators. When one of these inconsiderate talkative spectators went to the bathroom during the projection, the vampire followed him. After finishing urinating, the man began washing his hands. He looked at the vampire and said: "An awful film, don't you think?— anyway, I don't care for dance and musicals." "If by *awful* you mean 'commanding awe' then, yes, it is awful. But how come you came to watch it if you don't like musicals?" "My new girlfriend is a dancer. She insisted that we watch this film, one of her favorites, together. How could I refuse the earnest request of someone who the night before had exclaimed to me: 'You cannot believe, in fact I myself cannot believe how much I love you. I love you more than I love myself! I want to accompany you all the time.'" "What is your name?" "Sāmī.... Do you like dancers?" "Yes." "What is it that attracts you about them?" "Well, for one thing, that we are both threatened in the

contemporary world. 'The desire of contemporary masses to bring things "closer" spatially and humanly' (Walter Benjamin), which is one of 'the social bases of the contemporary decay of the aura,' would mean that dance and also death will increasingly come under attack in an attempt to do away with them since they are almost the two last loci of the aura, and thus of distance—one is never totally with the dancer or the undead who are elsewhere, in an altered realm.<sup>115</sup> Are you familiar with how a film is fabricated?" "Yes, I work in a TV station." "You must know then that you should keep your mouth shut since your voice is not part of the soundtrack of this film that does not subscribe to John Cage's aesthetics. You shouldn't talk when you're watching a film, because it should be like having a dream or like death: one finds oneself in these alone." At this abrupt turn of the tone of his interlocutor and his implying that he was dead, the man intuitively turned away from him towards the mirror and saw there only his own reflection.<sup>116</sup> When he turned back toward the vampire to check whether he was still there, he was taken aback to see instead a wolf, who leapt on him and sank his fangs in his neck (the animal is not mortal; but a human, who is a mortal, can have a becoming-animal in his or her death). Suddenly he was high up in one corner of the bathroom watching impassively a man whose back was to him being attacked by a wolf. When he woke up the next morning in his bed, he tried to dismiss the events of the previous night, thinking to himself: "It was only a dream or a hallucination." But when he looked out of the window a few minutes later, he saw the passersby walking in slow motion. He wondered: "Am I in a movie?"<sup>117</sup> He heard a voice behind his back whisper clearly: "If you are, then one way of averting being surprised is to reach the stage of rushes, since the breaks between them are not perceived as jump-cuts." Despite his dread, he managed to turn, but found no one. He turned back toward the window: the passers-by were frozen, as in Minnelli's film.<sup>118</sup> There were two clear differences between a tableau vivant and what he was

seeing: the people seemed definitely dead, and the objects in the street and even the passing cat had a jittery movement and therefore were out-of-focus. He felt dizzy. He called his boss at his mobile phone to report that he is sick and would not come to work. His boss did not answer. But a little later, he began to hear the ringing of a phone. Strange: it was not the familiar tone of his cellular phone—the only phone he had. Anxiously, he looked for his phone and was confirmed that it was not ringing—meanwhile the ringing continued in the apartment! Such a ringing comes as it were from a realm outside the dream of the dreamer. By its insistence, it reveals to the one who hears it how much his or her seeming going along with life is itself insistent, how insistent is his or her continuing belief in mundane reality despite so many signals that should make him or her think otherwise. Suddenly, the ringing stopped. Fearing to stay alone, he called his girlfriend and asked her to come and stay with him for a few hours. She promptly came. Notwithstanding her nightshift, she offered to remain with him, but he declined her offer. Readying herself to leave to work, she put on make up in front of the mirror. He looked out of the window; again, he saw people walking in slow motion. He screamed her name. She turned toward him. He pointed to the street and was on the point of saying that people were walking in slow motion, when he noticed that they were now walking in a normal way. He apologized for startling her. She smiled compassionately, then turned back to resume her make up. But now, it was her turn to exclaim: her image in the mirror was not facing her, but still looking in his direction.<sup>119</sup> After she left, and despite his dread, he went back to the same cinema, The Scene of the Crime, to try to understand what happened the previous night. Strangely, when he tried to order a ticket for the double feature playing that night, Duras' *India Song* and *Les Enfants* (*The Children*), he was unable to utter the words, so that he had to point to the two films' posters. Obviously, this time he did not talk during the projection. Indeed half of an hour into *India Song*, he was seized by

A Film by  
MARGUERITE DURAS  
JEAN MASCOLO  
JEAN-MARC TURINE

# Les Enfants



Axel Bogousslavsky

Martine Chevalier

André Dussollier

Daniel Gélin

Tatiana Moukhine

Cinematography by Bruno Nuytten  
Original music by Carlos d' Alessio

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anxiety and paranoia as he saw that the on-screen protagonists too did not open their mouths. What a coincidence: why was it on this singular day on which he unexpectedly found himself unable to talk that this cinema was playing, of all films, *India Song*? He rushed to the bathroom, to be away from these speechless characters and to take a tranquilizer and wash his sweaty face and hands. He heard the vampire's voice: "Sāmī, turn toward me." He turned but found himself still facing in the same direction, away from the vampire.<sup>120</sup> The vampire continued: "He, an undead, with his back to him, turns toward him, but his turn is overturned by an over-turn, so that he continues to look in the original direction. Do you know the beginning of T. S. Eliot's *Ash Wednesday*: 'Because I do not hope to turn again / Because I do not hope / Because I do not hope to turn / Desiring this man's gift and that man's scope / I no longer strive to strive towards such thing / (Why should the aged eagle stretch its wings?) / Why should I mourn / The vanished power of the usual reign? / Because I do not hope to know again / The infirm glory of the positive hour / Because I do not think / Because I know I shall not know / The one veritable transitory power / Because I cannot drink / There, where trees flower, and springs flow, for there is nothing again?'" Later that night, at "his" ruin, the vampire performed a ritual for his new victim that allowed the latter to talk again. "Thank you for making it possible for me to speak again! For a moment yesterday while you were sucking my blood, I thought that you would go all the way and kill me!" "Are you sure that you're presently alive?" The vampire's interlocutor was seized by anxiety and remained momentarily speechless. The vampire resumed: "The dead cannot talk until they go through the ceremony of the Opening of the Mouth. What one sees in *India Song* are dead people who have not gone through such a ceremony." In one sense, one cannot be completely sure at any moment that one is not dead: since one is always entranced at the entrance of death, and so always finds oneself

already at the other side, which at first (for one minute, ten minutes, a week, several weeks ...) seems to be more or less the same world that one left (albeit with intenser colors, etc.), I never immediately think that I must be dead. It is rather through a series of eerie, otherwise unexplainable happenings that I come to the conclusion: "I must have died." And indeed the vampire's victim came in this manner to this conclusion and felt that he was henceforth existing on borrowed time. When the vampire met his victim a few nights later to go to a cinema to watch Paradjanov's *Sayat Nova*, he exclaimed: "Die on!" Back at the vampire's ruin, the vampire told him: "For a number of years, Paradjanov's *Sayat Nova* was not screened because of extrinsic reasons: the repression by the Soviet regime with its credo of social realism in the field of art and cinema, etc. But films are not seen sometimes for intrinsic reasons, and this time their invisibility is not to be decried. 'You have seen nothing in Hiroshima, nothing': this statement from Alain Resnais' *Hiroshima mon amour*, said by the Japanese man to the French woman, applies to the film spectator, who is performatively withheld his or her vision by it, as much as to the female protagonist, who is or becomes part of the community of the surpassing disaster, and thus is affected by the withdrawal of tradition and things past such a disaster. From *Sayat Nova* on, Paradjanov's films are not seen because the jump cuts recall the spectator to his or her inexistence in an atomistic universe of renewed creation. I want to recall you to your nonexistence: look at the mirror." And indeed, on looking in the mirror, the vampire's interlocutor did not see himself. He felt vertigo; he did not know where exactly he was: whether in the ruin or not. "How disorienting and strange: while looking at the mirror, I do not see my reflection there, and therefore I feel that I don't have a body, indeed that I don't exist at all; and yet I've never been so aware of my body, because ever since the night you mortally sucked my blood, I vertiginously feel that I am indefinitely falling. Indeed I am experiencing now additionally the vertigo of the

contrast of these two vertiginous experiences, one indicating that I have a body, albeit reduced to a cadaver, an endless fall; and the other implying contrariwise that I don't have a body! I assume you too feel this kind of vertigo constantly?" "Yes. None would have experienced as strongly Spinoza's 'no one has yet determined what the Body can do ... the Body itself, simply from the laws of its own nature, can do many things which its Mind wonders at' (*Ethics*, II: 142.5–13) as Christ in the same body as Jesus, a human mortal, thus someone whose body is virtually a cadaver. Among the things he would have experienced is an indefinite fall; indeed he died one of the kinds of death most linked to gravity: hung on a crucifix (the right panel of Francis Bacon's *Three Studies for a Crucifixion*, 1962). We are heavy because we live on a rather massive planet and because we are virtually cadaverous mortals; it is only the latter that is our intrinsic weight. Do you know anything about black holes?" "Very little." The vampire headed towards his bookshelf. As he passed the mirror on the wall, neither he nor his interlocutor appeared in it. He took out a book, opened it and began reading from it: "What is the distance from the horizon to the singularity? .... Since the singularity is so small,  $10^{-33}$  centimeter, and is at the precise center of the [black] hole, the distance from singularity to horizon should be equal to the horizon's radius. You are tempted to calculate this radius by the standard method of dividing the circumference by  $2\pi$ . However, in your studies on Earth you were warned not to believe such a calculation.... space can be so extremely warped near the singularity that the chaotic region might be millions of kilometers in radius though only a fraction of a centimeter in circumference ..."<sup>121</sup> Similarly, while the human corpse is physically less than three meters long, one can fall 'in' the cadaver indefinitely." "Did you feel vertigo when you were alive too?" "Yes, and I remember the first time I felt it. It was not while standing on the balcony of some high-rise but when I read about the relativity of motion. But, back to black holes, since one doesn't leave (the subject

of) black holes easily. In the summer of 1995, the Lebanese artist Ziad Abi al-Lami' distributed a written request to the other 44 participants in the collective Šnāyi' Garden project,<sup>122</sup> asking them to grant him a space of  $30\text{ cm}^3$  in each of the 23 projects being prepared: to actuate his own intervention. While some granted the request, many refused it. Indeed two of the participants felt offended by it. Maybe their refusal stemmed from an obscure feeling that they had not yet produced the outside that has to do with their artwork, its outside (for instance the crows of Van Gogh's *Wheatfield with Crows* or the matted birds with markedly electronic sounds of Hitchcock's *The Birds*), an outside without which it cannot remain consistent; and therefore that it was premature to add his alien outside. My qualm with the move of Abi al-Lami' is that it tends to imply that the anomalous element has to be provided from outside, that the artwork does not itself have it, when in fact any 'universe that doesn't fall apart two days later' (Philip K. Dick) manages to avoid this eventuality precisely because it contains in itself its own zone(s) where it breaks down ('in' our physical universe, in the form of black holes with their singularities where the curvature of spacetime becomes infinitely large and spacetime ceases to exist). Does one encounter, hit against an impossibility in the creation of a universe? Yes, but that does not mean that it is impossible to create a universe, but rather that each universe contains ipso facto an impossibility. The other participants in the Šnāyi' Garden project, including the two who refused Abi al-Lami's request, were doing the same move in relation to nature: works of art are in a sense these ' $30\text{ cm}^3$ ' that artists request or impose on the universe, inserting through them in nature something that does not belong to it, for instance the over-turn. Isn't *Reproduction Prohibited* a ' $30\text{ cm}^3$ ' (to be precise,  $75 \times 65\text{ cm}$ ) space requested or imposed by Magritte on the universe or at least on nature, which does not contain over-turns? Our world is consistent enough not only to subsist for more than two days but also not to fall apart with the introduction through artistic and literary works

of what is *out of this world* (in both senses, literal; and idiomatically informal: ‘extraordinary; superb’)(would our world fall apart as soon as the Gnostic alien Savior appears in it?). Sophisticated as they are, artists and writers should try to ‘build a universe that doesn’t fall apart two days later’ (Philip K. Dick; cf. Nietzsche: ‘I teach you ... the creating friend, who hath always a complete world to bestow’) and then try to avoid credulously becoming sucked totally in it (Nietzsche again: ‘It is necessary to disperse the universe, to lose respect for the whole’).<sup>123</sup> Attempting to break up and disperse a universe (a gesture one finds in Marcel Duchamp, John Cage, and Abī al-Lami’s proposal at the Ṣnāyī‘ Garden project) presupposes a universe that doesn’t fall apart on its own two days after its creation—I do not think that this had already happened with the participants in the Ṣnāyī‘ Garden project; consequently, it was too early to disperse. The percentage of successful universes, ones that last for more than ‘two days’ is no greater in the physical universe than in fiction and art: a plethora of the *baby universes* that appear in the physical universe do not have enough consistency, and so disappear in less than ‘two days.’ What can resist, and resists the expansion of globalization is not the local of every country, but the universal of artistic works, which present each a universe that is not part of the expanding universe in which humans materially live but borders it.” Along his initiation, the vampire’s latest victim soon felt the need to find a dancer, one who can be in a place and simultaneously not in it but elsewhere. It was now clear to him that his girlfriend was no real dancer. He visited several dance companies, but was dissatisfied with them. Did he in the absence of real dancers in Lebanon try to recreate the impression they induce of being superimposed on a different backdrop than the one where they ostensibly are by going out with a weathercaster, given that the background against which the latter provides her forecast is keyed in? Yes. He managed to lure her to the reconstructed building that was given to him by the vampire, and which gave onto the gutted and shrapnel-

poked Grand Theater. Standing with her at the window, he wondered aloud: “How many more bombs will it take to produce in Lebanon not just holes in buildings, but a hole, however small, in reality, a tear in reality itself, so that it would no longer be seamless and so that there would be a crack in it à la that in Bergman’s *Persona*?” (As he finishes saying this, the camera would pan to the mirror, where the vampire does not appear, is a hole in it.) When she came back to consciousness, she felt famished. She headed to a restaurant. She felt relieved that it was not as crowded as usual, for she was presently feeling hypersensitive to sounds. She stood in front of the counter to order. She felt nauseated by the smell of the food—a smell that she would have found exquisite before. One Lebanese man, then two others, then a fourth came and stood before her to order. Notwithstanding the presence of three seated customers, one of the two men standing in front of her looked back and said: “It’s empty tonight!” His friend agreed. She felt anxious that they were not seeing her, and that that was because she no longer existed. She rushed to the bathroom and looked apprehensively at the mirror there: she appeared in it! She was relieved that the disregarding behavior of the four customers at the counter was to be attributed merely to the Lebanese’s common uncivilness. She spent the next few nights “with” the vampire. When her fiancée met her next, she was so anemic she had to be rushed to the hospital. He waited in the hall outside the emergency room. He could see from one of the windows a man outside pacing back and forth. Every time he would pass a certain spot in front of the facing house, the automatic light would come on, then be off again once he had moved away from that spot. After a while, that man headed to the emergency room to check the condition of the father he brought in shortly before. When the fiancée looked from the window again, he saw another man pacing back and forth. He was unsettled by the phenomenon he next saw: the light did not turn on when that man passed the same spot in front of the

house. He thought with jealous admiration how unselfconscious, how withdrawn that man must be for even light not to detect him. In the coming days, the fiancée was to discover that that man was a vampire. A few nights after her discharge from the hospital, the weathercaster was back at the vampire's house. He said to her: "Do your weather forecast." "Here? With no blue screen or maps?" "Yes." She began moving her right hand across the air, stopping it momentarily and pointing at certain invisible marks: "In Beirut, it is 82°F (high: 82; low: 63); in Tehran: 84°F (high: 84; low: 72); in Esfahan: 84°F (high: 84; low: 52); in Paris: 57°F (high: 70; low: 57); in Berlin: 57°F (high: 59; low: 52); in London: 61°F (high: 63; low: 61); in Bremen: 61°F (high: 66; low: 54)...." She looked in the mirror and was hypnotized by the absence of the vampire in it. His response was: "They have eyes, but do not see." Then he, who continued not to appear in the mirror, asked her: "Where are you now? In London? Bremen? Transylvania? Lebanon?" He bit her on the neck and began sucking her blood. At this point the latter's fiancée rushed in: "At long last I found you!" The vampire's mocking response was: "Where?" The lover ran toward her body, touched it, waved his right hand in front of her eyes to ascertain whether she was dead, then shrieked: "You've killed her!" Given his hypersensitivity to the micro-movements that announce a gesture, the vampire not only followed with his eyes, but also predicted all macro-gestures—except one: that of the movement of the hand in front of the eyes of someone to check that he does not see. The moment the fiancée stopped waving his hand, the vampire regained his seeming vision, tunneling just next to him. Instinctively, the fiancée repeated the same waving gesture but now in the direction of the vampire. The latter's eyes suddenly become glazed, and once more he no longer saw. Regaining his composure, the lover said to the vampire: "After all, as you must know, the dead cannot see." Unseeing, the vampire responded: "Insensitive that you are, I cannot reciprocally tell you: you have seen nothing in Beirut, the

site of a surpassing disaster, nothing." While continuing to wave his left hand in front of the vampire's eyes, he reached for a dagger with his right hand and stretched it toward the vampire's back and stabbed him deep inside the region of the heart. *We stab the dead*, those subject to over-turns, *in the back*.

*Transit Visa?* Does the ghost, who does not stay in a place but haunts it and who is thus the in-transit being *par excellence*,<sup>124</sup> need a transit visa? It does not seem to be the case: while on their respective arrivals on the platform before the Elsinore castle in Act I, Scene I of *Hamlet*, first Barnardo is told by Francisco at his post: "Stand, and unfold yourself" (to which Barnardo responds: "Long live the king"); then Horatio and Marcellus are ordered by Francisco: "Stand, ho! Who's there?" (to which Horatio responds: "Friends to this ground," and Marcellus elaborates: "And liegemen to the Dane"); the ghost is not asked to "stand, and unfold" himself when he appears on the platform. The dead is not with us in the same space, nor for that matter in the same country: while the vampire ostensibly standing with us is revealed not to be in our company through not appearing with us in the mirror; the ghost is shown not to be with us through troubles in communication, which is thus revealed to be not a local, in-person one but actually a telecommunication with the beyond, indeed a telepresence (of what no longer has a presence):

*Two remote audiovisual conferencing set-ups are linked across continents (Elsinore, Europe, and Beirut, Asia) through the internet. Barnardo, Marcellus, and Horatio await the arrival of the signal. "We have tried this set-up twice already, most recently yesterday. We got a signal only for a short period: the second time for the span during which 'one with moderate haste might tell a hundred'; the first time for somewhat longer. Then it broke off." After a few minutes' wait, a signal appears.*

*Enter the Ghost*

MARCELLUS

Peace, break thee off. Look where it comes again.

BARNARDO

In the same figure like the King that's dead.

MARCELLUS

Thou art a scholar, speak to it, Horatio.

BARNARDO

Looks it not like the king? mark it, Horatio.

HORATIO

Most like: it harrows me with fear and wonder.

BARNARDO

It would be spoke to.

MARCELLUS

Question it, Horatio.

HORATIO

What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,

Together with that fair and warlike form

In which the majesty of buried Denmark

Did sometimes march? by heaven I charge thee, speak!

*The signal becomes gradually weaker.*

...

Stay, speak, speak. I charge thee speak.

*By this point, the signal has become too jumbled and weak, drowned in noise.*

MARCELLUS 'Tis gone and will not answer.

*They tinker with the computer and soon enough the connection is reestablished and the signal is clear again.*

*Enter the Ghost*

HORATIO

But soft, behold, lo where it comes again!

...

Stay ...

...

O speak.

BARNARDO ... 'Tis here.

HORATIO 'Tis here.

*The signal again becomes too weak and blurred and then is off.*

MARCELLUS 'Tis gone.

When Horatio asks the ghost of the late king to speak but the latter doesn't talk, the scene looks very much like one of the initial experiments in using the internet to establish a live audiovisual communication between individuals in various countries or continents, the sound signal failing to reach Horatio although the image does (to Hamlet's "Did you not speak to it?" Horatio answers: "My lord, I did; / But answer made it none: yet once methought / It lifted up its head and did address / Itself to motion, like as it would speak ..."). Yet even if the ghost fails to articulate properly his linguistic message; or moves his lips but his voice is not heard at all by his interlocutor; or his words are drowned in some eerie rumble so that his interlocutor does not get what he says; or the connection is off frequently, his mere appearance conveys all by itself an important part of his message, namely that there is something wrong, indeed rotten in the family, or the village, or the country, or the world (commenting on the ghost's appearance, Marcellus says: "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark"). Isn't Lebanon, a country that underwent fifteen years of civil war as well as foreign invasions and numerous massacres, haunted? How can the Lebanese live normally when their government's debt is the highest among all rated sovereigns according to the international credit rating agency Standard & Poor's, and is expected to increase from the estimated 163% in 2001 to at least 170% of GDP in 2002; when according to the 24 August 2001 Middle East edition of *Le Monde* (p. 3) around 150,000 Lebanese emigrated in 2000 from their country, whose total population is a mere 3 million; when Israel, the country at Lebanon's southern border, has a warmonger, Ariel Sharon, as premier; when Iraq, a fellow Arab country, is still under barbaric sanctions; when Elie Hobeika, who was the head of the Phalangists' intelligence division in 1982 and who was blamed by Israel's Kahan Commission for personally directing the slaughter of hundreds, possibly thousands of Palestinians in the Šabrā and Šātīlā refugee camps between 16 September and 18 September 1982, served

three times as a minister in various postwar Lebanese governments, and was for a number of years the member of parliament for B'abdā; when religious sectarianism is still entrenched in the population even after fifteen years of civil war; when wiretapping is legalized and the use of car pollutants is condoned; when there is a flagrant remissness in enforcing a livable urban plan, etc. According to Deleuze, one of the characteristics of “the crisis which has shaken the action-image [and which] has depended on many factors which only had their full effect after the [second world] war” is “events which never truly concern the person who provokes them or is subject to them, even when they strike him in his flesh: events whose bearer, a man internally dead, as Lumet says, is in a hurry to extricate himself.”<sup>125</sup> This is the price that the Lebanese are paying for giving up the ghost, for the repression of the revenant now a decade after the war. When the ghost is banished or repressed, people turn into zombies, act insouciant in the weirdest and most alarming of situations. Henry Miller: “Once you have given up the ghost, everything follows with dead certainty, even in the midst of chaos” (the opening line of *Tropic of Capricorn*). After vast catastrophes, we need the ghost to keep implying to us by his mere haunting how rotten is the country where we live (when Hamlet returns from his encounter with the specter, Horatio asks him: “There’s no offence, my lord.” Hamlet answers: “Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is, Horatio, / And much offence too”), and thus prevent us from turning into zombies. In postwar Lebanon, Rwanda, Cambodia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, etc., the survivors are faced with the following choice: either they tolerate the ghost, resist the temptation of repressing or banishing him, or else they gradually turn into zombies (in the Haitian sense). With its unjust death of King Hamlet, Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* deals with this alternative. Prince Hamlet’s words to his mother in her closet characterize her as a zombie:

HAMLET (*to his mother*)

... Ha! have you eyes?

...

... Sense sure you have,

Else could you not have motion, but sure that sense  
Is apoplexed, for madness would not err,  
Nor sense to ecstasy was ne’er so thrall’d  
But it reserved some quantity of choice  
To serve in such a difference. What devil was’t  
That thus hath cozened you at hoodman-blind?  
Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,  
Ears without hands or eyes, smelling sans all,  
Or but a sickly part of one true sense  
Could not so mope.

As Hamlet finishes describing his mother as a zombie,<sup>126</sup> the ghost of his late father appears. We are thus provided with an occasion to witness the cause of her state as zombie: she has repressed the ghost (and hence does not see him).

*Enter the Ghost*

HAMLET

Save me and hover o’er me with your wings,  
You heavenly guards!—What would you, gracious  
figure?

GERTRUDE

Alas, he’s mad.

...

HAMLET

How is it with you, lady?

GERTRUDE

Alas, how is’t with you,  
That you do bend your eye on vacancy,  
And with th’incorporal air do hold discourse?

### Letters:

Mina establishes a unifying chronology from the journals and letters of the different characters. The incorporation of separate accounts into one narrative is an act of confession: Jonathan's desire for Dracula's brides and Seward's desire for Lucy are disclosed. Van Helsing: "We have told our secrets." These confessions, though, hide that a more fundamental secret is being hidden, for the different fragments, like different shots from different angles, are being used to edit around all the objective inconsistencies in the chronology and space. This remains a secret to them, that they confessed their mundane secrets precisely to hide more basic secrets: the inconsistencies in reality. If only the community, rather than any one individual, can conquer Dracula, it is not because each can enlist his specialty in the fight,<sup>127</sup> but because the differing points of view permit the intercutting of a smooth story that does away with the inconsistencies to be otherwise met in the world. Gregory Waller writes that by divulging the letters and diaries, "the limitations of each individual perspective are exposed"<sup>128</sup>—but this only in order to replace them by the limitation of the community's perspective. The risk of a certain kind of telepathy is that it can extend the frame of what each person can perceive so far beyond its usual limits that the inconsistencies that are part of the world (or rather that are not part of the world, since they appear when one withdraws from the world or when the world withdraws from one) show up.

In a vampire novel, the narrative device of the letter/diary/journal/ship log allows the author to avoid showing us whether the vampire thinks or perceives at all: we are shown the others' point of view of the vampire—at least until they are entranced by him and suffer posthypnotic amnesia.

In films that underscore the theme of telepathy, a letter does not so much serve to convey information to others—since they would telepathically have a hint of what is happening—<sup>129</sup> as to create a distance between its writer and the space-time where he is located<sup>130</sup>—as if the

one writing a letter can be reached only by a letter.

### Counterfeiting:

*Singin' in the Rain* starts with a witty disjunction between star Don Lockwood's glorifying narration of his first years in cinema and contrasting flashback images. There is a radical difference between the secrets or lies that are part of a living person's history, especially that of a star, and the counterfeiting that is not dealing with history, with the past, but with the late, the dead, yet is in a way no less objective. In Billy Wilder's *Fedora*, the film producer Barry Detweiler comes along thousands of other mourning fans to pay tribute to the recently dead movie star Fedora laid in her coffin. While waiting in line, he recalls his recent brief encounters with her on the island of Corfu. His flashback ends with his seeing her photograph on the front page of a Greek newspaper and being informed by a native that the headline announces her death. The second part shows his search for the truth of the late Fedora. To the dead applies not only *from dust* [of stars] *to dust* but also from superposition of probabilities to superposition of probabilities. The same way the kind of measuring device inflects the result in quantum mechanics, the personality of the one doing the search inflects the truth of the late. The producer now "discovers" that the corpse in the casket is not Fedora's but that of her daughter, Antonia, who looks exactly like her mother; that Fedora, after a disastrous surgical operation, was deformed and became unrecognizable; that with the death of a certain Countess Sobryanski, Fedora impersonated her; that Antonia impersonated her mother for the reception of an Oscar from the president of the motion picture academy; and that it was Antonia who acted Fedora's last three starring roles. All of this discloses nothing about the historical truth of the living Fedora. History is always of the living and for them. At the level of the historical past, what the producer saw in Corfu was the case: Fedora's doctor managed to arrest her aging; she was the guest

of Countess Sobryanski; and she had forgotten about her one night stand thirty years earlier with the producer, then a mere assistant on the set. Between historical recollection and the counterfeiting regarding the late, there is the caesura of Fedora's death. "Who is Athos Magnani? ... A traitor or a hero? ... What was the real story of Athos Magnani?" That is the question around which *The Spider's Stratagem* revolves. Historically, most likely he was actually what the other citizens of Tara believed him to be: a martyr assassinated by fascists. Certainly his story was transfigured on its way to becoming a legend with elements from *Macbeth* and *Julius Caesar*. But from the perspective of his son's attempt to know the truth of his late father, Athos Magnani is a traitor. "Why did he betray?" Because his son's search for his story after his death inflected that story given that the son did not stick to history: we are to expect such a posthumous influence in the case of the late. *The only good traitor is a dead traitor*, not only because that is the one traitor that is not dangerous to us; but also, essentially, because every dead is a traitor, first and primarily to himself or herself. The dead traitor is the only traitor I do not condemn, and not because death would have been his punishment already but because every dead is a traitor. Unlike *Fedora* and *The Spider's Stratagem*, and notwithstanding its problematization of how little can be really known about a person, *Citizen Kane*, which starts with the implicit question "Who was Kane?" ("You've got to tell us who he was"), sticks to life. One can envision a film in which following the joint deaths of an "immortal star" and her maid, a living person goes about his investigation of who they were differently, exploring the late in the case of the maid, but sticking to history in the case of the star. The film would thus confirm that the latter is immortal.

In Agatha Christie's *Murder on the Orient Express*, Poirot propounds two solutions to the murder. One of these sticks to history, while the other follows the late. According to the first, the murderer joined the train at Belgrade or Vincovci, changed into a Wagon Lit Uniform,

mortally stabbed Ratchett at quarter past twelve, then left the train before it got stuck in a snowdrift at half past twelve. The dead Ratchett changes into the heinous criminal Cassetti, who is, according to the second solution, killed by the twelve occupants of the Calais-Stamboul coach, who are avenging the murders the latter committed. It is appropriate that in Christie's book the Armstrong case, in which Cassetti and the other twelve passengers are implicated, is mentioned posterior to the murder; it is a weakness in Lumet's film adaptation to have started with the section on the Armstrong story, since this later establishes Ratchett as already Cassetti even before he is murdered. Beginning from the end, from the found corpse, to then reconstruct what happened does not find its necessity in the procedure of deductive reasoning, for the latter can be applied, as in Poe's *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* and in some of the Sherlock Holmes stories, in a projective way toward the future. It has its reason in the forgery that affects the late. The bad forgery perpetuated by Lumet makes of Poirot's first solution an artificial one induced solely by humanitarian, hence extrinsic, reasons.

The criterion to differentiate between those who search for the truth of the late—whether directly or by interposing someone to replicate him or her, someone who has therefore to get to the latter's truth—to sense his or her reversion to a superposition of probabilities (with the one that gets actualized determined or at least largely inflected by the particularity of the person looking for the late's truth or—in such cases the same thing—trying to imitate them); and those, dogmatic, who search for the historical truth of the dead is that the latter project any unsettling discovery about the dead person back to the historical past.

#### Secrets:

If light is not just inimical to the vampire, but can indeed destroy him, this is not simply because it is what renders manifest: if it did

only this, it would not destroy the secretive, the one who remains hidden even when manifest—as is made clear by his non-appearance in the mirror at the location where he is ostensibly standing with his interlocutor (this revealing the latter's perception to have been a *positive hallucination*). Light, what renders visible, manifest, can destroy the vampire, the secretive only because light is simultaneously the paradigm of the secretive (and not just in the case when it comes in excess, blinding, hence maintaining in the secret).

The first version of this secretiveness was Lorentz-FitzGerald's theory of contraction. Trying to save the ether wind theory, George Francis FitzGerald explained the negative results of the Michelson-Morley experiment, 1887—the light speed is constant—by postulating that the ether wind puts pressure on a moving object, causing it to shrink a little in the direction of the motion, the contraction increasing as the object's speed approaches the speed of light. The contraction would be just enough to keep the speed of light constant: the ether wind contracts the arm of the interferometer pointing into the ether wind, so the reduction of the velocity of the light traveling into the ether wind and back cannot be detected (a secret). This theory cannot be tested by measuring the length of the apparatus to see if it shortens in the direction of the earth's motion, since the ruler would also shorten in the same proportion. Lorentz also postulated that clocks would be slowed down by the ether wind, and in just such a way as to make the velocity of light always the same.<sup>131</sup> The theory became known as the FitzGerald-Lorentz contraction theory.<sup>132</sup>

The contemporary version is the double slit experiment: a very weak coherent light—one photon at a time—moves from source to detector, between which is a screen with two very tiny slits, at A and B. If B is closed the photon goes through the open slit. The same if A is closed. When both are open and we do not know through which slit the photon passed, there is interference. If we put detectors at A and B to be able to tell through which hole the photon goes when

both holes are open, interference no longer occurs. We can have interference only if the path the photon took remains a secret to us.

The quantum Zeno effect: an unstable particle, which has a known half-life when we apply intermittent observation to it, does not decay when a continuous observation is supposed.<sup>133</sup> Observation has to have refractory periods for there to be change since the latter happens in secret. Gilles Deleuze, writing on Bergson: “You can bring two instants or two positions together to infinity, but movement will always occur in the interval between the two, in other words behind your back.”<sup>134</sup>

#### Are You Sure I Saw It?

While Dreyer's *Passion of Joan of Arc*, which consists mostly of close-ups, is constructed through looks and eye directions, his next film, *Vampyr*, tackles the impossibility of looking and/or the undecidability of whether an act of vision is taking place. In the fourth shot, Gray moves a few steps away from an inn's glass door and looks up. The next shot is a pan of the roof that continues with a tilt down and ends with Gray entering the frame that was supposedly his point of view shot. Hence, as early as the sequence formed of the fourth and fifth shots, one is witnessing either:

— A dissemination of vision, Gray looking at himself, one expecting that an explicit dissociation or out of the body experience or hypnagogic state will be undergone by him, since these states make it possible for someone to witness what otherwise he or she cannot see.

— Or else an impossibility of vision, the fifth shot revealing itself to be an objective one rather than a point of view shot. The two-shot sequence would then serve to caution the film spectator not to take a shot of what is before the open eyes of the vampire as the view of the vampire, to wit of the dead, not to forget that the dead cannot see. It seems that Dreyer was aware that this cautionary measure will either be overlooked or else prove inefficacious, so he made the dead addi-

tionally blind. After sucking the blood of Leon in the garden, “the figure turns its head irritably and stares at the newcomers with the dead eyes of a blind person.”<sup>135</sup> A shot of Gray and Gisele, who have come to rescue Leone, follows. How strange that the spectators who consider the scene toward the end of the film in which a shot of Gray in the coffin is followed by his point of view shot as anomalous do not hesitate to take the aforementioned shot of Gray and Gisele as the point of view of the blind vampire! But that the vampire should have a point of view shot is more paradoxical than that Gray laying in the coffin should have one, for what’s taking place in the latter’s case could be similar to what occurs in zombie and tetrodotoxin poisoning cases: paralysis of motor functions with retention of consciousness.<sup>136</sup>

It is not obvious that the ghost sees, at least in the normal way, through the eyes; it may be that he sees through the voice he utters. Therefore prior to beginning to talk to prince Hamlet, the ghost of King Hamlet does not see him; he sees him only as he speaks to him. He sees him with his speech. While in Shakespeare’s *King Lear*, and Godard’s filmic adaptation of it, it is matter of looking with one’s ears (King Lear to the blinded Gloucester: “A man may see how this world goes with no eyes. Look with thine ears” [4.6]; Cf. “The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man’s hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was” [Shakespeare’s *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, 4.1]), in his *Hamlet* it is a matter of looking with one’s speech. If we ask the ghost to speak, it is less to hear his message, for we always intimate more or less what he has to say (Hamlet: “O my prophetic soul!”), but so that he would reciprocally see us through his talk (even if in his characteristically askew way). So the question is not only whether one will see the ghost (Queen Gertrude: “To whom do you speak this?” Hamlet: “Do you see nothing there?” Queen Gertrude: “Nothing at all; yet all that is I see”); it is also whether he will see us.

In a number of scenes in *Vampyr*, the cycle of shot of a person

looking/point of view shot/shot of the same person looking is short-circuited. As Gray enters a cluttered, dust-covered room and looks ahead, the camera tracks laterally to an empty coffin and beyond it to a placard with the inscription “Doctor of medicine.” The camera then swish pans from the latter to Gray moving away. Vision remains uncertain without a return to a shot of the looking person, and thus without re-claiming. It is not only the spectator who is unsure whether Gray saw the inscription before he moved away: the uncertainty extends to Gray himself. It is a secret even to him whether he saw it.

The vampire becomes definitively dead only when a measurement collapses all but one of the possibilities to which the late reverts, actualizing it alone. Unfortunately, regarding the vampire, it is easy to mistake a positive hallucination for a measurement: in Browning’s *Dracula*, on looking from Mina speaking with the vampire to the mirror, the doctor sees her talking alone.<sup>137</sup>

Since the undead is not really there, only layered on a location, and thus not clearly localizable, his victim’s look is awry with respect to the abstract line the film spectator traces between vampire and victim. In some future vampire film, the first section, which takes place in some postwar city (Sarajevo, Beirut ...), and in which all the characters are still living, should digitally incorporate several long-dead actors who interact seamlessly with the contemporary living ones. In the subsequent section, which takes place in Transylvania, with only living actors but with some of the characters now undead, the gazes should frequently be askew. As Harker moved, the gaze of the vampire moved with him, but always remaining at an angle, awry. It accompanied him but at an angle, hence accompanied him while not accompanying him.

In Wenders’ *The Wrong Move* (1985), a medium shot of a girl sitting in a train and looking is followed by a shot of a train seat stained with blood, then by a medium shot of the adult male protagonist sitting at

the opposite window and looking in the direction of the stained seat. Whose point of view was the shot of the blood stains on the seat? Not children in common, but point of view shots.<sup>138</sup> This is also the case between the disciple and his spiritual master, even, or rather especially, when the former is dead.

In *Last Year at Marienbad*, a shot of five people looking in different directions is followed by a point of view shot, which is followed by the same shot of the five people still looking in the same directions. This induces a strange memory since it is not clear whose point of view the interpolated shot was. The uncertainty is not merely that of the spectator but belongs to the diegetic world: any of the five can remember what the point of view shot showed if not in actuality then de jure. Thus, even those of the five who could later have affirmed that they were looking at something else then—perhaps all five will earnestly affirm this—will nonetheless probably have the impression that they are amnesiac about something.

In one scene in Fritz Lang's *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*, Baum gets hypnotized by (the already dead) Mabuse. The shot of Baum reading at the beginning of the scene is intercut with shots of masks, skulls, and a painting with distorted faces. These are gazing at Baum, from the same point of view, since the reverse shot, showing Baum, is from the same angle irrespective of the fact that the direction of the eyes of these objects, located in different sections of the room, is not the same. *Ça vous regarde*: 1. it concerns you; 2. it looks at you. Such conjunction is misleading, for it is only when something *qui ne vous regarde pas* [which does not concern you] intrudes on you that *ça vous regarde* [it gazes at you], you simultaneously losing the possibility of looking: the vision of Baum becomes impossible as the objects in the room gaze at him going deeper and deeper into hypnosis. The indifference of what is seen to the direction of the look indicates that in Baum's state of altered consciousness, it is not the eyes that gaze but the whole face, indeed the whole body.

A black hole is invisible. Nonetheless, it can be detected since it exerts a gravitational force: Cygnus X-1 consists of a visible, normal star orbiting around an invisible object. Similarly, the vampire is not visible in the mirror, but his presence can be detected by the attraction such a hypnotic absence of an image exerts on the look of the other, reflected person. While standing with Nosferatu in front of a mirror in Herzog's *Nosferatu*, the gaze of Lucy, who is to the left, is attracted to the right side of the mirror although there is no image there (while the vampire's gaze, since he has no reflection and since the camera has been positioned in place of the mirror, seems to be and is in fact directed at the film spectator).<sup>139</sup> This blankness is a blind spot in the mirror, turning the latter into a quasi eye. Therefore, like the eye, the mirror has a refractory period, and consequently evinces a *persistence of reflection*: Magritte's *Le Soir qui tombe*.

In Wenders' *The American Friend*, a stranger proposes to Jonathan to kill someone for a large sum. His reply is: "You must take me for somebody else." Later, a frontal tracking shot of Jonathan going to meet the same man in the airport is followed by a tracking shot, at the same pace, toward Jonathan sleeping on an airport couch. The latter shot could be Jonathan's point of view. In which case, we are witnessing a dissociation. This dissociation marks the decision to commit the crime.

The suspended movement and awry looks of people in Edward Hopper's paintings are the effects of a gravity-induced slowing down of time and bending of light. Many Hopper paintings empty of any human presence seem to be the points of view of the persons looking off-frame in some of his other paintings. If, nonetheless, there is a strong sense of the absence of vision in these points of view, it is due to the extreme slowing down of the rate at which the light reflected off these objects reaches the human figures, up to its suspension. The virginity in Hopper's work is not to be found in nature, but mainly in this delay that suspends the look so that the painted view as a point

of view is nonetheless seen first by the spectator of the painting.

We are moving toward a telepathic era, one that deals with matting and overlay, which means we are increasingly turning blind to the immediate environment, over a section of which is superimposed the blank monochromatic matte. In Buñuel's *The Phantom of Liberty*, 1974, the parents, who have been asked to come at once to the school because their daughter was kidnapped from her classroom, stand there with the superintendent and the teacher reviewing the circumstances in which the kidnapping occurred, while the daughter, standing in the same room, is chided by her mother when she interrupts the adults' conversation. The parents *and their daughter* then go to the police to report on the continuing disappearance of the daughter and to ask that the police find her. These two scenes show a response that will be, with the mounting use of mattes, much more frequently encountered: the person one is perceiving in the same space-time with one is treated as overlaid, hence as not really present there.

#### **The Emperor's New Costume, Or the Case of the Missing Mask:**

A fear so pervasive it blocks even the hypnotically dissociated part from performing automatic writing.

The conversing guests were moving their lips soundlessly. Was his state of altered consciousness distorting what he was seeing, the soundlessness of the conversations either a subjective visual illusion, or the result of his projecting his fear onto others? Or was it revealing to him the others' constant fear? Were they scared without knowing it, and even as they laughed and talked? Seeing them, he was reminded how when horrified one opens one's mouth to scream but cannot utter the shout. Their soundless conversations are a scream, one as expressive as that of the vice-consul in *India Song*, and as that, implied, of the wounded woman in Eisenstein's silent film *Potemkin*. He, like the protagonist of Munch's *The Scream*, placed his hands over his ears.

The inability to scream caused by fear is the beginning of a deafness.

Fear makes one unable to speak—even in the form of the interior monologue.

Seeing the vampire at the end of the corridor leading to his room, the guest was so terrified he could not utter the scream. Needles to say, the bite of the vampire was acupuncture that released his scream.

David Pirie is set in his *The Vampire Cinema* on correcting mistakes. He mentions that a number of early shorts have wrongly been included in vampire filmographies: *Vampires of the Coast* (1909), *The Vampire* (1911), *The Vampire's Tower* (1913), *The Vampire's Clutch* (1914), *Vampires of the Night* (1914), *Tracked by a Vampire* (1914), *A Village Vampire* (1916). Many of these movies used the term "vampire" in the sense of vamp, femme fatale. Yet he writes on page 46 of the same book: "Later he sees a snowy-haired wrinkled old woman and watches her being handed some poison by the village doctor." It is the other way round in *Vampyr*: the vampire hands the doctor the poison bottle. On the same page, the caption of a still of Gisèle (played by Rena Mandel) tied in the vampire's lair reads: "Leone, the vampire's victim in Dreyer's *Vampyr*, is played by Sybille Schmitz." What sloppy work from someone whose mediocrity shields from fear and its effects! Jean-Louis Schefer writes: "In Dreyer's film, *Vampyr*, a mill wheel, flour, the vampire pressed against a wall ... Dreyer's vampire expires before our eyes, caught simultaneously in the machinery's movement, in a shower of white powder (like the body of an insect falling within the sand of an hourglass) ..." <sup>140</sup> He mistakes the doctor for a vampire. Roland Barthes writes, "In Dreyer's *Vampyr*, as a friend points out, the camera moves from house to cemetery recording what the dead man sees ... the spectator can no longer take up any position, for he cannot identify his eye with the closed eyes of the dead man," <sup>141</sup> when in fact Gray's eyes are open. Shouldn't the last two errors be ascribed to fear, which

makes us flee so quickly, swish pan our look, that we do not see clearly?

Since David Lynch has accomplished one of the two exemplarily manners of instancing fear, to wit making it regular: the protagonist's hair is standing on end throughout *Eraserhead*; to write a novel where there is no mention of fear, where it is, as in Patricia Highsmith's *Ripley's Game*, displaced onto such phrases as "I'm afraid I can't help you,"<sup>142</sup> "I'm afraid I haven't changed my mind about that,"<sup>143</sup> "I'm afraid it's no go" (my italics);<sup>144</sup> or externalized in other characters' masks, while the protagonist acts detached, indifferent.

The masks I find arresting are those that are the product of either the fear-induced swish pan or tilt of our look away from the fearful object, or our virtual recoiling from it and thus remoteness. The shot in Bokanowski's *L'Ange* that begins as a very high-angle extreme long shot of a handleless seated man and a maid bringing him a pitcher, and continues with a zoom-in movement is odd, since what we apprehend at the end of the zoom-in movement are clear masks, i.e., our remoteness, one that makes us unable to discern the features of the face. Was the zoom-in really a zoom-out? Was there a crossing of the *imaginary line* during the zoom in, so that, imperceptibly to us, it became a zoom-out (a labyrinthine structure)? In *Jacob's Ladder*, the blurriness of the demon-like figures Jacob sees both in the moving car and in the subway is caused by his fear-induced swish pans of his look away from them. This blurriness produced by the fear-induced swish pan is the mask; hence the connection of such a mask with the fleeting. While the blurred version of the mask is emphasized in *Jacob's Ladder* and the clear version is underscored in *L'Ange* and *The Shining*, both are equally prominent in the work of Ralph Eugene Meatyard:

— The out-of-focus version of the mask in the photographs where the persons are not moving,<sup>145</sup> such as Untitled [*possibly* self-portrait in room wallpapered with newspapers],<sup>146</sup> 1967–68, Untitled [*it could be* interior with two boys], 1961, *To—El Mochuelo* [*maybe* boys with

noose], 1962, Untitled [*I have the feeling it is* male nude in bathroom], 1970, Untitled [*perhaps* two boys, one seen through hole in wall], 1962, Untitled [*conceivably* child as a bird],<sup>147</sup> 1960.<sup>148</sup>

— The clear version of the mask in Untitled [*perhaps* sitting boy with mask and masked hands—*Lucybell Crater*], 1960, *Romance* (N.) *From Ambrose Bierce* #3, 1962, Untitled [*perhaps* woman and child framing parallelogram window—*Lucybell Crater and Lucybell Crater*], 1970–72, and Untitled [*perhaps* girl atop woman], 1970–72.<sup>149</sup>

— The conjunction of the two in the same photograph in Untitled [*plausibly* masked woman with girl on ladder], 1970–72, and *Occasion for Diriment* [*apparently* young girl and masked boy beating his breast], 1962.<sup>150</sup>

The fear-induced swish pan or tilt or zoom-out is what makes the aforementioned photographs, which are at the level of their production not only posed but also staged, snapshots. In *L'Ange*, *Jacob's Ladder* and Meatyard's work, the mask serves not to hide the one behind it, but, through the fear-induced swish pan of averting to look, or the virtual recoiling far away, to shield the one in front of it from the horrifying sight.

The mask I wear may be a symptom of a becoming animal or god that is sweeping me off my face; or it may be a stratagem to imply the other's fear. In the latter case, the issue of donning a dreadful mask is not so much to psychologically induce fear in the other, as to impose on him the suggestion that while he may not be aware of it, he is already afraid: while one may be able to resist psychological fear, continuing to look at the frightening entity despite one's fear, the fear implied by the mask allows of no resistance, since the mask is the de jure externalization of one's swish pan of avoiding looking at something. When I see a mask either I am frightened or else the mask, whether or not it has a horrifying expression, is suggesting to me that I am afraid. To criticize works where a courageous warrior undauntedly fights masked, demon-like figure as idealizing, simplistic portray-

als of heroes, ones that do not show them betraying any fear, is to miss the swish pan completely. The masks of these demonic figures are the hero's fear made visible. If I find donning a mask unfair, it is not due to a moralizing attitude that condemns hiding the truth, but because of the added advantage whoever dons the mask has by reason of the association of the latter to the swish-pan and fear (slower thinking and reaction, etc.). When the other dons a mask to imply my fear, the only way I can show my absence of fear is not by staring at the mask and describing its features but by removing it, for to describe meticulously the features of the mask is to describe scrupulously what one is not seeing clearly. When the protagonist of Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut* asks the masked woman with the gorgeous body to remove her mask, this is not only because he desires her and wants to see her face and to know who she is, but also because the mask over her face implies that she scares him, when she no longer does, as she had come to warn him and help him evade danger. The mask does not cover the face, but is the fear-induced inability to look attentively and meticulously at the face. The mask does not abstract the essential features, delineating them and giving them the utmost expressivity. Indeed, it has no proper features, but only the distortions produced by the fear-induced swish pan of averting looking. In Michael Powell's *Peeping Tom*, the disturbed cameraman films his victims with a camera that has a mirror attachment that shows their fearful expression while they cannot move. Their expressions in the glass look distorted; this is not because the glass is misshaping them, but because of the swish pan in place, a virtual one. In this sense, the mask, however much it may be specific, for instance with smaller or bigger nose, singular expression, does not denote an individualization at all; hence the indistinguishability of the adult female Lucybelle from a three-year-old male (*Lucybelle Crater & 20 yr old son's 3 yr old son, also her 3 yr old grandson*—*Lucybelle Crater*, 1969–70); from a legless female (*Lucybelle Crater & 20 yr old son's legless wife Lucybelle Crater*,

1969–70); from a fifteen-year-old male (*Lucybelle Crater & 15 yr old son Lucybelle Crater*, 1970), etc. The different masks in Meatyard's Lucybelle Crater series are as little differentiable as the identical masks-faces of the eight librarians in *L'Ange*.

During a break in his child's math homework, his child said to him: "I overheard a conversation today between two of my teachers about the superintendent of the school. One of them used an expression I did not understand. Daddy, what are 'the emperor's new clothes'?" "They figure in a fairy tale with that title by the writer Hans Christian Andersen in which two tailors play a hoax on an emperor, convincing him that they have made for him a marvelous new dress with the property of seeming invisible to anyone who was unfit for the office he held or was a simpleton, when actually they have made none. During a public procession, each of his subjects not wanting to be considered either unfit for his office or a simpleton does not tell him that he is naked. He remains unaware of the actual state of affairs until someone your age confronts him with his actual situation. Had the procession happened not during the day but at this hour of the night, that child would not have had the opportunity to declare the truth about the emperor's clothes because his parents would have already tucked him in bed. Given that it is past your bedtime, let's quickly finish your math lesson. Sam borrowed from John \$3.75 one day, then \$6.25 a few days later. How much does he owe him in total?" "\$10." He paid the cover charge and entered into the nightclub. After the pianist, an acquaintance of his, finished his gig, he joined him for a drink. A phone call for the pianist interrupted their conversation. After some questioning, the pianist revealed that he was occasionally commissioned to play music at esoteric ceremonies. After further questioning, the pianist divulged that the phone call concerned one such ceremony that was to take place late that same night. "When I appeared at the gate for the first time, they unexpectedly informed me that there had been a change of plans and that they had to blindfold

me during the ceremony. I consented. While they were placing a cover over my eyes, I heard approaching footsteps. They came to a stop just behind me. I then heard the guard say: 'You neither have the hood, nor the tuxedo, nor, most importantly, the mask. We definitely cannot let you in.' I therefore presume that you need all of these in order to enter. After playing music at that ceremony, I was intrigued enough that I decided to join their society. But once I mentioned this matter to them during one of their phone calls to me, they treated me with flagrant contempt. Fortunately, once my candidature was rejected, they again treated me courteously in my capacity as the pianist." He immediately headed to the rental shop. It was closed. He buzzed the owner at his apartment above the shop: "I am sorry to inconvenience you at this late hour, but it is urgent that I rent a costume for tonight. I'll pay you \$200 extra for your trouble." Having gotten his costume, he hopped into a cab and headed to the ceremony's address. When they reached the mansion, he ordered the cab to pass it and park a block away. He changed into his costume. He was fearful as he headed toward the gate. The taxi driver honked. What did he want? He was already standing before the masked gatekeeper, and did not feel like going back to check. He was worried that his fear would betray him. Nothing of the sort happened: he was ushered inside by a second masked man. He then saw a ceremony in progress, with numerous participants, all masked. The masks had various sorts of expressions: laughter, anxiety, awe, duplicity. It was clear to him that this was no customary bal masqué, not least because he felt no curiosity whatsoever to guess who might be behind the masks. He could espy his acquaintance, the pianist, playing music while blindfolded. Some of the masked women were naked. After watching an innocuous ritual, he walked through gallery after gallery where masked but otherwise naked people were having intercourse. Around an hour later, he was walking toward the cab, first with quick steps, then more slowly, his fear beginning to subside. As he sat in the cab, the driver told him: "I



Stills from Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*.

had tried to alert you: You forgot your mask!” Disconcerted, he blamed his apprehension for the oversight. He wondered how come they let him in maskless. He was then seized with great embarrassment that they had pulled the wool over his eyes: they must have swiftly acted in concert to make him feel he was masked. He marveled how ironic it was that shortly after explaining to his child what the emperor’s new clothes were, he had unwittingly enacted the emperor behind his invisible mask. But he was mistaken. What actually took place was that his fearfulness had made him swish pan his look, so that he saw masks. Since his fearfulness was itself frightening (*fearful* *adj.* 1. Causing or capable of causing fear; frightening. 2. Experiencing fear; frightened [*American Heritage Dictionary*]),<sup>151</sup> it made others too swish pan their look, with the result that they also saw a mask, but one that did not necessarily have a fearful expression: while some saw a mask with a horrified expression, others saw a smiling one, others still one with a deadpan expression. Near the end of *The Shining* Wendy looks in one of the rooms and sees two masked persons: were a fearless person to search the Overlook Hotel for these masks, he or she would fail to find them. This proposition, which appears in the first edition of (*Vampires*), 1993, was confirmed in Kubrick’s *Eyes Wide Shut*, 1999: one plausible explanation of why when following the masked ceremony in which he participated, the protagonist goes back to the costume shop to return the items he rented, he finds in his bag the tuxedo and the hood, but not the mask is that he did not don a material mask at that ceremony. The fear of the spectator of *Eyes Wide Shut* is not so much induced by identification with the threatened protagonist, as implied by the fact that he or she sees masks on screen. The perceptive spectator of that film will deduce from seeing the protagonist masked that he himself is fearful. By blindfolding the pianist, those at the ceremony acknowledged that he is fearless: he would have seen that no one was masked, even the naked ones indulging in an orgy. The person they turned back at the door in the

presence of the pianist must also have been fearless. What were their criteria for accepting or rejecting someone to become an initiate? “We despise both the fearless and the cowardly, whose fear is not frightening.” It was a society of the fearful, of those whose fear is frightening. They accepted only the one who perceived them, with their bare faces, as masked, and who himself appeared masked to them. Indeed he soon received a letter informing him of the date and whereabouts of the next ceremony, with the following *nota bene*: “Please do not forget to come dressed in a tuxedo and a hood.” A new version can and should be made of Hans Christian Andersen’s *The Emperor’s New Clothes*, possibly with the title *The Emperor’s New Costume, Or the Case of the Missing Mask*. In such a version, it is not two mischievous and dishonest weavers, but two perceptive mask-makers who arrive at the empire’s capital. They stress that they make masks only for fearful ceremonies. They are commissioned to do so. On the appointed day, the participants in the ceremony marvel at how much meticulous artisanal work it must have taken these craftsmen to make their masks. This time too it was an infant who indicated that there were no masks. “In the *Introductory Lectures*, Freud ... tells us to look at children: they run along the brink of the water, climb on the window sill, play with sharp objects and fire. They have no notion of danger, no sense of fear ... The child must necessarily receive help from others both to satisfy its needs and to ward off danger until such time as it learns to be afraid. The child has no natural sense of fear; fear is something which is learned, and not from experience alone. We can be taught to be afraid ...”<sup>152</sup> But this time, the child’s disclosure was not fully accurate, since if one is fearful, there is a mask; it therefore was legitimately rejected. “We here in the society of the fearful never cared about the truth of either cowards or the fearless, and therefore of infants.”

We fear fear because often fear either discloses to us or makes us sense what we know (i.e., we fear fear because we are basically gullible

enough to think that what we did not know that we know is the truth). Courage is not the absence of fear, since it partly resides in confronting what fear discloses; but the absence of the fear of fear, of the swish pan that hides what fear could have revealed.

Madness is the fear of death-as-undeath that *frightens one to death*.

That is certainly not what one wants: to be cornered between boredom and fear, between being carried along the unique direction of chronological time and disorientation in a labyrinthine time.

#### **Unsound Silence:**

He was sitting in the back seat of the car during a drive from Milwaukee to Oshkosh. He could not clearly hear the voices of the two women having a conversation in the front seats. It was not that they were whispering; nor that their talk was submerged by the sound of the wind against the speeding car or by the noise of trucks overtaking their car. It was exactly as if the volume had been lowered on a radio.

He no longer heard, only overheard—even those addressing him.

He was being disintegrated by their laughs and endless talk, anti-coagulants of time.

Preserved under silence, under a sound vacuum. But what preserves one from what can preserve only by freezing? Not music that the character would play to evade the silence, since such music would itself be covered by the diegetic silence-over; but, rather, diegetic music-over, heard telepathically.

One must become motionless to listen to the silence. But reciprocally the emergence of a diegetic silence-over, of dead silence, immobilizes one (*Last Year at Marienbad*), makes one dead still. There are two sorts of silence-over: a diegetic one and an extra-diegetic one. If the silence is extra-diegetic, then it does not interfere with the diegetic movements. A diegetic silence-over freezes the person into a sort of tableau vivant, rather than, as in Maya Deren's dance film *Ritual in*

*Transfigured Time* or Cocteau's *The Blood of a Poet*, into a statue; or, for the brief interval before they become frozen, gives a floating somnambulist feel to the moving people, who appear not to be touching the objects they are handling or the floor on which they are moving,<sup>153</sup> so that Robbe-Grillet's recourse to soft earth ("The soft earth here makes no sound, fortunately, when anyone walks on it"<sup>154</sup>) or thick carpets ("silent halls where the sound of footsteps is absorbed by carpets so heavy, so thick that nothing reaches the ear ... as if the floor were still sand or gravel ...")<sup>155</sup> or gravel, and Dreyer's recourse to dust in his script of *Vampyr* ("The dust is so thick there that it muffles the sound of his footsteps") are not necessary once one enters the regime of diegetic silence-over.

While John Cage emphasizes that there is no silence: even were one to enter an anechoic room, one would still hear a high sound, that of the nervous system in operation, and a low one, that of the blood in circulation; Jalal Toufic stresses the presence of (a diegetic) silence(-over) that can fall initially despite the sounds, but that soon freezes their sources.

In *Persona*, the actress becomes silent for she briefly hears a diegetic silence-over in the theater. How can one be sound in this silence? How not to feel an apprehension that decay, error, fallacy (the opposite of sound reasoning) is on the verge of happening or already happened, whether or not in the form of this silence?

#### **Frozen Still:**

The vampire was safe during the day notwithstanding that no one was guarding him, because he was frozen still, and thus withheld, subtracted from time.<sup>156</sup> Even the light of day cannot harm him when he is frozen. His enemies could kill him, an act that happens in and takes time, only when he was again part of time. "We look like chivalrous people waiting for this aristocrat, who belongs to an antiquated era, an era of chivalry, to 'wake up,' only then attacking him." They waited

for him to come out of his freezing, then they stabbed him in the back.

The motionlessness in *India Song* is radically different from the immobility in *L'Immortelle*, *Last Year at Marienbad* and Roman Polanski's *The Tenant*. The former is merely a way to negotiate hot weather, while the latter is a feature of the realm of the undead. Unlike Roland Barthes, I am not concerned with the extra-diegetic still,<sup>157</sup> but with the diegetic immobilization of characters or of film images in the motion picture. Vertov's *negative of time* is not, as Annette Michelson writes, reverse motion: "Looking for the negative of time, we find it in the use of reverse motion as analytic strategy."<sup>158</sup> It is rather the frozen frame. Vertov did not yet have the negative of time in *Kino-Glaz* (1924), so that he could possibly be accused of "formalist jackstraws" when Kino-Eye "moves time backwards," giving back to the bull's carcass his entrails, and then dressing him in his skin and then bringing him back to life, the prostrate animal becoming reanimated and standing on its limbs. But Vertov reached the negative of time in *The Man with a Movie Camera*, 1929, so Eisenstein's following denegation is unfounded: "It [slow-motion] is usually employed with some purely pictorial aim, such as the 'submarine kingdom' in *The Thief of Baghdad*, or to represent a dream, as in *Zvenigora*. Or, more often, it is used simply for formalist jackstraws and unmotivated camera mischief as in Vertov's *Man with the Movie-Camera*."<sup>159</sup> Indeed it is Eisenstein who can be charged with "formalist jackstraws" when in *Potemkin*, three shots of three statues of a lion, in the first of which he is lying down dozing, in the second of which he is awake and ready to rise up, and in the third of which he is already risen, are edited together to give the paradoxical impression that the marble lion has risen in protest against the massacre of the Odessa Steps. It is the frozen frames in *The Man with a Movie Camera* that render possible fast-forward; slow motion; backward in time movement; and the auto-motion of the camera and its winding mechanism, and of the

tripod.<sup>160</sup> In Vertov's *Three Songs of Lenin* (1934), the intertitle "If only Lenin could see our country now!" recurs three times. Indeed Lenin could not see the future because his motionlessness as corpse shown in several shots is not one that allows for irregularities of time. Therefore Vertov had to revert in this film also to freeze framing in order to be able to have fastforward and other time irregularities.

According to Henrik Galeen's script for Murnau's *Nosferatu*, the man who goes down to the ship's sleeping quarters comes back up with his hair abruptly turned white after seeing the vampire. Is this a fear-induced effect that can be biologically explained or is it the result of a time-lapse made possible by the vampire's freezing in the coffin?

#### **Backward in Time Movement:**

Around half an hour after regaining animation, the vampire was already uncertain whether he still had eight hours till sunrise or half an hour in the reverse direction of time till just before sunset. It turned out to be the latter. He felt his head turned to the side, as when a barber adjusts the position of one's head, and soon was going backward down the stairs to the sepulchre.

Dracula enjoined his guest Harker to write a letter to his employer as well as one or two additional ones to acquaintances informing them that he would be staying with his host for a month hence. He then deposited three blank sheets of note paper and three envelopes on the table. It looked like they were not deposited in a forward time movement but by a reverse motion that brought them back to their initial position: *dead stop*. Harker found it very difficult to comply with his host's demand not only because he did not want to tarry a month at the castle, but also and mainly because he felt he was being asked to write on the past.

The immobilizations schizophrenics perceive and/or undergo make possible backward in time movement: Mark Vonnegut saw the water of a cascade going up (*The Eden Express*). In *The Tenant*,

Tralkovsky's neighbors stand frozen still for hours. This makes possible going back in time: the shot of the person covered with bandages in the hospital near the end of the film is the same as the one near the film's beginning: in both, it is Simone Choule who is bandaged in bed looking at Tralkovsky and Stella. Probably the reason the woman in *Last Year at Marienbad* finds it so difficult to remember the previous year's events is that the absolute immobilizations of the other people make possible an actual movement backward in time. Hence her awkward, difficult position: she is asked by her suitor to remember their first meeting at Marienbad, when she has been transported back to that first time the previous year at Marienbad.

Some scripted films should use the hysteron proteron trope, that is be filmed in inverse order to the shots' order of appearance in the finished film: the last shot of the film filmed first, the next-to-last second, etc. So what would be during the screening of the film and according to the diegesis a temporal progression from younger to older for the character would be in the case of the actor or actress a regression to a younger age. With regard to the actor, Cocteau's "cinema films death at work" applies within each shot and in films and videos that do not use editing (Warhol's single-shot films, etc.) or where the order of filming coincides exactly with the order in which the characters appear in the diegesis. In traditional films Cocteau's words only partially apply since there is frequent shuffling of the order of the shooting in relation to the order in which the shots appear in the finished film.

#### **The Atavism of Mystery:**

Murder in mystery novels reactivates a gamut of archaic beliefs, and this irrespective of whether the story explicitly invokes the supernatural (Doyle's *The Hound of Baskervilles*):

— The communication with the dead: in Agatha Christie's *Appointment With Death*, at 4:15 Lady Westholm, in the company of

the suggestible Miss Pierce, paused below the ledge, shouted up to Miss Boyton, and remarked to her companion: "Very rude just to snort like that." Nadine Boyton returned to the camp at approximately 4:40, sat on a chair next to Miss Boyton and had a conversation with her, leaving her at 4:50. Carolyn Boyton affirms that she returned at 5:10 to the camp and spoke to her stepmother for a while. Raymond Boyton asserts that he returned to the camp at 5:50, went up to his stepmother, exchanged a few words with her, then went to his tent and afterward to the marquee. It is later revealed that the death of Miss Boyton occurred around 4:10.

— Being in two places at the same time, which echoes the primitive's belief in astral bodies and doubles: in Christie's *Thirteen at Dinner* (1933), Jane Wilkinson, whose husband was found murdered in the library of his London home, is identified by two witnesses, the butler and the secretary, as having been to see him at 10 p.m. the night of his murder, and is also identified as having gone to a formal dinner party at the house of Sir Montague Corner at Chiswick that same night, arriving at quarter to nine p.m. and leaving at half past eleven p.m. During the party she left the dinner table only for a few minutes in the company of the butler to answer a phone call. The time of the murder is determined to be between ten and eleven at night.

— In primitive cultures, the name of the dead, and in some cases even the names of the other members of the tribe, of animals and plants, was changed. The Masai in East Africa change the dead man's name immediately after his death. Among the Guaycurus in Paraguay, when a death took place, the chief changed the name of every member of the tribe: "From that moment everybody remembered his new name just as if he had borne it all his life."<sup>161</sup> If the name of the dead happens to be the same as the name of a tree or animal, the name of the latter is changed. "In the seven years which the missionary Dobrizhoffer spent among Abipones of Paraguay, the native word for jaguar was changed thrice, and the words for crocodile, thorn, and

the slaughter of cattle underwent similar though less varied vicissitudes.”<sup>162</sup> In mystery stories too, we encounter 1) the change of the name of the dead whether in the form of burial under a false certificate or substitution of one corpse for another (Chesterton’s *The Secret Garden*), etc. 2) The change of the name of plants: at the end of Ruth Rendell’s short story *Means of Evil*, we are informed that the shaggy cap (*Coprinus comatus*) was replaced with ink cap (*Coprinus atramentarius*). 3) The change of the name of at least some of the survivors: in *The Maltese Falcon*, after the death of detective Miles Archer, Samuel Spade’s female client’s name changes from Wonderly to Leblanc to Brigid O’Shaughnessy.

— Ancient Egyptian chapels had a *false door*, a stone-carved panel Egyptians believed would function like a real door allowing the spirit of the deceased to leave the underground burial chamber to receive the offerings in the chapel. In the locked-room mysteries, we encounter an equivalent phenomenon. How did the murderer manage to get out of the room in which the murder happened although its door(s) and windows are found sealed from the inside and no footprints lead to it (Robert Arthur’s *The 51st Sealed Room*; or, *The MWA Murder*; Chesterton’s *The Secret Garden*; “Sapper”’s *The Horror at Staveley Grange*)?

— In primitive cultures, there is a taboo on touching the dead or anything touched by him or her. In mystery stories, such a taboo takes the guise of the avoidance of leaving any fingerprints at the site of death.

— In primitive cultures there is no notion of natural death: the death of someone was willed by another, whether human, dead, demon or god. Similarly, in mystery stories it is extremely rare for what seems to be a suicide or an accident to be accepted as just that rather than as a murder. Although neither the police, nor the newspapers (the *Evening Shout*, etc.), nor the general public doubt that Miss Boyton and Lady Westholme died of accidents, the reader of

Christie’s *Appointment With Death*, like a superstitious primitive, *knows* that these deaths have been willed and are in no way accidents.

There is a secondary elaboration in mystery stories to place the changing of the name, the communication with the dead, the refusal to believe in a natural or accidental death, the presence of a person in two places at the same time, and tunneling within a reasonable scheme, rather than leave its uncanny, archaic origination manifest: for instance, tunneling can be accounted for by one of the solutions John Dickson Carr gives in the chapter titled “The Locked-Room Lecture” in his novel *The Three Coffins*; being in two places simultaneously can be explained by means of a false alibi, etc. That it is a secondary revision is also shown by the circumstance that companions to mystery stories stop in their synopses of the plots at the presentation of the facts before the detective begins to solve the puzzle (their legitimate excuse is that they must not reveal the whodunnit).

#### Counterfeiting:

In Wenders’ *Until the End of the World*, against the ominous background of an imminent threat of a nuclear conflagration, a man retrieves a camera supposed to allow blind people to see the images it has recorded. He then videotapes various relatives sending greetings to his blind mother. One of these shots looks like a Vermeer. Judging from a series of anomalies in the functioning of the plane flying him back to his father’s out of the way lab in Australia, it seems that the dreaded nuclear end of the (rest of the) world has occurred. At the lab, the news of the end of the world coincides with the arrival of the camera and the resumption of the experiments, which this time succeed. The blind person’s first words regarding the shot that is Wenders’ forgery of Vermeer are: “I see a red, a blue ...” It is this *creation* from the inchoate state simultaneously with the end of the world that transfigures and affirms the forgery, makes it other than an imitation. According to the 1977 Copyright rule in the USA, copyright pro-

tection extends for the life of the author plus fifty years, following which the work falls into the public domain. After the end of the world, there is no longer any ban not merely on the reproduction but even on the creation of what was there before. Is this why many schizophrenics, who experience the end of the world, feel that thoughts, accomplishments, songs, artworks signed by others have been stolen from them, the real creators, by these famous artists or writers, some of whom composed their songs or wrote their books prior to the birth of the schizophrenic or when he or she was still a small child?

#### **Coexistence of Tenses:**

Dracula is first this side of a spider's web that extends across the staircase; then he is to the other side without shredding the web. That may have happened through (quantum) tunneling or because Harker, who is addressing him, is speaking to the past, to what existed before the spider built its web.

#### **Why Make Another Version of *Nosferatu*?**

There has been an absence of a continuous tradition in German cinema: between the expressionist period and the New German Cinema of Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Werner Herzog, Alexander Kluge, Hans Jürgen Syberberg, Wim Wenders, et al. there is the black hole not only of the Nazi era, but also of the period of reconstruction that followed it, which was almost totally controlled in the domain of cinema by Papa's Kino, filmmakers who began to make films under Goebbels and continued to dominate film production up to the late 1960's. The New German Cinema directors felt the need, some more intensely than others, to reestablish a link with the pre-Nazi filmmakers: Wenders' *Kings of the Road* (1976) begins with the actor Rüdiger Vogler interviewing an old cinema organist who used to accompany films in the silent era; Herzog remakes Murnau's *Nosferatu* ("We are trying in our films to build a thin bridge back to that

time"<sup>163</sup>); Wenders dedicates *Paris, Texas* (1984), and Herzog *Every Man for Himself and God Against All* (1974) to Lotte Eisner, the critic-historian who wrote *The Haunted Screen* on German cinema from its inception to the late nineteen twenties (Herzog: "Lotte Eisner's interest in our fate ... built a bridge"<sup>164</sup>). The first motif of *Nosferatu* ("And when he passed the bridge, the phantoms came to meet him"), the bridge, has been found (the filming of Joe Levine's *A Bridge Too Far* in Delft had just finished when Herzog came to film *Nosferatu*, a film about someone who crosses a too far bridge. Coincidence?).

The second motif is the phantoms. In a letter he sent Eisner in 1976 (his *Nosferatu* was released in 1979), Herzog wrote: "Fritz Lang died ... I believe no one really knew that he was still alive ... they chased Fritz Lang so far away from us, that he was no longer among the living, but rather a rumor. You were among those who kept urging me to go see him, but I never really dared because ... he had already become a spirit to me."<sup>165</sup> Fritz Lang was not the only director who had become a phantom in postwar Germany. But there are also other kinds of cinema phantoms: nine out of the twenty-one films made by Murnau are lost, and some of the remaining ones are incomplete (Bazin writes about the mummifying/embalming and preservative function of film.<sup>166</sup> Film images preserve, but films themselves were for a long time not preserved).<sup>167</sup> *Nosferatu* was banned because it did not receive the imprimatur of Bram Stoker's widow, detainer of the copyright of *Dracula*: news of the film reached her only two months after its release by the Prana Company of Berlin in March 1922. A legal action was directed against it for infringement of copyright. In July of 1925, a German court decreed that all the prints must be destroyed. Most of the prints subsequently disappeared, but the makers managed to steal the negative abroad. *Nosferatu* was for a time a phantom. The film was shown again, in London, on December 16, 1928, reaching American screens a year later. A bridge had to be created to the directors who had become specters, but also to those of their films that had become,

permanently or temporarily, phantoms.

To make a sound version of Murnau's silent *Nosferatu*, it was not enough to add the customary diegetic sound. In Herzog's remake, music-over is heard telepathically, *overheard* by the people in the town square, who dance to it and not to the inaudible music being played by the musicians in the diegesis. The suffix *er* either denotes one who does a specified action or is used to form the comparative degree of adverbs and adjectives. In undead films the two are inextricably linked: the harker is the one who cannot hark except if he harks more than others, but also more than himself, by being telepathic.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault writes about the presence of two models of the plague each answering to a different political project. One is that of "suspended laws ... bodies mingling together without respect ... in a sort of collective festival." And indeed, we have all sorts of interminglings in vampire films:

— The living dead, the vampire, who is one form of undead. The cross which the burgomaster draws on doors to distinguish the dying/dead from the living in the plagued city in Murnau's film is prefigured by that other cross given to Harker by the woman in the tavern to defend him against *Nosferatu*, the living dead.

— The dead living, the mad, those who *died before dying*, who are another form of undead.

— The mixing of the dead and the living in the plagued city.

The plague as carnival introduces inversions ("the chaste man performs sodomy upon his neighbors. The lecher becomes pure. The miser throws his gold in handfuls out the window ..." <sup>168</sup> and in prison Renfield sucks the blood of flies), until everybody becomes undifferentiated, so that one person has to be sacrificed. <sup>169</sup> Rather than being determined by what differentiates him from others, the choice of the one to be sacrificed is what makes him singular, thus reintroducing differentiation and doing away with the plague. Or else the choice falls on the one who prior to the appearance of the plague was already

telepathic and somnambulistic, thus one who already differentiated herself or himself from the normals, from those who had restricted spectra, precisely by being the undifferentiated, mixing here and elsewhere and wakefulness and sleep. Harker, who is charged by his employer to take the ground plan of the house to *Nosferatu* in Transylvania and to get his signature on the ownership papers, is, through a parapraxis, the messenger of a message he was not asked to give, Lucy's photograph, drawing the vampire's attention and desire to her in a sacrificial gesture.

In the second model, "everyday ... the syndic ... stops before each house: gets all the inhabitants to appear at the windows ... If someone does not appear at the window, the syndic must ask why? ... each individual is constantly located, examined and distributed among the living beings, the sick and the dead—all this constitutes a compact model of the disciplinary mechanism ... Against the plague, which is a mixture, discipline brings into play its power, which is one of analysis." <sup>170</sup>

Murnau's *Nosferatu*, whose first shot is a panoptic vision from the tower dominating the city, is inscribed within the disciplinary model of the plague (the other model can be found in his *Faust*, 1926). Herzog opts for the other model, the plague as festival/carnival/anarchy. But viewing Murnau's *Nosferatu* exclusively within the disciplinary model is only partially accurate, since, as in Herzog's *Nosferatu*, the city is ultimately saved by Ellen's sacrifice and not by the disciplinary measures. The mixing that the plague introduces and with which Murnau's film deals propagates itself to a mixing of the two models of the plague in his film.

#### Of Men and Mice:

Rats and mice have been subjected to myriad memory experiments. In some of these, for instance those conducted by Karl Lashely, lesions were inflicted on different parts of their brains to see if memory resides in a specific area; in many others, they had to find

their way through mazes. With the plague, which is sometimes carried by rats, the situation is reversed, with humans now the subjects of the “experiment”: many of those struck by the pestilence become amnesiac and are lost in the plagued city become a maze.

**Pain:**

Is pain in part the pity one has for the body?

To see or hear someone else suffering or to think that he or she is suffering is in most cases harsher than to undergo his or her suffering, for during life there is a limit to the duration and/or intensity of the suffering that can be undergone, beyond which one faints, one goes into a coma, one has a dissociative, out-of-the-body experience, or one dies. But pity can increase indefinitely and not in proportion to the other’s suffering (that’s why we may ask to suffer in his or her or its place if he or she is not prone to pity): it is an infinite phenomenon. Since it has no negative feedback mechanism, pity may not be part of life, but already part of death, since death may be the realm of the absence of reversal points, of escape velocities.

In Bill Viola’s *I Do Not Know What It Is I Am Like*, which at one point documents a ceremony in the Mahadevi temple, Fiji, in which the participants stick needles in their bodies and then perform fire-walking, Viola appears in the pupils of birds, in drops of water, on faucets’ surfaces: in the guise of images, which feel no pain.<sup>171</sup> The vampire, who does not appear in mirrors, cannot alleviate pain in the same manner.

A shot of a person looking in a specific direction is followed by a second shot that begins as a static point of view then continues in a pan to the side. The third shot is not a return to the person who was looking. Consequently, it is objectively undecidable not only for the film spectator but also for the character whether the second shot was in its entirety the point of view of the latter, who must in that case

have at one point moved his head to the side; or whether the shot had become objective. The resultant reduction in subjectivity consequent of this objective undecidability is an analgesic.

**Reference Letter from the *Hidden Observer*:**

In the nonlocal phenomenon of hypnosis, during which the hypnotized person is often overlaid on a setting other than the one in which the induction began, reference resides not only in the figure of the hypnotist, but also in the phenomenon of the *hidden observer*: during a hypnosis experiment, a highly hypnotizable subject was entranced and told to feel no pain when one of her hands was put in ice-circulating water, while the other hand, kept out of awareness, was to report through automatic writing, at five-second intervals, and on a scale of 0–10, on the pain the first hand was feeling. She orally reported feeling no pain, while in automatic writing she was reporting: 2 ... 5 ... 7 ... 8 ... 9 ...<sup>172</sup>

Frederic Jameson: “Highs and lows really don’t imply anything about the world, you can feel them on whatever occasion.”<sup>173</sup> What about set (expectations and attitudes) and setting (physical and psychological environments)? Jameson can afford such imprudence since he is still this side of the threshold. If there is anything that can permit one to feel something or nothing “on whatever occasion,” it is yoga, which stresses so much the role of the guru as reference. Can’t disciples be in turn at times the reference of their spiritual master? No, they are always overcome with sleep when needed. Leaving his other disciples at Gethsemane, Jesus goes in the company of Peter, James and John to pray. He asks these three: “Stay here and watch with Me.” He moves *a stone’s throw*<sup>174</sup> and prays. When he comes back, the three are sleeping: “What? Could you not watch with Me one hour?” Three times does he leave them to pray, each time, upon returning, finding them sleeping. “Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed ...”

Finishing his words, he sees the traitor Judas coming toward him.<sup>175</sup> The electron beam intensity in a field-emission electron microscope is so low that one electron occupies the microscope at any one time, so that the interference needed for the production of a hologram is a single-electron phenomenon. Similarly, spiritual masters and guides do not need another's reference for they are their own reference, their own guides: Castaneda's sorcerer don Juan, as well as many a yogi and Sufi master, can be at two places at the same time. In the case of normal people in states of altered consciousness, neither they nor their double plays the role of a reference.

#### **Out-of-Sync:**

Many states of altered consciousness unlock the *a priori* conjunction between a sound and an image: for instance between the sound "of" a closing door and—I was on the point of writing "the closing door"—the image of the closing door. When in such states, one has to eschew falling either into the absolute solitude that consists in the deadly complete separation of the sound track and the image track (William Burroughs); or into the paranoid excessive correlations between sounds and images: for example, one body for two voices in possession (Friedkin's *The Exorcist*).

#### **I Am Shattered!**

In Francis Bacon's work, the mirror seldom functions as the familiar reflecting surface. It rather frequently acts as a pinning or absorbing medium, so that part of the materiality and life of the person in front of it is transferred to it—the limit case being his or her total absorption in the mirror, as in *Lying Figure in a Mirror* (1971), *Study of Nude with Figure in a Mirror* (1969), and *Triptych* (1987). The two functions occasionally coexist, as in the right panel of *Triptych Inspired by T. S. Eliot's Poem "Sweeney Agonistes"* (1967): the man on the phone has been totally absorbed in the mirror, while the feet of one of the

reclining men and the edge of the bed are reflected in the mirror. On the way to total absorption, we have *Figure Writing Reflected in a Mirror* (1976), and the right panel of *In Memory of George Dyer* (1971), where the tug is no longer between the person and his presence in the mirror, but between the latter and his presence in the reflecting surface of a table, the part of the body still not absorbed in either deploying much acrobatics to maintain itself outside both. In *Study for Portrait* (1981) the body has become so adroit at maintaining its balance between the two tugging media that it can sit half outside the mirror and half inside it with neither medium exerting an attraction on the part of the body in the other one, and without even the body's minimal displacement due to the index of refraction from one medium to the other. But this adroit body now dissociates in half outside the mirror (*Study from the Human Body*, 1981) or inside it (*Portrait of George Dyer in a Mirror*, 1968), the threshold no longer being the obvious dividing surface between the mirror and what is outside it, but a *false* one.

Haven't taken a shower or looked in a mirror for days. While walking, hearing sometimes the sound of glass as it breaks—where is the sound coming from?—of steel utensils becoming rusty in time-lapse.

#### **The Off-Screen and/or the Set On-Screen:**

By seeing in wide shots in *Vampyr* people's reflections in water in the absence of the people themselves, one is seeing the off-screen as such on screen—which off-screen has itself an off-screen. One cannot see this off-screen as such on-screen without feeling that one is apprehending it telepathically or hypnagogically (one subject reporting his hypnagogic experience: "Reflection in a lake of old houses that did not exist!"<sup>176</sup>). In addition to these reflections dissociated from their sources, Gray shortly sees a shadowless guard sitting with his chin propped on his hand. His shadow comes in, rests his rifle next to the



Stills from Dreyer's *Vampyr*.

chair and sits in the same position: it is only then that the image becomes in sync. These instances of off-screen in the frame foreshadow the coming dissociation of their diegetic witness, Gray.

“There are no wings to the screen. There could not be without destroying its specific illusion, which is to make of a revolver or of a face the very center of the universe.”<sup>177</sup> The centrality of the on-screen that Bazin writes about must be reconsidered in light not only of dissociative experiences (in near-death states, chronic migraine ...)—where the out of the body component is simultaneously on screen and off-screen (in reference to the body left behind, for instance that of Gray on the bench—which has its own off-screen)—but also of virtual reality, which permits telepresence, and, through the use of sensors, tele-sensing. Is the subtle or virtual body off-screen or in the wings?

Notwithstanding Bazin’s assertion “The screen is not a frame like that of a picture but a mask which allows a part of the action to be seen. When a character moves off-screen, we accept the fact that he is out of sight, but he continues to exist in his own capacity at some other place in the décor which is hidden from us,”<sup>178</sup> in some states of altered consciousness what lies beyond the perceptual horizon is not a homogeneous extension of what is within it: in film terms, the off-screen is no longer the homogeneous extension of the on-screen but is either radically heterogeneous with it: the apartment where one happens to be may be identical to one’s apartment in a particular city, but one may look out of the window and discover that one is rather in a different city or in the desert; or has totally disappeared: in David Blair’s *Wax*, the black that frames the image is an instantiation of the absence of off-screen. When *Wax*’s protagonist reaches the edge of the frame, there is either a dissolve to another location or else the character acknowledges the limitation: “I couldn’t go beyond the perimeter of the acre” (his assertion is inaccurate when the frame extends slightly beyond the perimeter: the protagonist could have taken one or two additional steps). A suspension of history is often linked with the

sudden disappearance of the off-screen, hence with the divestment of the on-screen space, which has become closed, from the rest of the world. If there is something to the other side of what one still vaguely remembers to have been the door through which one entered the bar a short time ago, it is at present an extension of the bar—the bar as the world. This phenomenon made, for the first time, bearable, gave a different perspective on those people who (as in the TV show *Cheers*) seem to spend their lives in bars.

If a scene starts with a close-up, there is uncertainty for the duration of the shot as to what the off-screen is. In films dealing with states of altered consciousness, this ambiguity should not be abolished once a master shot establishes the location and the situation where the action is happening, but is to be renewed within the same scene whenever there’s a return to a close-up. The shot change would then correspond in the diegesis to what it is in the filming: a lapse, a break. In such states, what is a close-up if not a shot of a person trying to remember—the rest of the space that was disclosed by the master shot?

The train goes underground. We are in a prison. The people inside the train appear ugly, dead, deformed. In the corner, a sad, withdrawn man, a thread of liquid in his eyes tinged with red. His sadness makes the others look human, alive. The liquid in his eyes moves down the vapor on the windows, which become transparent. Once again I am in a mere train going to specific places.

In Straub-Huillet’s *Moses and Aaron* (1975), where the main subject of the film is God, the camera pan often becomes the tracing of a creation: what appears along its movement is being created at the pace of that movement. Therefore, when the camera movement stops, the two sides of the frame are not symmetrical: to one side there is nothing, while the other side is simply the homogeneous extension of the screen, which we already saw.

Reality is as distant in situations of psychosis or deep trance as the

film set is from the finished film. And just as reality does nonetheless sometimes appear in these situations, the film set on rare occasions protrudes in the finished film! The set is included in fiction films neither through the accurateness of the settings, for instance Hitchcock's ("I am very concerned about the authenticity of settings and furnishings. When I can't shoot in the actual settings, I'm for taking research photographs of everything");<sup>179</sup> nor through the use of master shots: who tells us that the set itself is not filmic, hence possibly containing abrupt place changes? Hitchcock, who cautioned against respecting the integrity of the set during the filming, recommending that one be concerned only with the film images that will be extracted from the set, the arrangements into which they will enter and the off-screen they will suggest, nonetheless reinscribed a set in many of his scenes through the presence in the film's diegesis of anomalies of the sort one encounters normally only at the filming phase. Truffaut: "To inject realism into a given film frame, a director must allow for a certain amount of unreality in the space immediately surrounding that frame. For instance, the close-up of a kiss between two supposedly standing figures might be obtained by having the two actors kneeling on a kitchen table." Hitchcock: "That's one way of doing it. And we might even raise that table some nine inches to have it come into the frame. Do you want to show a man standing behind a table? Well, the closer you get to him, the higher you must raise the table if you want to keep it inside the image."<sup>180</sup> In *North by Northwest*, the clothes that are too short for their ostensible owner, but regarding which the protagonist's mother's comment is that they "are perfect," are an instance of the appearance of the filmic set in the diegesis. When later in the same film, a crop-dusting plane sprays a section of the field devoid of crops, the film spectator may feel that that plane was supposed to be matted on images of a field awash with crops, and therefore that he or she is unexpectedly witnessing the set in the film. We therefore witness a more sophisticated relation with

the film set in *North by Northwest* than in Hitchcock's *Rope*, with its absence of cuts.<sup>181</sup> The protagonist of Fritz Lang's *Secret Beyond the Door* is an architect who is obsessed with reconstructing the felicitous atmospheric rooms in which certain infamous crimes took place. He does not make do with reproductions of the items in the rooms, but purchases and transports to his house the original items. Like the film set, which is extra-diegetic, the seventh reconstructed room, which is a duplicate of the bedroom of his new wife, is not to be witnessed since the murder for which it is the perfect setting has not yet happened. Indeed, the architect is entranced when in the room: he sees it without seeing it. I could not suppress a smile of recognition when I saw his worried wife take hold of a flashlight before she headed to that room. Bazin: "The screen is not a frame like that of a picture but a mask which allows only a part of the action to be seen ... 'The theater,' says Baudelaire, 'is a crystal chandelier' ... we might say of the cinema that it is the little flashlight of the usher."<sup>182</sup> When the taboo against witnessing the last room is transgressed by her, the uncanny effect one has is that of seeing the set in the film. These examples from Hitchcock and Lang present ways for the set to appear in film other than the much more explored, actually exhausted, self-reflexive manner of showing part of the crew and the production equipment in the film.

#### Extras:

In *Singin' in the Rain* the star Don Lockwood, who begins his career as a stuntman, falls in love with a woman who becomes a double for the voice of another: how fitting since it is dangerous to serve as the double for another person's voice (Robert Aldrich's *The Legend of Lylah Clare*).

Time-lapse cinematography permits one to see violence that may otherwise pass unperceived: for instance red starfish feeding slowly on white ones. But maybe the violence of time itself feeding on these

predators even as they prey on others is then obscured by their violence and can be better felt in normal motion when nothing *seems* to happen (the first part of Akerman's *Je, tu, il, elle*, 1974). Two temptations to be resisted: that one try to occult the violence of time by drowning it in one's violence, or that one submit to it, becoming an extra to the passage of time (Akerman's *Jeanne Diehlman*, 1975).

#### **Vertiginous Eyes:**

*Vertigo's* Scottie Ferguson, a former detective suffering from vertigo, acquiesces reluctantly to an old school friend's commission to follow his wife Madeleine supposedly suffering from possession by her great-grandmother, Carlotta Valdes, who committed suicide at the age of 26, Madeleine's present age. He surveils Madeleine, who wanders in an entranced state in the city, first stopping at Carlotta's tombstone; then at a museum, where she sits for a long time in front of a portrait of Carlotta with a red necklace; then at a hotel, from one of whose rooms she mysteriously disappears, and which Scottie's subsequent research discloses as the house where Carlotta lived for many years. A day or two later she drives to the Golden Gate Bridge. He follows her. Suddenly she jumps into the San Francisco Bay. He quickly jumps behind her and saves her, then takes her to his house to recover. It is now for the first time that their eyes cross. When the next day she returns to his house to leave him a thank you note, he, who had followed her, comes forth and talks to her. They wander together through the city and then into a park. They stand before a cross section of a sequoia whose rings indicate the width of the tree when various historical events took place: 909 AD: the beginning of the tree's life; 1066: the Battle of Hastings; 1215: Magna Carta signed; 1492: the Discovery of America; 1776: the Declaration of Independence; 1930: the date the tree was cut down. Madeleine, entranced, points to the circles on the cross section of the Sequoia tree and says: "Somewhere here I was born, and there I died." They

then drive to a seascape. As she walks toward the promontory, he rushes toward her apprehensive that she will again jump into the water. He holds her tightly. They kiss. She tells him that she is haunted by a recurrent dream, but seems unable to clearly remember it. After a sleepless night, he hears insistent knocks on his door toward dawn. When he opens the door, he sees her. Haggard, she says: "The dream came back again ..." He gives her a glass of Brandi to calm her down, then he asks her: "Now, can you tell me?" "It was the tower again and the bell and the old Spanish village. Clear, so very clear for the first time, all of it." "Tell me." "It was a village square, and a green with trees, and an old whitewashed Spanish church with a cloister. Across the green, there was a big gray wooden house with a porch and shutters and a balcony above ... a small garden and next to it a livery stable with old carriages lined up inside." "Go on." "At the end of the green, there was a whitewashed stone house with a lovely pepper tree at the corner ..." "... and an old wooden hotel from the old California days; and a saloon: dark, low ceilings, with hanging oil lamps?" "Yes!" "It's all there. It's no dream. You've been there before, you've seen it." "No, never!" "Madeleine, a hundred miles south of San Francisco, there is an old Spanish mission, San Juan Batista it is called, and it has been preserved as it was a hundred years ago, as a museum. Think hard, darling, think hard: you've been there before, you've seen it." "No, never, I've never been ... Oh Scottie, what is it? I've never been there." In what context other than possession can we place such an exchange? Time travel. Shortly, they drive to the mission. After telling him that she loves him, she is suddenly seized by an apprehension: "It's too late." He implores her and protests: "No. No ..." Unyielding, she runs away from him up the bell tower staircase. Prevented by his paralyzing vertigo from following her to the top, he sees her moments later fall to her death. Madeleine's death is ruled a suicide by the court. Her guilt-ridden bereaved lover suffers from melancholia. Out of the hospital, he comes one day across a woman who physically looks quite

similar to Madeleine, but who is, unlike her, common, wearing garish clothes and largely blending with her coworkers at Magnum's department store. He follows her to her hotel, sees her open the window of one of the rooms, knocks on the door of the corresponding room and asks her to go out with him for a drink. She consents reluctantly. After he leaves, she starts writing a letter to him. We witness her flashback: wearing a gray suit and with blonde-died hair drawn back, she reaches the top of the bell tower where Gavin Elster, Madeleine's husband, is already standing with one hand over the mouth of a body identical to hers. She confesses in the letter she ends up tearing that she was part of a scheme devised by Elster to kill his wife and inherit her fortune, and that he had used her for her remarkable resemblance to his wife. One may at first be surprised by how common Judy looks once she is no longer dressed up and directed on how to behave, walk and talk by Madeleine's husband. But what happened on the top of the tower? She witnessed her death when the husband threw Madeleine down. Judy, who while impersonating Madeleine said as she pointed to a spot of the cross section of the Sequoia's trunk, "There I died," dies before she dies. Only someone common can *glibly* accept to be in a situation where he or she will witness his or her death. The two identical bodies on top of the Spanish tower bring to mind time travel. Perhaps the greatest drive behind time travel is to witness oneself in these two limit situations: death (Chris Marker's *La Jetée*) and birth; to watch one's birth and one's death (with video and film, one can now see oneself not only being born but even prior to birth, as a fetus in the womb of one's mother. But one cannot see oneself die. That's why the drive to witness one's death is much stronger than that of witnessing one's birth). How hapless Scottie is: her love for him had to compete with the amazing fascination, the drive to witness one's death. Her run toward the tower is an attempt to be present at the scene of her death. When he later asks her: "Why did you scream?" she answers: "I wanted to stop it Scottie." And

indeed on arriving breathless at the top of the tower, she gestures toward Gavin Elster not to throw his wife off the tower, in a repentant impulse, but more so because in that instant in which she sees a woman who is identical to her in body and clothes and hair style on the point of being pushed from the tower, she intuitively realizes that she is witnessing her own death. Hitchcock does not emphasize the look on Judy's face then; he shoots the scene of the co-presence of the two identical bodies on the tower and Elster's throwing of Madeleine to her death in a long shot with Judy's back to us. I envision the expression on Judy's face on top of the tower to be identical to that on the protagonist's face in *La Jetée* as he uncannily witnesses himself die. If that was her death Judy witnessed, then that is how she will die, falling from the bell tower of the old mission (it would have been best had she been wearing the same gray dress when she and Scottie, who is under the sway of the repetition compulsion, insisting all along their relationship that she dress the way Madeleine did, go to the tower that final time). In *Vertigo*, woman is difficult to look at not because, as Laura Mulvey advances, she induces a castration anxiety in men,<sup>183</sup> but because she has seen her own death, thus has vertiginous eyes. Having overlooked that in *Vertigo* Judy sees her own death, Mulvey fails to discern in her famous article, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," where she writes in the section titled "Woman as Image, Man as Bearer of the Look": "In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female," that in the universe of Hitchcock, one exemplifying the male gaze on the woman, it falls to a woman to have that most uncanny and peculiar of gazes: seeing one's own death, oneself die. If *Vertigo* is such a paradigmatic film about the gaze, it is not only because it presents us with a male private eye spying on a woman, but also in that a woman witnesses what one normally cannot see: one's own death. Since the latter is the far intenser gaze, the film's emblematic credits begin with the vertiginous gaze of Judy. The single

Hitchcock opening credits sequence that foregrounds the gaze, *Vertigo*'s, shows a woman's eyes and not a man's. The paradigmatic gaze in Hitchcock is not that of a man reduced to a gaze, the photographer with cast leg of *Rear Window*, but of a woman who witnessed her death, Judy in *Vertigo*. In the nightmare he has after Madeleine's death, Scottie sees himself mortally falling from the top of the tower. In that nightmare, he already, through displacement onto himself, senses that his beloved witnessed her own death and he is jealous of her for accomplishing that. The assumption by the woman of the paradigmatic position of the gaze necessitates or favors that she also be, at least partly, the source of the gaze even when she is ostensibly the one being stared at. It is therefore symptomatic that only after we see the scene where Judy witnesses a body identical to hers being thrown off the tower that we learn that the woman who was being followed by Scottie already knew that he was following her and therefore that she was perceiving him without looking in his direction, gazing at him.

The eyes of someone who has seen his or her own death are at least as vertiginous as time travel or being simultaneously at two places. Thus the credits sequence of *Vertigo* shows proliferating receding revolving spirals in the eye of Judy—the superimposed title and credits act as a minimal veil to shield us from this vertiginous gaze. Mulvey: "Scottie's voyeurism is blatant: he falls in love with a woman he follows and spies on without speaking to ..." But given that the voyeurism of Scottie is mitigated by the circumstance that the best position in which to be in relation to someone who has witnessed her own death is that of a shadowing detective since it allows one to avoid her vertiginous eyes, it is better to find other examples of voyeurism in Hitchcock's work, for example, the male photographer with cast leg of *Rear Window* who spends his time spying on his neighbors with his camera's telephoto lens; or *Psycho*'s Norman Bates, his eye gazing through an aperture in the wall at his female hotel guest taking off her

shirt and skirt in order to shower. I imagine that past the traumatic visit to the jetty during which he saw himself die, *La Jetée*'s boy's friends used to often play with him blind man's bluff to simply have those vertiginous eyes of his temporarily covered with blindfolds. As an adult, he is at times followed, at other times blindfolded by those conducting the time-travel experiment, because it is traumatic, unsettling to look into his vertiginous eyes. The one kind of gaze that would balance, be equivalent to that of someone who saw his own death is the startling actual movement of the eyes of the woman in *La Jetée* in what was until then a photoroman.

As she comes out of the bathroom dressed in the same gray suit as Madeleine and having Madeleine's hair color and style, Judy, surrounded by a green penumbra, ostensibly issuing from the garish light of the hotel neon sign flashing outside her window, looks spectral. She appears that way not only because Scottie has the impression that he is seeing Madeleine coming back from the dead, but also because Judy herself is someone come back from the dead, since what she witnessed on the tower was her own death. Therefore we should extend the scope of Hitchcock's "the man wants to go to bed with a woman who's dead; he is indulging in a form of necrophelia,"<sup>184</sup> viewing it as referring not only to Madeleine but also to Judy. Scottie's cold bearing and rigid posture as Judy hugs him is that of someone holding a corpse; and his gingerly reciprocal hug is that of someone not fully convinced that she is there, that is, that of someone hugging a ghost. The protagonist of Marker's *La Jetée* is ghostly (as the narrator indicates: "she calls him her ghost") not only because he appears and then disappears in his back and forth travels in time, but also because he has already died, carries in his memory the image of his death, which he saw as a child.

What kind of emotion does Scottie feel as he sees on Judy's neck the necklace he recognizes as that of the dead Madeleine? Psychologically, he seems distressed, having realized for sure that he

had been played for a sucker by Madeleine's husband, and that the woman standing before him was willfully part of a scheme to implicate him, as the witness of a suicide, in what was actually a murder. But conjointly, although this is not acted psychologically, he is happy, indeed transported, since he now has the chance of revisiting the past (he soon tells her: "I have to go back into the past once more, just once more ... One doesn't often get a second chance. I want to stop being haunted. You're my second chance, Judy"). From the moment Scottie sees the necklace, *Vertigo* is confirmed as a time-travel film. Judy's earlier mysterious disappearance from the hotel and her subsequent appearance at the mission running up the staircase to the top of the tower where she stands along an identical woman complemented each other. They already hinted at time-travel. (During his first meeting with Scottie, Gavin Elster had decried the passing away of old San Francisco: "San Francisco has changed. The things that spell San Francisco to me are disappearing fast ... I should have liked to have lived here then." It is flamboyantly fitting that he prepared for Scottie the conditions for time travel to the past.) It is thus not accidental that *Vertigo* has been referenced intertextually by two time-travel films: Chris Marker's great *La Jetée*, and Gilliam's *Twelve Monkeys*, a remake of *La Jetée*. The time-travel machine has taken many figures in film: cars, etc., but also, once, in *Vertigo*, a necklace.<sup>185</sup> While they kiss after she comes out of the bathroom looking exactly like Madeleine, and as the backdrop shows, Scottie and Judy are momentarily transported back in time to the mission. What Deleuze writes about depth of field applies to Scottie and Judy's trip back to the Spanish tower: "The images in depth express regions of past as such, each with its own accents and potentials ... The hero acts, walks and moves; but it is the past that he plunges himself into and moves in: time is no longer subordinated to movement, but movement to time. Hence in the great scene where Kane catches up in depth with the friend he will break with, it is in the past that he himself

moves."<sup>186</sup> Their trip to the mission is a travel back in time. Why did he time-travel? To find in the multiverse that world in which all the lies his beloved told him are truths;<sup>187</sup> and because he who had tried to free Madeleine from her possession with the past had become obsessed by it (insisting that the brunette Judy dye her hair blonde and replicate the way Madeleine dressed and behaved, and visiting with her Ernie's, the restaurant where he glimpsed Madeleine for the first time), subject to the compulsion to repeat,<sup>188</sup> thus to the death drive. Scottie, who conquers his acrophobia and reaches this second time the top of the church tower, has actually replaced one kind of vertigo by another, the spatial one of acrophobia by the temporal one of time travel. Notwithstanding that the mission was empty when they arrived, a dark figure suddenly walks out of the dark staircase. It is from the past that that figure, a nun, appears on the tower bell. Startled, Judy recoils and falls fatally off the tower. Madeleine was not murdered by someone from the past, but Judy was. Looking down toward the dead body of Judy, Scottie assumes the posture of The Crucified. Whom might he try to resurrect, Judy or Madeleine? Who of the two is the kind of beloved who induces the urge to resurrect, implying that it won't be disappointing? Since except for Jesus Christ, one brings back from death one who is haunted by the other, Madeleine is a far better candidate for resurrection since she was herself partly possessed by her ancestor Carlotta Valdes, thus somewhat other.

#### **The Mourner and the Dead/Undead:**

It is related in Katherine Hurbis-Cherrier's video *All That's Left* that when asked by the priest to share anecdotes about the videomaker's dead aunt, none of those attending the funeral mass said anything. I imagine some of them moving their lips soundlessly, neither out of shyness nor owing to an intuition that the late has reverted to a superposition of possibilities, but as a miming of the diegetic silence-over

that is most probably enveloping the dead. What took place at the funeral mass was thus a real minute of commemorative silence.

Some dead are conjointly undergoing an extreme permeability in the Bardo state (*every name in history is I*) and totally embalmed and shielded in a safe inside the melancholiac who incorporated<sup>189</sup> them (“*save v. tr.* 2. To keep in a safe condition; safeguard. 3. To prevent the waste or loss of; conserve. 4. To set aside for future use; store. 5. To ... spare”<sup>190</sup> ... from the rebirth-redeath cycle). Maintaining outside of death the person who died and that one is unable to successfully mourn maintains one outside of life. Tim Burton’s *Batman* shows one version of the conflict between the unliving and the undead: that between the unliving through *incorporation* (Batman) and the undead responsible for the death of the one(s) the former is incorporating (the Joker). Some vampire films show a more just version of this conflict, this time between the unliving and the undead they incorporated, the latter trying to get rid of the former to liberate themselves from the image being enforced on them by the unliving. Either because the undead has been replaced by the double (in Hitchcock’s *Rebecca*, wanting to hurt the new wife for replacing her dead, former mistress, the maid tells her that the hung portrait represents her husband’s grandmother, when in fact it is Rebecca’s, the husband’s previous wife. This seeming lie is the occasion for us to know that in the undeath realm the late Rebecca has been replaced at least in part by the husband’s grandmother), or because he or she has no image (whether because he or she sees himself/herself with his or her back to himself/herself in the mirror or because he or she does not appear in the mirror), this image is a fake one. In Hitchcock we have both the wrong man, the male unjustly accused of being the murderer (*The Wrong Man*, 1956, etc.), and the wrong woman, the dead woman who is divergent from her image (*Rebecca*, 1940; *Vertigo*, 1958). The same way that in Islam and Judaism man is in the image of a God who has no image, in many of the films that deal with the failure of mourning

we have the case of a living person forced by the unliving melancholiac to be in the image of the dead, who has no image.

Between *Distracted* and (*Vampires*), between the suicidal and the undead, between distraction and the yogic absolute concentration needed to neutralize the underworld of undeath, between forgetfulness and amnesia, between the perforation of walls and (quantum) tunneling, there was the encounter with the double (-in-the-mind). All along (see the Author’s Note and the last page in *Distracted*), I had the apprehension that my reception from my threatened amnesiac version in a realm of altered consciousness would result in a book that is the double of *Distracted*, signaling the latter’s ruin.

It is only now, having encountered the double in my mind and undergone amnesia, that I entered a relation with my late father—or is he, who died five years ago, in 1986, by now totally dissolved into clouds and towels or reincarnated?

*Life goes on:* the dead is replaced from the standpoint of the living who has accomplished the work of mourning. Death goes on: the dead is replaced from his or her own standpoint: “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.”<sup>191</sup> It is not the living only who should not forget the dead: the latter too should not forget themselves. The fidelity of Shakespeare’s Gertrude takes into consideration the dead’s forced infidelity to himself/herself.

Wilhelm Wundt reports that a loved one changes at the moment of death into a demon from whom the survivors can expect nothing but hostility. This change can only partially be explained by Freud’s ambivalence of the living toward the dead while they still lived and consequently only partially by *projection*, for it is also in part the result of the dead’s possession or replacement by the double. Concerning the dead, one has to decide at each occasion whether he or she has been totally replaced by a demon (the constant refrain in *Dracula* to justify the impaling and beheading of the undead, for instance of the

vampire Lucy: she only has the figure, likeness of the living human being); or whether he or she is possessed, in which case he or she ought to be helped even if the only remnant of him or her is the *hidden observer*. The lama or Sufi Shaykh can help through the diegetic voice-over that guides the undead in the in-between state, whether Bardo or *barzak*; the lay person can help through writing or art.

Persons with obsessive neurosis have obsessive guilt feelings in relation to the dead person. “It is not that the mourner was really responsible for the death or was really guilty of neglect, as the self-reproaches declare to be the case. None the less there was something in her—a wish that was unconscious to herself—which would not have been dissatisfied by the occurrence of death and which might actually have brought it about if it had the power. And after death *has* occurred, it is against this unconscious wish that the reproaches are a reaction.”<sup>192</sup> Was Freud’s placing the “has” in italics a parapraxis? That is, did Freud want to italicize everything else except this “has”? For why is it only after the death of the other person that the obsessive neurotic begins to feel guilt if the unconscious wish was all the time operant? If it is only then that the self-reproaches appear, it is because it is only after death, and in the case of the schizophrenic, after death before dying, that, no longer guarded by consciousness, the dead can be affected radically by the unconscious of others. The living can always and so easily enter without permission or obstacle the minds of the dead: symptomatically, Harker enters Dracula’s castle without invitation, the door opening on its own (Browning’s *Dracula*). But the dead have to be invited into the living’s houses (Murnau’s *Nosferatu*). Therefore, rather than trying to shield the living from the dead, one should try to shield the dead and those who died before dying (the mad, etc.) from the living. Once the dead has either dissolved into everything else or reincarnated—*life goes on* even for the dead—the living’s previously legitimate guilt toward him or her should cease, otherwise it turns into a sick indulgence. If the

dead is attacked, it is by all, by those who knew him or her and by those who didn’t. These are not in concert in their attack that produces a surrealist *exquisite corpse*, although their victim most often feels that they are. That is why notwithstanding folkloric versions’ portrayal of the undead’s retaliation as circumscribed, first against his family and relatives, then against the inhabitants of his village, his retaliation actually operates, as in the modern fiction versions, indiscriminately, through the plague.

#### **Mortal Guilt:**

One finds the conjunction of death with guilt already in Genesis (2–3), although there it is twice covered-up through inversion, made to look as if mortality is due to guilt, and guilt is due to a specific, intentional act. But guilt precedes any specific intentional act precisely because mortality precedes guilt: it is because there is death and hence the unconscious that there is a guilt that has nothing to do with any intentional acts. I, but also the dead and schizophrenics, in fact everybody, with the possible exception of the yogi—yoga works to burn, do away with the unconscious—am always guilty toward the dead and the schizophrenics, those who died before dying. Ghost and vampire do nothing but free associate, that is why they haunt life, the scene of crime both against and of the undead—not only the murderer but also the victim return to the crime scene.

We are guilty before the dead because while in principle we are able to resurrect them, we did not take the measures that would have turned this potentiality into an actual ability; and because our unconscious is already attacking them who have lost the shield of the ego.

#### **Diegetic Voice-over/Image-over:**

Examples of diegetic voices-over: the voice of the lama assisting the dead by reciting from the *Bardo Thödol* (literally *Liberation through Hearing in the In-Between State*); the voice of the ancient Egyptian lector priest

reading from *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* in front of the mummy; or that of the hypnotist: “Although deep asleep you can hear me clearly ... You will always hear me distinctly no matter how deeply asleep you feel.” The lama has to achieve with the dead disciple what the hypnotist can achieve with the hypnotized person. The voice-over of the master assists the dead to fight many of the *sous-entendus* in the Bardo state.

Before the opening of the stage curtain, a deep, slow voice hypnotically addresses the hidden actor: “Your eyes are very tired.” The curtain opens partially. Two men are standing facing each other. The one with his back to the audience continues: “You long to close them.” The other’s eyes close. The hypnotist descends into the pit. From there he continues: “You are going back two years into the past. You will now open your eyes and be there. You will continue to report to me and hear my voice and answer my questions however deeply asleep you feel.” While the actor opens his eyes, the curtain resumes opening, revealing two performers standing in the other half of the stage, in a different décor. The first actor says: “I see the queen and the king ...” and walks toward the two other actors. At several points in the play, he utters his thoughts and describes aloud what is happening to him, but the other two characters do not hear him. Here the aside loses its artificiality to become diegetic, namely the verbal reporting that occurs in the hypnotically-induced age-regression that does not reach full revivification.<sup>193</sup>

Someone reporting his out-of-the-body state: “Mostly, I was just observing ... It didn’t feel as though it was happening to me at all.” In *Psycho*, both the overhead shot of Norman possessed by his mother and donning her wig and dress as he stabs the detective on the staircase, and the overhead shot of him transporting his mother’s mummy play the role of an out-of-the-body point of view shot: a diegetic image-over. The voyeurism in *Psycho* is to be located not only in Norman’s looking in the peephole at the woman undressing, but also in his looking at himself-as-his-mother from an out-of-body position.

### ***I Am the Martyr Sanā’ Yūsif Muḥaydlī:***

In memoriam *everyone and no one*<sup>194</sup>

A TV monitor hanging midway from the ceiling shows a chair behind which is a poster with photographs of assassinated members of the Lebanese Communist Party. A man clad in khaki enters frame, sits on the chair, and addresses the camera: “I am the martyr comrade Khalil Aḥmad Raḥḥāl.” Thus starts the mixed-media *Three Posters* presented by Elias Khoury and Rabih Mroue on 2 September 2000 at Ayloul Festival, Beirut. The man goes on to tell us that he will very shortly undertake a martyring operation against the Israeli occupation forces in Lebanon. There follows two other takes, with variations, of his testimony. At this point, Elias Khoury walks to the door behind the TV monitor and opens it, revealing the same set we were seeing on the monitor and a video camera directed at the chair and the poster. We thus realize that what we had watched was not a taped video but a live performance (it is as if the subtracted de jure repeatability of the image when the latter is revealed to have been live was compensated by and displaced to a de facto repetition of the testimony).<sup>195</sup> If I had believed the opening statement, then it is as if when I saw the same person still alive I were watching a ghost, so that while at the level of the medium we move from a light image to real presence, at the level of the structure of the piece, we move from a presence to an apparition. The performer removes his fatigues, takes out a piece of paper from his pocket and reads from it: “My name is Rabih Mroue. I was born in Beirut in 1966. I joined the Communist Party in 1983, and I participated in operations of the Lebanese National Resistance in 1987 in Ḥaṣḥayya and Balāt and other locations.” He then mentions that Raḥḥāl died not in the south but in one of the internecine battles in West Beirut in 1987, and offers the show in tribute to the martyrs of the national resistance. The door is closed again. Then a second video is shown. It is an unedited document showing the late communist Jamāl Saṭī relaying his last message

## “أنا الرفيق الشهيد جمال ساطي”

ص. ١٩١

### الشهيد جمال ساطي

الاسم : جمال ساطي

مواليد : كامد اللوز البقاع الغربي عام ١٩٦٢ حائز على شهادة البكالوريا القسم الاول ، سبق وان نفذ ٩ عمليات ضد قوات الاحتلال وهي :

في ٨٣/٥/٢٩ - تفجير لغم بناقلة جند للعدو قرب كامد اللوز يدمرها .

في ٨٣/٨/٢٧ كمين لدورية قرب كامد اللوز .

في ٨٤/٣/١٨ كمين لدورية قرب جب جنين وكامد اللوز ادى الى مقتل ٤ جنود للعدو .

في ٨٤/٤/١٥ هجوم على موقع مشترك للعميل لحد وقوات الاحتلال الاسرائيلية في كامد اللوز .

في ٨٤/٦/٣ كمين لدورية لقوات الاحتلال بين كامد اللوز والبيرة ادى الى مقتل ٣ جنود للعدو .

في ٨٤/٦/٦ تفجير عبوة بناقلة جند قرب كامد اللوز ادى الى تدميرها .

في ٨٤/٦/٢١ كمين لدورية من المخابرات الاسرائيلية في شوارع كامد اللوز .

في ٨٤/٨/١٥ هجوم على موقع اسرائيلي في جوار كامد اللوز .

في ٨٥/٢/١٢ تفجير عبوة بشاحنة اسرائيلية .

ص. ١٩٠

Jalal Toufic

العمليات الاستشهادية

Vampires



Station Hill

المركب العربي للثقافة

## “In memory of the amnesiac Jalal Toufic (not that he no longer exists, but that he was/is dead/undead then/now)”

epigraph

### The mortal Jalal Toufic

Name: Jalal Toufic

Born in Beirut in 1962. He received a BA in Philosophy from the American University of Beirut in 1984; an MA in Cinema Studies from New York University in 1987; and a Ph.D. in Radio/TV/Film from Northwestern University in 1992. Toufic has taught at the University of California at Berkeley, USC, and California Institute of the Arts.

2000 — *Forthcoming* (Berkeley, CA: Atelos).

1999 — Editor of *Middle Eastern Films Before Thy Gaze Returns to Thee*, Discourse 21.1.

1998 — Co-editor of *Gilles Deleuze: A Reason to Believe in this World*, Discourse 20.3.

1997 — *Radical Closure Artist with Bandaged Sense Organ*, installation, Artists Space, New York, June 7–July 19.

1996 — *Over-Sensitivity* (Los Angeles: Sun & Moon Press).

1996 — *‘Āshūrā’: This Blood Spilled in My Veins*, 17-minute two-channel video.

1995 — *Credits Included: A Video in Red and Green*, 46 minutes.

1993 — *(Vampires): An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film* (Barrytown, New York: Station Hill Press).

1991 — *Distracted* (Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press).

2000 — *Two Posthumous Resumes*.

## “أنا الرفيق الشهيد جمال ساطي”

ص. ١٩١

### الشهيد جمال ساطي

الاسم : جمال ساطي

مواليد : كامد اللوز البقاع الغربي عام ١٩٦٢ حائز على شهادة البكالوريا القسم الاول ، سبق وان

نفذ ٩ عمليات ضد قوات الاحتلال وهي :

في ٨٣/٥/٢٩ - تفجير لغم بناقلة جند للعدو قرب كامد اللوز يدمرها .

في ٨٣/٨/٢٧ كمين لدورية قرب كامد اللوز .

في ٨٤/٣/١٨ كمين لدورية قرب جب جنين وكامد اللوز ادى الى مقتل ٤ جنود للعدو .

في ٨٤/٤/١٥ هجوم على موقع مشترك للعميل لحد وقوات الاحتلال الاسرائيلية في كامد اللوز .

في ٨٤/٦/٣ كمين لدورية لقوات الاحتلال بين كامد اللوز والبيرة ادى الى مقتل ٣ جنود للعدو .

في ٨٤/٦/٦ تفجير عبوة بناقلة جند قرب كامد اللوز ادى الى تدميرها .

في ٨٤/٦/٢١ كمين لدورية من المخابرات الاسرائيلية في شوارع كامد اللوز .

في ٨٤/٨/١٥ هجوم على موقع اسرائيلي في جوار كامد اللوز .

في ٨٥/٢/١٢ تفجير عبوة بشاحنة اسرائيلية .

ص. ١٩٠

## “I am the martyr comrade Jamāl Sāṭī.”

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### The martyr Jamāl Sāṭī

Name: Jamāl Sāṭī

He was born in Kāmid al-Lawz, Western Biqā', in 1962. He holds a Baccalaureate-I certificate (*shabāda*). He has already accomplished 9 operations against the occupation forces:

5/29/83 — The detonation of a mine under an enemy troop carrier near Kāmid al-Lawz, resulting in the carrier's destruction.

8/27/83 — Ambushing a patrol near Kāmid al-Lawz.

3/18/84 — Ambushing a patrol near Jib Jinnīn and Kāmid al-Lawz, which led to the death of 4 enemy soldiers.

4/15/84 — Attacking a joint post of the agent Lahd and the Israeli forces in Kāmid al-Lawz.

6/3/84 — An ambush of a patrol of the occupation forces between Kāmid al-Lawz and al-Bira resulting in the death of 3 enemy soldiers.

6/6/84 — Detonating a roadside bomb under a troop carrier near Kāmid al-Lawz, resulting in its destruction.

6/21/84 — Ambushing an Israeli intelligence patrol in the streets of Kāmid al-Lawz.

8/15/84 — attacking an Israeli post in the vicinity of Kāmid al-Lawz.

2/12/85 — detonating a bomb in an Israeli truck.

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# Au hasard Balhazar

. A FILM BY ROBERT BRESSON .

## Models:

Anne Wiazemsky  
François Lafarge  
Philippe Asselin  
Nathalie Joyaut  
Walter Green (I)  
Jean-Claude Guilbert  
**Pierre Klossowski**  
François Sullerot  
M.C. Fremont  
Jean Rémignard

## بطولة جمال ساطي

ويقول بعض شهود العيان ان الشهيد جمال كان يقود الحمير الذي حملت  
عليه كمية المتفجرات بواسطة سلتين ووضعها بشكل متواز وان الشهيد  
كان يرتدي ثياب شيخ محلي حتى لا يلفت اليه النظر.



*Translation of poster's Arabic section:*

*Leading Role:* Jamāl Sātī

"Some eyewitnesses say that the martyr Jamāl was riding a donkey on which was placed, in two balanced baskets, a large quantity of explosives; and that he was donning the clothes of a local sheikh so as not to draw attention to himself."

before his planned martyrdom (an edited version of the tape was broadcast on Lebanese TV on 6 August 1985). Sātī repeats his testimony, with variations, three times, each time starting with: "I am the martyr comrade Jamāl Sātī."

Sanā' Muḥaydlī seems to have been the first to use such a locution.<sup>196</sup> Her videotaped testimony, shot by her, and broadcast on Lebanese TV on 4/9/1985 starts with: "I am the martyr Sanā' Yūsif Muḥaydlī (*anā as-shahīda Sanā' Yūsif Muḥaydlī*)."<sup>197</sup> The morning of that same day, at 11 a.m., the 17-year-old Muḥaydlī had crashed the explosives-filled car she was driving into an Israeli military convoy at Bātīr gate, Jizzīn, killing, according to the Israeli military spokesman, two officers and wounding two soldiers. The same locution is found in the subsequent televised testimonies of a number of Lebanese resistance fighters who died in martyring operations against the Israeli army and/or the now defunct South Lebanon Army (SLA): "I am the martyr Mālik Wihbī ..."<sup>198</sup> (Mālik Wihbī, b. 1966, mortally crashed his truck full of explosives into an Israeli military convoy at 6:15 p.m. on 4/20/1985 at the Qāsmiyya Bridge checkpoint); "I am the martyr comrade Khālīd Azraq ..."<sup>199</sup> (Khālīd Azraq, b. 1966, mortally crashed his pickup truck full of explosives into the joint Israeli and SLA checkpoint at Az-Zāmrīyya at 4:30 p.m. on 7/9/1985); "I am the martyr comrade Hishām 'Abbās"<sup>200</sup> (Hishām 'Abbās, b. 1962, mortally crashed his car full of explosives into a SLA checkpoint at Kafr Tibnīt at 4 p.m. on 7/15/1985); "I am the martyr 'Alī Ghāzī Ṭālib"<sup>201</sup> ('Alī Ghāzī Ṭālib, b. 1967, mortally crashed his car full of explosives into an Israeli military convoy in Arnūn, Nabatīyya, at 8 a.m. on 7/31/1985); "I am the martyr comrade Munā' Ḥasan Qaṭāyā"<sup>202</sup> (Munā' Ḥasan Qaṭāyā, b. 1967, mortally blew up his car containing 300 kg of explosives at the SLA checkpoint at Rymāt, Jizzīn, at 14:05 on 8/28/1985); "I am the martyr comrade Maryam Khayr Ad-Dīn"<sup>203</sup> (Maryam Khayr Ad-Dīn, b. 1966, mortally crashed her car full of explosives at the SLA checkpoint at Za'la, Ḥaṣbayya, at 7:30 a.m. on

9/11/1985). This locution may be one of the major inventions of the Lebanese war.<sup>204</sup> It can only issue from someone who not only is unaware that he or she is already dead even as he or she lives, but also wants to extend his or her life even into death. Thus the testimony of Bilāl Faḥṣ, who drove a car filled with 150 kg of explosives into an Israeli convoy on 6/16/1984 at Zahrānī, Ṣaydā, begins with the following Qur'ānic *āya*: “And call not those who are slain in the way of Allāh ‘dead.’ Nay, they are living, only ye perceive not” (Qur’ān 3:169);<sup>205</sup> and Sanā’ Muḥaydlī says in her testimony: “I am not dead, but alive amidst you ...”<sup>206</sup> Notwithstanding over a hundred thousand dead in the years of war and civil war, the Lebanese seem not to have learned to die. Therefore, one of the great tasks of art and writing in Lebanon for the foreseeable future is to teach this people famed for being “life-loving” to die,<sup>207</sup> that is, that they are already dead.

“By the time you see this tape, I, comrade Jamāl Sātī, will have died” is believable, but not: “I am the martyr comrade Jamāl Sātī.” While I can usually assume in the present of videotaping my future state at the time of broadcasting or screening, I cannot do so in the case of death.<sup>208</sup> I cannot believe Jamāl Sātī on TV telling me, “I am the martyr comrade Jamāl Sātī ...”,<sup>209</sup> even if I am told that he had died in a martyring operation by the time I saw him on TV (Jamāl Sātī, b. 1962, mortally blew up the explosives hidden in two baskets on his donkey at the SLA checkpoint at Tallit Zaghla, Ḥāṣbayya, in the morning of 8/6/1985). And while I can categorically assert, “I will die,” I cannot deduce from this that at one point in the future I can say, “I am dead,” even if death is not a final disappearance. The dead’s living lover, family, relatives and/or colleagues are customarily asked to come to the morgue to recognize the corpse;<sup>210</sup> but the dead too has to recognize his or her corpse (Billy Wilder’s *Sunset Boulevard*). Can I deduce from the resulting “this is my corpse” “I am dead”? While it may seem that such a conclusion is a forgone one, in death there is no link between the two: “This is my—Nietzsche’s—corpse, therefore

Prado is dead.” Death, in which I constantly *free associate*, not infrequently in a paranoid manner, nonetheless does not allow me to go from “I was murdered” to “I am dead.” The revenant can say, “I was murdered,” but not, “I am dead,” notwithstanding that the former logically implies the latter. The answer to the “question,” “Am I dead?”<sup>211</sup> that haunts me as I keep experiencing unworldly occurrences, and the deduction from “I was murdered” cannot be, “I am dead”—unless the latter is attributed to another proper name—but, “I must be dead.”<sup>212</sup> The vampire in Coppola’s *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* does not say during his confession to his lover, Mina, “I am dead,” but: “I am *dead* to the whole world.” Nowhere except in Edgar Allan Poe’s short story *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar* have I come across the locution “I am dead.” When the doctor who had hypnotized the moribund Mr. Valdemar “asked him ... if he still slept,” he answered at a delay: “Yes; — no; — I *have been* sleeping — and now — now — *I am dead*.” *Nearly seven months* later, his state having remained *exactly* the same, when the doctor attempts to awaken him, his hideous voice breaks forth: “For God’s Sake! — quick! — quick! — put me to sleep — or, quick! — waken me! — quick! — *I say to you that I am dead!*” How to account for this locution in Poe’s short story? In trance I become my own medium. I cannot directly assume my death. My death is uttered either through a medium, as in Kurosawa’s *Rashomon*—were Nietzsche to speak through the medium he could very well say: “I, Nietzsche, am dead”; or through others, as with Nietzsche in his dying before dying: “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,”<sup>213</sup> and by implication: “I, Prado, am dead,” “I, Prado’s father, am dead.” The dead is no one, as is made clear by the mirror device in vampire films, the vampire not appearing in the speculum; moreover, the dead is not one name, but every name in history, and therefore, synecdochically, everyone. By titling his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* “A Book for Everyone and No One,” Nietzsche is addressing it to the dead and to himself at the onset of his coming psychosis,

of his dying before dying, when he will exclaim: “Every name in history is I.”<sup>214</sup> The real one who died before dying is not Jamāl Sātī saying, “I am the martyr comrade Jamāl Sātī,” in a videotaped testimony before going on a successful martyring operation, but Nietzsche writing in a letter: “Every name in history is I.”

The late has no past, since the latter is affected with forgery: the dead cannot assume even the martyring operation that led to his or her death; no future, since his or her timeline has stopped: Harker’s words to Mina before he leaves to Transylvania in Murnau’s *Nosferatu*, “Nothing will happen to me,” which are intended to be reassuring, are actually worrying since they imply that he will be dead there; and no present in which to say: “I am dead.”

It is often said that the difference between a human and an animal with regards to death is that the former knows that he or she is to die, while the latter doesn’t. But is it basically the case that a human knows that he or she will die? Freud: “Biology has not yet been able to decide whether death is the inevitable fate of every living being or whether it is only a regular but yet perhaps avoidable event in life. It is true that the statement ‘All men are mortal’ is paraded in text-books of logic as an example of a general proposition; but no human being really grasps it, and our unconscious has as little use now as it ever had for the idea of its own mortality”;<sup>215</sup> “the psycho-analytic school could venture on the assertion that at bottom no one believes in his own death, or, to put the same thing in another way, that in the unconscious every one of us is convinced of his own immortality.”<sup>216</sup> It may be true that it is only others who die, not I, but that is in part because in death I assume all the (other) names of history: “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.” Every name in history, and thus, synecdochically, every human in history has died but not I. This gets materialized in the absence of others often experienced in death: the deserted cities in which the somnambulistic dead wanders in

Bergman’s *Wild Strawberries* and Buñuel’s *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*. While “dying ... is essentially mine in such a way that no one can be my representative” (Martin Heidegger),<sup>217</sup> in death I am every name in history, I am Prado, Prado’s father, Tolstoy, Martin Heidegger, etc. “We are mortal beings, hence already undead even as we live” is a credible statement; it appears in my text “*If You Prick Us, Do We Not Bleed?* No.”<sup>218</sup> One can credibly paraphrase this statement as “I am already dead even as I live” only if one bears in mind that in death I am not concurrent, and therefore that the two *Is* in the statement do not refer to the same name.<sup>219</sup> Thus in the case of Nietzsche, the unfolding of the statement would yield: “I, Prado, Prado’s father, Lesseps, Chambige, am already dead, even as I, Nietzsche, live.” Christ died for Nietzsche, the author of *The Anti-Christ*, since in his dying before dying Nietzsche signed one of his letters with *The Crucified*. Christ died for the schizophrenic Shi’ite ‘Abd ‘Alī 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 ...” Christ dies for us in that in our death, we are all the names of history, including Jesus Christ.<sup>220</sup> It is likely that the prohibition in Judaism against pronouncing the secret name of God is a preventive measure against our assuming that name in death, with the consequent death of God.

Since there is something false about the statement “I am the martyr comrade [proper name of the talker],” it is appropriate that Rabiḥ Mroue should perform what appears to be a fictional version of it: “I am the martyr comrade Khalīl Aḥmad Raḥḥāl.”<sup>221</sup> Paradoxically, while Jamāl Sātī’s statement is false although by the time the videotape is broadcast on TV, Jamāl Sātī has indeed already died; the second statement is not: unawares, Mroue was telling us something about his death—I shudder to think that his speech was co-written or even changed by his collaborator Elias Khoury, since Khoury would have thus contributed to writing the forged past of the

undead Mroue. Art and writing are dead serious. Rabih Mroue dead is all the names of history, including Khalil Aḥmad Raḥḥāl (Rabih Mroue could as well have said: “I am the martyr comrade Jamāl Sātī”; Jamāl Sātī dead may say: “I am the martyr comrade Rabih Mroue”). Therefore when Rabih Mroue says, “I am the martyr comrade Khalil Aḥmad Raḥḥāl,” those who know him are not justified in deducing that they are watching something fictional—this would be the case were he assuming a character who is alive. The statement “I am comrade Khalil Aḥmad Raḥḥāl” is certainly far less risky for the performer uttering it than “I am the martyr comrade Khalil Aḥmad Raḥḥāl,” since the second discloses to us something about the performer in the counterfeit realm of the late.<sup>222</sup> The dead are usually not to be believed (Kurosawa’s *Rashomon*), yet the historically-false information Rabih Mroue gives about himself while playing a dead character is believable—we have here an exemplification of Picasso’s “Art is a lie that makes us realize truth, at least the truth that is given us to understand. The artist must know the manner whereby to convince others of the truthfulness of his lies.”<sup>223</sup>

### Composites:

The first thing one notices in many nineteenth century photographs is the blurriness of the living. Since the early daguerreotypes and calotypes required long, multi-minute exposures, at first photography best preserved the dead, not the living, the quick (quick. 6. *Archaic* a. Alive [*American Heritage Dictionary*]). But even at present, one would be able to see clearly, if the fear of fear did not force one to swish pan one’s look, that when the motionless living and the frozen undead are side by side, the frozen brings out the blurriness of the motionless. While the living never become immobile but only motionless, i.e., move less, to a lesser degree; the vampire and the dancer come to a dead stop. The freezing of the undead is not merely motionlessness, but the coming of the motionlessness to a violent,

furtive stop (breaching the conservation of momentum). He had seen corpses before, but this thing he was now perceiving in the coffin was very different, was not moving at all. To belong to nature whether as an object or as a living entity is to be restless.<sup>224</sup> Even the corpse, even one in suspended animation, moves, is restless, when compared to the freezing of the dead and to that of the dancer; it is only the ones released from Karma, as well as the vampire and the dancers when they are frozen that are not restless. The freezing of the dancer in *Coppélia* is what differentiates her from the mannequins since, unlike their motionlessness, this freezing is not worldly but occurs only in the realm of mortals. The blurriness of the living is due to their movement even as they stand still; the blurriness of the dead, perceptible in Francis Galton’s and Nancy Burson’s composites,<sup>225</sup> is the result of the decomposition of the different composites of which each was composed (“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”<sup>226</sup>). The living person is a composite that dissociates in death-as-undead or during some states of altered consciousness first into separate subunits that are themselves composites,<sup>227</sup> most of them uglier than the original one, then into elements, becoming alien. Each of us is common, not alien, both because each of us is a composite of all the others, even of those who lived erstwhile and who are long dead, and because each of us is part of the composite that constitutes the others. That is why we do not find others or for that matter ourselves alien, and that is why they too do not find us alien. In certain states of altered consciousness, though, we see the dead, people who have become not merely uglier, but alien, and that is because they are no longer composites (the withdrawal of the cathexis of the world).

What is extremely discomposing about the double is that in a twisted, too logical way, he is more me than myself: while I include all the others, he includes only “me”; and therefore he is not really me, since

I am never purely myself. The double is unrecognizable because he is the Same. The double is not the other, but I divested of all others. That is why whenever I encounter him, even in a crowded public place, I feel I am alone with him, *alone with the alone*;<sup>228</sup> he embodies the divestment from the world. That is why encountering the double is such a desolate experience, and is a premonition of death with its bereavement from others and the rest of the world.

#### **The Surgeon and the Dismembered Apprentice Magician:**

Walter Benjamin: “The surgeon represents the polar opposite of the magician. The magician heals a sick person by the laying on of hands; the surgeon cuts into the patient’s body. The magician maintains the natural distance between the patient and himself; though he reduces it very slightly by the laying on of hands, he greatly increases it by virtue of his authority. The surgeon does exactly the reverse; he greatly diminishes the distance between himself and the patient by penetrating into the patient’s body, and increases it but little by the caution with which his hand moves among the organs.”<sup>229</sup> Benjamin appears to be unaware that the magician can effectively maintain the patient’s aura only because he underwent initiatory states and ordeals one of which consists in seeing in visions his body being dismembered by demons who clean his bones, throw away his bodily fluids, “cut off his head (which they set to one side, for the novice must watch his own dismemberment ...) and hack his body to bits, which are later distributed among the spirits of various sicknesses. It is only on this condition that the future Shaman will obtain the power of healing ... His bones are then covered with new flesh, and in some cases he is also given new blood.”<sup>230</sup> It is the reconstituted body of the shaman, his new body that has an aura.

#### **Subtle Necrophilia:**

He knew that the surface skin cells were dead since cells cannot

survive exposure to the air. Nonetheless, he was inflamed by the tenderness of her skin. He wanted to caress all of it, even that under the nails.

He who had said about his maddening wife, “She is dead to me,” subsequently followed her into the underworld when she died to all others too. As he reached that realm, he heard a mocking voice in his head: “Why did you follow her here, into the underworld? You would have done better to stay in the life realm, for it is far more probable for you and her to meet in the guise of your reincarnations than that you would meet in the labyrinthine realm of undeath with its over-turns.” The underworld’s god did not instruct him not to look back at her before they both attain life. She followed him toward the life realm. As he crossed into life, he heard her voice say, “You can certainly touch,” and felt her pull his hand to her vulva. He could feel warm sand inside. He heard a grating lascivious laugh. He promptly turned. Before he had time to remove his hand, he saw her open her mouth to speak. Notwithstanding hearing her voice in his head, she seemed soundless, for the voice was out of sync with the frantic movement of her lips. “Yet another necrophiliac. You followed me into death to fuck me. Go ahead.” The expression on her face was at first concordant with the jeering tone of the voice, then became contrastingly quite sad then reverted again to being derisive. He did not feel enough repugnance for his look to repulse her into the death realm. As he removed his hand, she said: “We, the dead, are permeable to each other. I feel an insertion of your thoughts in my mind. This impression of a thought-insertion is amplified and confirmed by the circumstance that these thoughts are articulated not in my voice but in yours. The hand with which I gripped yours and placed it on my vulva was itself gripped by the forceful order of your voice in my head. Which one should I take as more indicative of your desire: your present disconcerted silence, which is open to interpretation, or your obscene voice that I hear in my mind and that dissuades from any interpretation?

Place your hand back on my pussy.” When he did not stir, he again heard her voice: “Something is clearly bothering you.” Was she finally coming to her senses, be it momentarily? “It must be that I am not really a corpse. I’ll indulge you.” He was unsettled by the speedy furtiveness with which her body was transmuted from a subtle body into a corpse. He heard her voice again. It did not come from the mouth of the corpse, which was inert, but seemed to be both in his head and in the air. “Something is still bothering you? That I am upright? OK. I’ll lie down.” She lay on the ground. When he still did not move, she added: “Are you sure you will not regret missing the opportunity to fuck me now, when I am dead? Wouldn’t it be one more irresponsible experience to have in the realm of death, where we are anyway guilty?” When he still did not approach her, she, puzzled, asked: “What then do you want from me?” He knew better than to expect requited love from the dead, those who no longer exist. To have reciprocal love and gratitude, he had to wait until she was alive again. He blurted: “I want nothing from you yet: you are presently nothing.” He took a mirror from his pocket and held it to her: she did not appear in it. “I can want something from you only after I raise you from death.” She responded in a thundering voice: “If you truly do not want anything from me, why don’t you leave me alone? Or else, since you, insignificant in comparison to Orpheus, are bound to fail to resurrect me, why don’t you look for me later in the guise of my next reincarnation? Here I’ll quote your beloved Nietzsche: ‘Above all do not mistake me for another’ (*Ecce Homo*)—in the reincarnation. A caution: when looking for my reincarnation, do not trust any feeling of intimacy, however intense, that you may have toward someone. So as to spare you much fruitless search, I will reveal to you how I will look in my next reincarnation.” Shortly, there was a blinding light, a quasi lightning. When he opened his eyes again, she was holding a photograph! It showed a Japanese girl dressed in the characteristic, sailor-style school uniform. One of her breasts was visible, and her

underpants were hanging at her knee. He heard in his head the following words from Genet’s *Querelle*: “The notion of love or lust appears as a *natural* corollary to the notion of Sea and Murder—and it is, moreover, the notion of *love against nature*.” He had a hard on and ejaculated. He found himself uttering the following formula from Chapter XXV of the Papyrus of Ani, a version of *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*: “My heart, my mother; my heart, my mother! My heart whereby I came into being! May nought stand up to oppose me at [my] judgment, may there be no opposition to me in the presence of the Chiefs (Tchatchau); may there be no parting of thee from me in the presence of him that keepeth the Balance! ... and may no lies be spoken against me in the presence of the God.” And then he heard himself continuing: “May my phallus not behave against me.” The semen that fell on the ground began at a short delay to appear on her lips, as if she was actually below the dry, porous ground and it had just seeped to her there. On witnessing this, more semen surged out of his penis. He tore the photograph and threw it away. “I agree: torn, and stained with some mud, it looks even sexier.” He did not recall the ground as muddy, but rather as dry. But now he looked: the ground was indeed muddy. How then did his semen reach her lips? His repugnance was still not such as to push her further into Hades. She resumed her movement toward life. When she was right before him, she stopped. Then after a considerable interval, she advanced one step, and that step was of the same sort that Lazarus took to move out of the grave. Now, after so many impossible matchings due to over-turns in Hades, the two looks, of presently two alive mortals, met. We get an elusive remainder of our and the other’s mortality when on meeting a stranger’s look, our look, seized with an unsettling surprise, has the impulse to turn away. As we gradually find it natural for our looks to meet, we are becoming oblivious that the other human is a mortal.

The bite of teeth into flesh, the love bite, never thrilled him, only teeth kissing teeth. The vampire’s victim felt that her assailant’s erect

penis deep inside her was full of her blood, which instead of getting distributed to all his body went straight to his sexual organ. His sucking of her blood psychosomatically played for her the role of a *period*, therefore she could not have a child for that time span. The vampire renders men impotent and women sterile. “Here there are neither children nor dogs” (*Vampyr*): contagion, genetic splicing, video/TV inlay/overlay and film matting, which produce recombinant images, have replaced reproduction, filiation, and what defends the territory.

#### Gutless:

Like the vampire bat, who must consume 50–100% of its body weight in blood every night,<sup>231</sup> the vampire swelled into a great mass during the feeding binge (*Carmilla*).<sup>232</sup> Yet hunger subsisted, for the vampire, like many a schizophrenic (Judge Schreber “lived for a long time without a stomach, without intestines ... without a bladder”),<sup>233</sup> had no guts. Hence *The Hunger* is a felicitous title for a vampire film. Shortly he had to disgorge what he drank, since it did not dissolve in him—the ability of things to dissolve in others, to become part of them always amazed him. He vomited through his one subsisting quasi-gut: his throat. This made him all the more conscious of all the pipes and tubes not only outside the walls (Bacon’s *Figure at a Washbasin*, 1976, *Three Figures in a Room*, 1964, and *Triptych*, May–June 1973) but also inside them (Terry Gilliam’s *Brazil*). Then he disgorged his throat: all the pipes and tubes in the walls disappeared and he looked for a long time at the walls’ impervious smoothness, like a trap that has snapped shut (like the door closing behind the victim of the vampire).

Anorectics often take over the family cooking; the lean Nosferatu prepares Harker’s meals. He did not have to do so for long, since at the high altitude where his castle was, his guest soon began to suffer from loss of appetite and dulling of taste.

Michel de Certeau saw the following piece of graffiti in the bath-

room of a movie theatre: “Don’t write on the shitters, shit on writing.”<sup>234</sup> Surely this line was not addressed to the dead, who view things in a literal way, thus do not take *shit on* as a phrasal verb meaning “to treat with malice or extreme disrespect,”<sup>235</sup> and who, having no guts, are unable to shit. “Stop shitting me.” “I am gutless, so I do not shit.” “No Shit!” The undead, those who are *scared to death*, are gutless: something has *scared the shit out of* them.

#### Death:

Is it the case that there is no affirmation of life without the affirmation of death, not as pure inexistence, but as undeath, the “life” of death, the Bardo state? But how can one affirm a realm that admits of no negation? How can one affirm what only posits, even uncertainty?

Is there no escape from death, not in the sense that we will all die—that remains an external characteristic not so much of death itself as of its relation to life—but in the sense that death itself has no reversal thresholds and allows of no escape velocities from it? One reason for seriously considering the possibility of reincarnation would be that any sentient being has built-in mechanisms to arrest or muffle its operations once it cannot deal even inefficiently with its surroundings (it is itself one of its surroundings), whether through fainting, hibernation, catatonia, thanatosis, dissociation or even death: when the anxiety becomes radically unbearable for the undead,<sup>236</sup> the only way out is life. It is possible that were a nuclear conflagration to kill everybody, this would not mean the annihilation of the soul/ka/shadow/consciousness-flux, but only, which is the scariest, the obliteration of the possibility of credit in the form of reincarnation?

The realm of undeath can be avoided by either indefinite total immobilization, the freezing of everything, exemplarily by an omnipresent observation; or, beyond *free association*,<sup>237</sup> universal interaction. The “omnipresent” act of observation that Vertov’s kino-eye

is purported to be (“We, the masters of vision, the organizers of visible life, armed with the omnipresent kino-eye”)<sup>238</sup> can coexist with universal interaction precisely because it is not omnipresent after all,<sup>239</sup> but contains refractory periods (at least in the guise of the closing of the shutter of both the camera and the projector), for the absence of any refractory period leads to the quantum Zeno effect: a radioactive atom does not decay if continuously observed.<sup>240</sup> The freeze-frames in *The Man with a Movie Camera* indicate that *kino-eye* did manage at times to become a total observation.

The mystical *die before you die* is being reduced to the shallow “die before you die” of cryonics. Many people who have their bodies cryopreserved are really trying, most often without knowing it, to postpone undeath much more than to evade death-as-extinction. In this regard, there is a radical difference between being cryopreserved after death *has* occurred (even if the interval between the death and the freezing was not long enough to cause irremediable damage) and being frozen before dying: in the former case, the freezing followed by reanimation would not have short-circuited undeath.

It is said in Cocteau’s *Orpheus*, 1950: “There is no lying in the land of death.” This must be the paradigmatic lie the dead tell the living. As is clear in Kurosawa’s *Rashomon*, 1950, the testimony of the dead, through the mouth of the medium, is no more authentic, truthful, than that of the living.

One must not deal with death in a *deadly serious* manner, since doing so almost always leads to one’s behaving in a cowardly way.

Death is the absolute literalness of everything. One should try as much as possible to eschew the use of figurative language in the presence of psychotics, who died before dying, for many figurative expressions are the transcription in common language of literal happenings in states of altered consciousness: *lose face*, *watch your back*, *out of this world*, etc. He was sitting with a new acquaintance in the nightclub B018 in Karantina, Beirut, built on the site of a massacre that

took place during the Lebanese civil war. His new Lebanese acquaintance advised him: “*Idhā lam takun dhi’ban akalatka adh-dhi’āb*” (If you are not a wolf, the wolves will devour you). He asked his friend: “Do wolves eat each other? Do you know of any cases of lycanthropy in Lebanon?” “Are you really unaware that that expression is figurative? Sometimes you behave like a goose!” Contrary to the common sense attitude, which is frequently metaphorical/symbolical, an outsider—and who is more of an outsider than the dead?—most often takes things literally, catches what was hidden behind the metaphor.<sup>241</sup> Nietzsche’s “One is not courageous enough to accept what one already knows” often applies to the literal meaning hidden behind the metaphorical/symbolical one. Unfortunately, that which is *staring one in the eye* in states of altered consciousness, the literal, is often doing so to hypnotize one.

Death is the unconscious come to the surface. One has then to rise to a new surface. Asked how it feels to have attained satori, D. T. Suzuki answered: “Just like ordinary everyday experience, except about two inches off the ground!”

Schrodinger’s cat, which is dead-alive before measurement, in a superposition of the two states of death and life, is nonetheless not vampiric, for the vampire, except in inane films, in which he or she is a superposition of being dead and being alive, is undead, that is, neither alive—within the known laws of life—nor dead hence extinct.

Sartre writes in *Nausea* that things assume the aspect of adventure only when we tell about what occurred from the end’s perspective: “I haven’t had any adventures. Things have happened to me, events, incidents, anything you like. But not adventures.... for the most common event to become an adventure, you must ... start *recounting* it. When you are living ... the settings change, people come in and go out, that’s all. There are never any beginnings. Days are tacked on to days without rhyme or reason, it is an endless, monotonous addition.... But when you tell about life, everything changes; only it’s a change nobody

notices ... You appear to begin at the beginning: 'It was a fine autumn evening in 1922. I was a solicitor's clerk at Maromme.' And in fact you have begun at the end. It is there, invisible and present, and it is the end which gives these few words the pomp and value of a beginning."<sup>242</sup> Death being the end—that never ends—everything that happens after/in it is an adventure. Guide books (*The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*) are of little value there—but a guide is necessary.

Death has two figures: organic death, which allows those who survive me to concoct a retrospective unity to my life; and undeath, with its links to forgery and doubling. Given its interest in forgery and doubling and the labyrinth, it is understandable that there's no definitive organic death in Robbe-Grillet's work (hence the title *L'Immortelle*), that a character may be killed in one scene and be alive in another that seamlessly follows it chronologically.

It is instructive to compare how two German filmmakers, Wenders and Herzog, dealt with the dying of a person who belongs to cinema history. Wenders, who had already made several films that dealt in one way or another with the death of film directors—in *Kings of the Road* (1976) one of the two protagonists reads in a newspaper about Fritz Lang's death; in *The American Friend* (1977) Nicholas Ray plays the role of a painter mistakenly believed to be already dead, and several Mafia characters played by film directors (Sam Fuller, Daniel Schmid [in the role of Ingraham], Peter Lilienthal [in the role of Marcangelo]) are killed—arrives as soon as possible to make a film about/with the dying Nicholas Ray, but, while not being a resurrector, seems to be wishing that he has come too late—what is the filming called that takes place after it has ended? The reshoot—that is, that the whole film be as it were a reshoot with Ray as revenant. One can imagine Wenders' frustration: why can't Ray do in *Lightning Over Water* (1979–80) what the character he played in *The American Friend* managed to do so well, be a revenant while still alive? After *Lightning*

*Over Water*, Wenders went on to make *The State of Things* (1982), in which the diegetic film director is killed, and *Tokyo-Ga* (1985), a tribute to a dead filmmaker, Ozu. Herzog writes in *Of Walking in Ice*: "At the end of November, 1974, a friend from Paris called and told me that Lotte Eisner was seriously ill and would probably die. I said that this must not be, not at this time, German cinema could not do without her now [the motif of unfinished business often encountered in vampire films (Herzog's *Nosferatu* ...)], we would not permit her death ... I set off on the most direct route to Paris, in full faith, believing that she would stay alive if I came on foot."<sup>243</sup> Had he who came on foot from abroad reached Eisner too late, it is possible that he would have resurrected her.

To be dead is to be haunted by others: the living, the undead, and the fleeting virtual (inexistence, like quantum emptiness, is full of fluctuations [virtual photons alter the electron magnetic moment by 0.1159652%: *presence*], in the form of thoughts, affects, phrases, etc.).

Death being the great intermingling, isn't it natural for the dead's desire to be transfixed on that part of the human body that has the most to do with what preserves selectivity, with the immune system: blood?

Any definite quantity compared to infinity is zero, so that we the living are in the eyes of someone who experiences infinite time, such as the schizophrenic or the one on LSD, already dead, never were alive, never were but dead, and that's how we look, that is how infinite time changes us into ourselves as dead.

In Dreyer's *Passion of Joan of Arc*, Massieu asks Joan: "Your deliverance?" She replies: "My death!" *Vampyr* shows that death is no deliverance. *Ordet* (1954) shows the deliverance from death through resurrection.<sup>244</sup> The world of *Vampyr* (1932) happens between the death of *Ordet's* Inger and her resurrection (from a 1954 interview with Dreyer: "When did you first come to think of filming *Ordet*?' 'It happened one evening *twenty-two years ago* when I attended its first performance at the Betty Nansen Theater ...'"<sup>245</sup>). Inger's bite-like kiss

just after her resurrection can be considered a lingering reflex from her stay in the undead world of *Vampyr*.

It is not the conscious living who feels that he will always exist, but, on the contrary, the dead. The living has the apprehension that one day he or she will cease; the dead has the anxiety that he or she will always exist<sup>246</sup>—true, an existence interspersed with lapses and the possible replacement by the double.

Whatever disaster one may encounter in life, it makes no sense to respond with, “Today, I lived a day too long,” since these words apply only if death is a definitive end. If at all, one may say these words on the day when one discovers one cannot die, both because that, rather than any other disaster, is the disaster per se; and because the day now either appears to span years (“and surely a day with your Lord is as a thousand years of what you number” [Qur’ān 22:47]; “To Him ascend the angels and the Spirit in a day the measure of which is fifty thousand years” [Qur’ān 70:4]) or gives the impression that it eternally recurs. Nonetheless, *everything* is not lost, i.e., one may still be able to lose everything, since faith may allow one to commit suicide in spite of the anticipation of what it will most probably result in: one’s becoming an undead in nefarious conditions (if I am to attempt suicide, it will be by eating a small puffer fish).

Bataille writes: “In theory, it is his natural, animal being whose death reveals Man to himself, but the revelation never takes place. For when the animal supporting him dies, the human being himself ceases to be. In order for Man to reveal himself ultimately to himself, he would have to die, but he would have to do it while living—watching himself ceasing to be.... This difficulty proclaims the necessity of *spectacle*, or of *representation* in general, without the practice of which it would be possible for us to remain alien and ignorant in respect to death .... In tragedy, at least, it is a question of our identifying with some character who dies, and of believing that we die, although we are alive.”<sup>247</sup> If there is a necessary connection between death and

spectacle, it is not for the reason advanced by Bataille, but because one’s death is stolen, experienced by another, by the one who replaces one there, the double, hence by another character or other characters. It is then that it is the most difficult to accept to be a spectator.

#### Acting:

In films of the undead, one should tolerate neither bad acting, a performance untrue to the fiction; nor good acting, a performance *true to life*. One should achieve *false acting*, a performance that is true to death: through a mismatch of the gaze with its object, etc.

Stanislavsky stresses the need for continuity for the actor to achieve a *true to life* performance: “Going back to the imaginary scene when I made my morning call on Famusov, I recall an infinite number of physical objectives which I had to execute in my imagination. I had to go along a corridor, knock at a door, take hold of and turn the doorknob, open the door, enter, greet the master of the house and anyone else present, and so forth. In order to preserve the truthfulness of the occasion I could not simply fly into his room in one movement,”<sup>248</sup> and: “You cannot step from the first floor of a house to the tenth [but that is precisely what we find in Deren’s films (*Meshe of the Afternoon*, *Choreography for a Camera*, *At Land*)] ... You must go through and carry out a whole series of consecutive and logical physical and simple psychological objectives.”<sup>249</sup> It is therefore insufficient to create lapses in the diegesis and jump cuts in the image and sound if one does not also, as Robbe-Grillet did so well in his films, neutralize the feeling and the acting of one’s performers, for otherwise, in order to achieve the emotions they think the role asks for, they will create in their imaginations a series of objectives that will restore a continuous off-screen, if not to the film—this is impossible in the cases of Robbe-Grillet and Deren—then at least at the level of the scene.

Actors playing a dead person have to be motionless for the length of the shot. In Roman Polanski’s *The Tenant*, the actors in the roles of

Tralkovsky's neighbors, who stand immobile for extended periods, are playing dead, whether they know it or not.

In *Persona*, the actress Elisabeth Vogler turns through her catatonic muteness into a black hole from which no words escape but that sucks the words of others, if not by their uttering them, then by their impression that they are undergoing thought broadcasting. On feeling irresistibly induced to talk, her nurse Alma should not have talked about her past but about that of another character or of an invented, fictional nurse Alma. Elisabeth would then have sucked not her, but the role, a virtual person. Notwithstanding her assertion, "That evening when I had been to see your film, I stood in front of the mirror ... I think I could turn myself into you," the nurse could not deploy a healthy counterfeiting against the impending bad, nihilistic one, so her face and that of her patient forged each other, became forged faces.

**In the *You* Mode:**

The *you* mode applies:

— During disorientation: you suddenly don't know what your name is, where you are, what hour it is. Then things begin to clear up: you know now who you are. But you still don't know where the faint light in the room is coming from and why you have this open book in front of you, your palm feeling the texture of its papers. You walk like a somnambulist to the door, turn the light on, and look at the room.

— In somnambulism.

— In some precognitive remote perception experiments. Waiting for the train, you look around the station: the same sort of people, the same floor, the same lamps, the same clocks as in other stations. All of these similarities, including the similarity of the tedium you feel here as in other stations, make you feel that the actual stations are abstract and minimalist, and that what fills them is traveling with you. It dawns on you that the statistics monitoring the remote perception

experiment, in which a percipient has to describe an unknown geographical location where an agent, in this instance you, either was, is or will be, should be altered, since all the percipient has to do is to describe any station from memory and the station in question would fit. You close your eyes and try to evoke a station and describe it, sure that you would then end up simultaneously having described the one in which you are standing. Still closing your eyes, you take out a notebook and a pen from your pocket and ... nothing! You seem to have lost all memory of any station. A little later, you impulsively look to your left and see a woman. Although she is not the kind that attracts you, you gaze at her. And although you don't feel any curiosity about her, you have an urge to look at her socks to see what color they are. You see that they are yellow and folded at the edge. "On a few occasions, agents have reported informally that while at the target their attention had been inexplicably drawn to rather minor or peripheral details of the scene, and later learned that those details were prominent in the percipient's description."<sup>250</sup> The clear desire forced on the agent to see a specific but rather neutral phenomenon or object is not necessarily, indeed is often not at all that of the percipient, whose state remains in most cases one of apathy and detachment (hence in part the vague terms used by the percipients in the experiments conducted by Jahn and Dunne even when their descriptions were precise: *what seems like, it could be, or, have the impression, maybe something like, possibly, I have a feeling of*).<sup>251</sup> Between the percipient and the agent there is that "third who walks always beside you" (T. S. Eliot),<sup>252</sup> and it is this third, the double of the percipient, who wants to see these specific things. Telepathy's disclosure of the absence of distance between two people unveils in turn the presence of a distance in the same person. The aforementioned *third* will become prominent when virtual reality becomes operational; in the case of commands and actions performed in or through virtual reality, between one and the machine one can control at a remote locality, there will be the "third ... always

beside you.” The noise which is being abolished in digital as against analog modes of communication (where it can be only minimized) will be transferred to the person’s own mind—a phenomenon equivalent to what happens in the case of *squeezed light*.

— In hypnosis: you hear the hypnotist saying, “Staring at the target so long has made your eyes very tired. Your eyes hurt and your eyelids feel very heavy. Soon you will no longer be able to keep your eyes open. You will have stood the discomfort long enough ... Your eyes are moist from the strain. You are becoming more drowsy and sleepy ... It would be a relief just to let your eyes close and to relax completely, to relax completely.”<sup>253</sup>

#### Over-turns:

“You take me for granted.” “You take yourself ... in the mirror, your mirror image’s facing you, for granted.”

Hegel: “Death, if that is what we want to call this non-actuality, is of all things the most dreadful, and to hold fast what is dead requires the greatest strength.... But the life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it.... It is this power, not as something positive, which closes its eyes to the negative, as when we say of something that it is nothing or is false, and then, having done with it, turn away and pass on to something else; on the contrary, Spirit is this power only by *looking the negative in the face* [my italics], and tarrying with it. This tarrying with the negative is the magical power that converts it into being. This power is identical with what we earlier called the Subject ...”<sup>254</sup> What comes from facing death not as annihilation—as pure nothing; nor as a determined negation, once one inscribes one’s death in a larger cause: the revolution, etc.; but as a realm of total non mastery, as undeath? But can undeath, the realm of over-turns, be faced?

“Shuddering, Hamilton grasped the railing and began to climb back

upstairs. He had gone only two steps when his legs, of their own volition, refused to carry him farther. His body comprehended what his mind refused to accept. He was going back down ...” Hamilton was taken aback (“*aback* *adv.* **1.** By surprise: *He was taken aback by her caustic remarks.* **2.** *New England Southern U.S.* Behind: *aback of the house.* **5.** *Archaic* Back; backward. *adj.* *New England* **1.** Being at a standstill; unable to move: *You run your business that way and first thing you know you’re all aback*’ *Dialect Notes*” [*American Heritage Dictionary*]). “Is—there anything I can do? Won’t you turn toward me? Must you have your back to me?” Hamilton laughed wildly. ‘Sure I’ll turn toward you.’ Gripping the railing, he made a cautious about-face—and found himself still facing the gloomy cave ...” (Philip K. Dick, *Eye in the Sky*).<sup>255</sup> Orpheus did not just yearn to look back at his dead wife, Eurydice, while ascending the passage from Hades: he actually looked back toward her already in the underworld. But, owing to 180° over-turns, he continued to look away from her. It is only when he reached the sunlight and life again that he could successfully turn. Life and death are separated by, among other things, an *imaginary line*. In Munch’s *The Scream*, the human figure has undergone a 180° over-turn, and now is looking in the opposite direction both to the two friends who were accompanying him on a walk, and to the fjord: a withdrawal of the world.<sup>256</sup> But isn’t one part of the world that has ostensibly withdrawn? In Magritte’s *Reproduction Prohibited* (1937), the person facing the mirror sees his reflection with its back to him. A mortal’s relation to his or her mirror image involves a hailing that usually succeeds in eliciting a response, one having made a 180° turn in the mirror to answer one’s *sous-entendu* hailing of oneself in front of it. Heidegger: “Mortals are they who can experience death as death. Animals cannot do this. But animals cannot speak either. The essential relation between death and language flashes up before us, but remains still unthought.”<sup>257</sup> This relation of death and speech can find at least one of its loci in the basic *sous-entendu* interpellation a mortal, who undergoes over-turns,



From the series *Over-turned Portraits* made by Paul Perry, Nicola Unger, and Persijn Broersen to accompany my lecture *Backing Mortals' Proper Names*, DasArts, 2 November 2001.

addresses to himself or herself in the mirror. Such an interpellation fails in *Reproduction Prohibited*: the “Hey, you there” is not answered by the 180° turn that constitutes a subject “because he has recognized that ... it was really him who was hailed (and not someone else).”<sup>258</sup> The 180° over-turn neutralizes the subjectivization of the interpellation since it overturns the turn to answer the hailing, this *turning one's head* and often producing an about-face, with the new beliefs either filling one's mind completely or entering into conflict with one's previously-held ones, displacing them to the background. Whereas a photograph or a painting in which a person is giving us his back invites identification, the back turned on us in *Reproduction Prohibited*—not in the accidental sense that the one in the mirror is looking away from us, but categorically, since the backs of both the person and his reflection in the mirror are turned on us—makes it impossible for us, unless we had at one point died before dying, to identify with the figure in the painting. Pascal Bonitzer writes in relation to Robert Montgomery's film *Lady in the Lake*: “The argument against the film is that the ‘parti-pris’ of the subjective camera prevented the famous and necessary identification between the spectator and the hero ... We cannot identify with someone whose face is always hidden from us.” Who is this *we*? What if we are undead, hence have no face, either because we have no image in the mirror or because the image we see there always has its back turned on us? Even in that case we cannot identify with one “whose face is always hidden from us” but only because we *are* him and he cannot identify with himself. Bonitzer's words apply validly to the normal spectator. Not to *run out on* or *walk out on* the one who is suffering from immobilization and/or fascinated motionlessness, and not to *turn one's back on* the one who is, against his will, turning his back on the world and himself (it may be that only a dancer can endure and counteract, and hence affirm, the latter state: in Deren's *Choreography for a Camera* the dancer's quick revolving movement in front of a two-headed statue of Siva, which embodies a sus-

tained crossing of the *imaginary line*, produces, and not only stroboscopically, another two-faced being). Those who undergo anxiety, experiencing everything, including themselves (in depersonalization), as strange,<sup>259</sup> must be helped; one should help only strangers.

There is an ever-present temptation to blur the discreteness of the over-turn, to make it into a gradual turn, as can be seen in Munch's work. First comes *Study for Despair*, 1891–2,<sup>260</sup> with a man in profile propped against a railing. Then comes *Despair (Deranged Mood at Sunset)*, 1892, where we see two other figures walking in the distance away from the foreground character leaning in profile against the railing—this painting presents a spatial arrangement that closely follows the one experienced by Munch during an anxiety attack: “I stopped, leaned against the railing, dead tired (my friends looked at me and walked on).” Then, in 1892, come two small pen-and-ink sketches titled *Despair* and intended to serve as illustrations for the book of poems Emanuel Goldstein dedicated to Munch and for which Munch created the frontispiece: while the first presents the same spatial positioning as the aforementioned painting, in the second the person in the foreground is looking straight in the direction of the spectator of the sketch. Then comes *Study for The Scream*, 1893,<sup>261</sup> where one of the main figure's two friends is turned and looking either at the landscape or at the figure in the foreground, counterbalancing the latter's full turn that resulted in his facing in the direction of the spectator. Last but not least comes *The Scream*, 1893,<sup>262</sup> where the character has undergone a 180° turn while the other two men continue their walk in the background, their back to him. We see Munch moving from the profile position, which imitates his conscious memory of his panic episode, to the 180° over-turn, which renders his panic more exactly. Past attaining the latter arrangement, the regression to earlier spatial arrangements serves to give the erroneous impression that the 180° turn is gradual: in *Despair*, 1894 (reworked, ca. 1915),<sup>263</sup> the person in the foreground has undergone

a 135° turn, is introspective, his eyes as if closed, his face directed toward the ground. *The Scream*, 1895,<sup>264</sup> can be viewed as a restatement of the appropriate arrangement but also as placing the 180° turn after the 135° turn, this implying that a gradual turning had taken place. When Munch exhibited the “Love” series in 1894 in Stockholm, both *Despair*, 1892, and *The Scream*, 1893, were part of it. The danger of the serial, for instance Munch's *The Frieze of Life*, is that it may imply that the turn was gradual. This secondary elaboration also manifests itself in the fact that many of the stages Munch as an artist had to go through in reaching the sudden turn that is rendered in *The Scream* are produced again, past 1893, in different media: lithograph, intaglio, woodcut, pen-and-ink sketches and prose poems. It is in a letter written on November 14, 1894, i.e., around a year after the definitive version of *The Scream*, that Munch mentions that he has begun working in the graphic arts. “Art comes with a person's urge to communicate to another—all means are equally good”; certainly prints make possible a wider circulation and exposure of the oeuvre than paintings, occasionally exhibited in a few museums, do. Unfortunately, the resultant enhanced communication with and accessibility to the public of Munch's work was due not only to the fact that more people could see the prints than could see the paintings, but also to the counterfeit possibility for the different planes and positions of the discrete turns to communicate, most spectators viewing what is happening as a gradual turn. If at all, the gradual turning applies to the theme of jealousy. And it is because there is no anxiety in this case that Munch does not feel the compulsion to show what can be taken as a gradual turning: *Jealousy*, 1895,<sup>265</sup> *Jealousy* 1986,<sup>266</sup> *Jealousy*, 1907,<sup>267</sup> *Jealousy*, 1933–35,<sup>268</sup> all show the character in the foreground looking in the direction of the viewer of the painting.

*Let's face it* (let's confront it with complete awareness), how not to be paranoid, how not to *lose face* (suffer a loss of respect or reputation), how to *save one's face* (avoid appearing stupid or wrong), when one

undergoes over-turns, that is, when things are constantly said and done *behind one's back* (without one's knowledge or permission).

In Theo Angelopoulos' *Eternity and a Day*, 1998, a renowned old Greek poet, Alexandre (played by Bruno Ganz), learns from his doctor that he is very sick: "When the pain becomes unbearable, go to the hospital." He dismisses his housekeeper, telling her that he is about to embark on a "long journey" from which he will not return, and declines her offer to take her with him on his "trip." Alexandre's one acknowledged regret is that he has only left "fragments, words here and there." He has been consumed by one project since the death of his wife: to complete an unfinished poem entitled *The Free Besieged* by the nineteenth century Greek poet Count Dhionísios Solomós (1798–1857). Solomós' earliest poems were written in Italian, but in 1822 he determined to write in Demotic (literally, "popular") Greek—he was the first poet of modern Greece to do so. According to Alexandre, Solomós was on the look-out for words and expressions used by common Greek people and paid anyone who provided him with specimens of them. "Partly due to the impediment of the as-yet meagre resources of his chosen linguistic medium," his major poems *The Cretan*, 1833; the second and third sketches of *The Free Besieged*, 1827–49 (which deals with the siege of Missolonghi); and *The Shark*, 1849, remained fragmentary. Will Alexandre palliate the fragmentary nature of his own work as well as that of Solomós on his possibly last day alive? While every new day brings with it the opportunity to accomplish some unfinished business, it also brings with it the occasion for new, unexpected unfinished business. In the process of packing, Alexandre discovers a collection of unopened letters belonging to his late wife, Anna. While getting in his car to drive to his daughter to leave his dog in her custody, he notices a group of children standing at a crossroads. When cars come to a stop at the red light, the boys run toward them and start cleaning their windshields. He drives past them, but has to stop at the next, red light. A child runs

to his car and starts to clean the windshield. Greek policemen appear and begin chasing the children cleaning the cars at the preceding light. Alexandre tells the child to hop in his car, thus saving him from apprehension. He deposits him a few streets farther. Shortly, he hands his daughter his late wife's letters. Among them is a letter without an envelope. She asks for and gets his permission to read it. It turns out to be a letter from his then young wife imploring him, who was then often distracted from her by his work, to give her a day of his time. After leaving his daughter, and while waiting for his prescription to be filled at a local pharmacy, he sees the same Albanian window-washer abducted into a van. He rescues the refugee boy, and resolves to take him back to his war-torn homeland, but at the border abruptly ascertains that this is not the best way to help the boy. While on a bus with the boy, he encounters the long-dead poet Solomós or a performer playing him and asks him after listening to him recite one of his poems: "Tomorrow, how long will it last?" By the time he has put the refugee boy on a ship heading to the United States, it is late at night. Soon, he comes to a stop at a red light. His car's wipers go back and forth on the windshield under the rain. This shot is reminiscent of the beginning scene of Volker Schlöndorff's *Circle of Deceit*, 1981, where the protagonist, played also by Bruno Ganz, sits in his car under the rain while the windshield wipers move back and forth. The light having changed to green, the adjoining cars move ahead. After honking, the driver of the car behind him turns sideways and bypasses him. The shot is reminiscent of Fritz Lang's *The Testament of Dr. Mabuse*, 1933, where a driver who had stopped at a crossroads is shot while waiting for the green light so that his car remains in the midst of the road while the other cars soon move on. This scene has a strong temporal charge, both because it evokes, first in a nostalgic then in a melancholic manner, the previous run of the children to the stopped cars; and because when Alexandre does not move while the other cars do, one has the impression that unlike the others, who have

a future in which to move, his time line has come to an end. There, in the car, now dead, he becomes his own double, a *faussaire* (the French release title of Schlöndorff's film), a counterfeiter. At dawn we see the car, which is still parked in the middle of the road, from the rear. The traffic light changes to red. Another car comes to a stop at the light. All of a sudden, Alexandre's car crosses the red light. Was he not dead after all? Was he simply tired after such a long day of emotional upheaval and back and forth car journeys with the Albanian refugee boy and so fell asleep at the wheel? No, he was not just tired then but *dead tired*. It is probable that the one who was in the car that stopped next to his at the traffic light was his double, and that he was seated either at the driver seat, or else at the back seat with no one behind the wheel! Horrified, Alexandre either drove away disregarding the red light,<sup>269</sup> or else the car moved all by itself. Then, *coming forth by day*, he walks in his old seaside house in the light of the most ancient Egyptian of twentieth century painters, Edward Hopper. When he reaches the balcony door, it opens on its own before him—we are thus confirmed that the car had moved on its own. Since his walk is complemented by a tracking shot of the camera through the door, then across the balcony, we presume that we are getting his point of view shot of the beach. Now the camera advances beyond the balcony and smoothly descends until it reaches ground level. Unexpectedly, he enters frame and walks onto the beach. It is as if he had a subtle, angelic body, one that would have allowed him to float down from the balcony (a tribute to Wenders' *Wings of Desire*, whose protagonist is an angel played by Bruno Ganz, and in which the camera fittingly has a floating feel?). Since dance allows two dancers to meet across the two singular altered realms into which it projects them, two lovers can meet even in the undead realm by dancing. He dances with his dead wife and then says to her: "One day I had asked you: 'Tomorrow, what is tomorrow, Anna?'" Is it a thousand years ("a day the measure of which is a thousand years of what you count")

DOUBLE  
FEATURE!

# Groundhog Day

Directed by Harold Ramis

Story: Danny Rubin; screenplay: Harold Ramis and Danny Rubin, 1993

Sils-Maria?  
August 1881



Magritte, *The Human Condition*, 1933

"One day I had asked you: 'Tomorrow, what is tomorrow, Anna?'"

# Eternity and a Day

Directed by Theo Angelopoulos, 1998

© 2001, by Jalal Toufic

[Qur'ān 32:5)] or fifty thousand years (“a Day whereof the span is fifty thousand years” [Qur'ān 70:4])? While withdrawing, she answers: “Eternity and a day.” He calls her, “Anna ... Anna,” with no response—her turns, she who is dead and who is no longer dancing, are overturned by over-turns. Godard’s *King Lear*, 1987, fails to develop one of its remarkable intertitles, *a picture shot in the back*, beyond the thematic of betrayal—that of King Lear by two of his three daughters, that of Godard himself by the producer of the film, etc.—and a critique of the customary posture of the audience in a cinema theater, each row of people with their backs to the following row. “A picture shot in the back” is accomplished in the last shot of *Eternity and a Day*: notwithstanding Angelopoulos’ answer to Gideon Bachmann’s “Does he die at the end of the film?” “No, no,”<sup>270</sup> I would assert that his protagonist is dead by the time we see his back against the sea and he fails thrice to answer the call of his dead wife, repeating to himself instead the three words he had learned in that last day of his life: *korfulamur*: “heart of a flower”;<sup>271</sup> *argathini*: “very late at night”; and, most importantly, *xenitis*: “one who is a stranger everywhere”—a word that felicitously describes his present state, since the dead is *xenitis*. Henceforth, he will no longer have to look for words and expressions and be ready to pay for them, for they will be willy-nilly imposed on him by the (dead’s) whispering or screaming voices, as happened in the case of Daniel Paul Schreber with: *flüchtig hingemachte Männer*: “fleeting-improvised-men”; *vorhöfe des Himmels*: “forecourts of heaven,”<sup>272</sup> etc.; and in the case of Artaud with: “*Uk’hat*is: the lost pigs of the moon,”<sup>273</sup> etc. While literature has to a large extent by now accommodated the languages of the common people, with very rare exceptions it has yet to accommodate the languages of the dead and the voices: “o dedi / a dada orzoura / o dou zoura / a dada skizi / o kaya / o kaya poutoura / o ponoura / a pena / poni” (Artaud).

“Then Abraham approached him [The LORD] and said: ‘Will you

sweep away the righteous with the wicked? What if there are fifty righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? ...’ The LORD said, ‘If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake’” (Genesis 18:23–26). Abraham then repeats the question-entreaty invoking the possible presence of forty-five, then forty, then thirty, then twenty righteous people in the city, and each time the Lord responds that in that case he will spare the city (Genesis 18:27–31). “Then he said, ‘May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?’ He answered, ‘For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it’” (Genesis 18:32). But were there ten righteous people in Sodom? The angels of the Lord tried to find other righteous people beside Lot, his wife, and their two daughters. But even the two men who were pledged to marry Lot’s daughters thought he was being facetious when he warned them, “Hurry and get out of this place, because the LORD is about to destroy the city!” (Genesis 19:14), revealing themselves not to be righteous. There turned out to be only four righteous people in the city, so God did not spare it for their sake; indeed he swept away the righteous with the wicked. “As soon as they [the angels of the Lord] had brought them out, one of them said, ‘Flee for your lives! Don’t look back, and don’t stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!’” (Genesis 19:17).<sup>274</sup> How twisted is the expression: “Don’t look back ... or you will be swept away!” as well as its equivalent: “Don’t look back, or you will die.” It puts its addressee in a double bind: if he or she turns, he will cease to live; but if he or she fully obeys the “prohibition” against looking back, the end result is tantamount to being constantly subject to over-turns and thus already dead, since over-turns are a characteristic of the undeath realm. Thus, appropriately, Lot, his two daughters and his wife were not spared in two different ways. Lot’s wife looked back successfully and by that turn conjointly revealed that she is not

a mortal and “became a pillar of salt” (Genesis 19:26). Lot and his two daughters possibly, indeed probably, turned but their turns were overturned by over-turns,<sup>275</sup> this revealing that they were already dead. While with regards to Lot’s non-mortal wife, the prohibition to look back should be taken as a moral proscription; with regards to Lot and his two daughters, and as was the case with Orpheus, it should be taken as an ethical revelation of a certain state of affairs: you are undead and therefore subject to over-turns and thus any turn you make will be overturned. The passage through the plain in Lot’s story is a passage through death (are we to take the proximity of that region’s sea to this deathly plain as one reason that sea was called the Dead Sea?); Lot and his two daughters on the plain are in a similar position to Jonah in the belly of the great fish. Since the mortal Lot had intercourse with a non-mortal woman (for a previous Biblical version of such intercourse, but in an inverted gender form, see Genesis 6:4: “The sons of God went to the daughters of men and had children by them”), it is fitting and symptomatic that it is in relation to him, at the door of his house, that the people of Sodom get the idea of having intercourse with angels. “The two angels arrived at Sodom ... ‘My lords,’ he [Lot] said, ‘please turn aside to your servant’s house ....’ ‘No,’ they answered, ‘we will spend the night in the square.’ But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house.... all the men from every part of the city of Sodom ... surrounded the house. They called to Lot, ‘Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them’” (Genesis 19:1–5).<sup>276</sup> I wager that had these non-mortals spent the night in the square, the mortal people of Sodom would not have tried to have sex with them.

**Kneeling Angel with Mountainous Wings (aka Toward a Title for a Gibran Watercolor Left Untitled)<sup>277</sup>:**

Dedicated to Patrick Bokanowski for *L’Ange*



He was at an impasse in his pondering the fall of bodies: how could a rock, albeit a Taoist one, permeated by emptiness, and a feather fall at the same speed? He prayed for God’s assistance. There is no prayer without listening (“Why do you want me to be in your religious film when you know that I am not only an atheist, but also a libertine? Is it the Falconetti syndrome?” “It is because you listen so well, even when you are talking. I think you would be wonderful at prayer”). To

encounter someone who is inept at listening is to know that he or she is inept at praying. If power makes it extremely difficult for its wielder to pray, it is because it makes it very difficult for him or her to listen.<sup>278</sup> To pray is to invoke while listening: what is invoked is God's help ... to listen even more intensely—until one hears “as only / saints have heard: heard till the giant-call / lifted them off the ground; yet they went impossibly / on with their kneeling, in undistracted attention: so inherently hearers” (Rilke, “The First Elegy,” *Duino Elegies*). After an extended time, the levitating saint screamed, to stop such extremely intense listening, and fell to the floor.<sup>279</sup>

One day, on turning upon hearing a sudden silence, he perceived through the window a nude humanoid figure standing before the mountain that faces his study. The mountain seemed transfigured, purplish. The angel was hovering in a kneeling posture about two inches off the ground. The witness could hear the sound of the wind and simultaneously the silence of the angel. When the angel spoke, the wind in no way obstructed what he was saying: “I need wings to alleviate the fall implicit in the cadaver you virtually are.” No angel who appeared to a non-mortal had wings, since these, often portrayed conventionally in Christian, Moslem and Jewish art, are to counter the fall implicit in the cadaver that the mortal human is virtually. The wind moved the grass beneath the angel's feet, but no air stirred in his hair nor in the mountain. The witness felt conjointly a most intense nostalgia and an awful dread. “Every angel is terrifying” (*Duino Elegies*),<sup>280</sup> as even Rilke, who “stroked, as if it were a great old beast, the little [mountain] Muzot that had sheltered all this for me ...”,<sup>281</sup> knew. Why did he have the impression that the mountain was the angel's wings? Was it because the closely arranged transfigured parallel rocks looked like the feathers of a wing? Was it because through an effect of foreshortening, the angel's arms seemed to be attached to the mountain? There was an additional reason: while the halo of the angel delineated him from everything else in the landscape, it did not do so from

the mountain. True, a minimal demarcation subsisted. He could figure it out only when he jotted down “The angel was in front of the mountain” and realized that his words were inaccurate. He found himself revising the sentence to: “The angel was before the mountain.” It then became clear to him that the angel was not only in front of the mountain but also prior to it, and not merely historically, but also in the present he shared with it. We, humans, wait for the angel in the temporality of chronological time, yet when he, eternal, shows up, he has always been before us in the present.<sup>282</sup> The angel, even a guardian one come to help us in an emergency, has all the time he needs to observe us in the present: “In the hills, an old man read *The Odyssey* to a child, and his little listener stopped blinking” (Wenders' *Wings of Desire*). Against the hidden cameras in so many crass TV programs across the world, cinema and writing, for instance *Wings of Desire*, directed by Wenders and co-written by Handke, have managed to deploy the angel. While the angel may be indescribable, as the one who glimpses him quickly averts his look in awe, he is master of description because he is prior to us in the present we share with him, and because he does not arrive, therefore does not interrupt or alter anything in the situation. Who indeed has seen an angel arrive? We wake up from a nightmare, and there he is. We wipe our weeping eyes, only to discover that he is already with us.<sup>283</sup> Is it surprising that no one announces the angel? For it not to lead to an infinite regression, every structure of annunciation requires one whom no one announces, who does not arrive, whose showing up reveals that he was already present: the annunciator of the arrival does not arrive. Notwithstanding that he is in constant displacement to relay messages and annunciations, the angel gives the impression, through being from all time in any present we share with him, of abiding in that moment, revealing by contrast that other creatures are constantly restless, beside themselves: the great paintings and frescos of the annunciation give the impression that Mary is the one who does not belong in the room, who has just entered it.

There is a harbinger to every real arrival. How can an arrival be announced and remain an event? By being impossible.<sup>284</sup> One can thus define any eventful arrival: it is foreshadowed but as impossible, as the impossible to happen.<sup>285</sup> It is impossible that the Word become flesh (John 1:14), that a virgin give birth (“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” [Luke 1:34]),<sup>286</sup> and that divine nature and human nature coexist in the same person. The angel brings with him a double surprise: he was already here (!), and what he announces is impossible or revealed to be impossible. The event oscillates between not being announced, prior to us even in the present we share with it, and being announced but as the impossible to happen. The event: the angel and the messiah. We are taken by surprise not only by the angel, but also by the messiah notwithstanding that we invoked him for the longest time. If the angel, who is in constant viewing of God (“their [these little ones] angels in Heaven always see the face of My Father Who is in Heaven” [Matthew 18:10]), is nonetheless very much bound with faith, it is because the good news he announces makes what seemed prior to such annunciation extremely difficult but possible now impossible but bound to happen. Every angel is terrifying not least because faith is terrifying. His friend asked him why he seemed so concerned and uneasy. After much pressing, he confessed that an angel had appeared to him and had revealed to him that the eldest son of the imam would succeed his father. “Were you asleep? How did he look?” “I was awake writing. I was startled by his presence, dropped my quill, and he knelt down and picked it up for me.” “Are you sure it was not all a dream? Anyway, your distress puzzles me: aren’t we both fervent partisans of the imam’s eldest son? Ought you not to be pleased by this good news or rather confirmation of what has been for some time now a forgone conclusion, his father having proclaimed him his successor?” “But precisely why do we need a confirmation of a foregone conclu-

sion?” A fortnight later, rumors began circulating about the untimely death of the eldest son of the imam. “Why have you switched your allegiance to the imam’s younger son? Surely you don’t believe that his eldest son is actually dead: he is just occulted.” “That is what I too believed in the aftermath of the circulation of the news of his death. Unfortunately, yesterday, by a concatenation of circumstances, I was privy to see his actual corpse. Were you to persist in your belief that he is the next imam, I would not blame you since you have not seen his corpse, but you also should not blame me since I have.” “But the angel announced a different good news!” When Paul Virilio writes that in our world of communication at the speed of light, we have a “globalization, in which *everything arrives without there being any need to depart*,”<sup>287</sup> one can deduce that it is a world devoid of angels.<sup>288</sup> Heidegger says in his last, *Der Spiegel* interview that “only a god can save us” in the epoch of technology.<sup>289</sup> This god has to be announced. Therefore god cannot appear before the epoch of technology has taken a turn such that it is no longer the case that there is a generalized arrival. Is our task to prepare the coming of a god or of the messiah? Let us be more modest: if at all, our task would be to prepare the coming of the angel, of the one who announces him. And that seems the right way to go about it, since were we to prepare for the coming of God or the messiah we would be *forcing the end*.<sup>290</sup> While anyway we cannot effectively hurry the coming of the messiah, for that event is miraculous, it is possible and appropriate to force the coming of his annunciator.

Did the appearance of the angel definitely confirm his faith? No, only a few hours later doubt assailed him again. Was it because what he had witnessed reproduced an exquisite 1923 watercolor by an otherwise mediocre painter called Kahlil Gibran, its mountains painted in a manner reminiscent of those in Chinese art or in Chinese-influenced Persian art, its closely arranged parallel rocks looking like the feathers of a wing?<sup>291</sup> The angel visited him again, this time in his

room. It was his first experience of micropsia: the angel appeared the size of a mustard seed. Why then had his wings the normal dimensions of those of a bird? When he observed the wings more attentively, he perceived that what he first took for feathers were rocks. He recognized then that the wings too were Lilliputian. Indeed, when he hearkened in expectation of the angel's message, he could hear a mountain's reverberations. The episode happened in a hypnagogic state. The next day, the angel appeared again in his room. This time, he did not seem to be in miniature and the mountain he had for wings was life-size, gigantic. He tried to comprehend how the angel and the mountain could be within the room while being far bigger than it. That night, dreading that he was losing his mind, he mentioned this event to a painter friend of his. The latter remarked: "It must be that you were then in the listening room or the tomb of the wrestlers." While puzzled by this answer, he intuitively felt that it was erroneous. He figured out that if the angel and the mountain that formed his wings could be in a room that was far smaller than they, it was because they were not in the world, and therefore not in the room, but in light. To have a halo is not to be surrounded by light but to be in light. In eternity, it is not light that is in the world, but the inverse: the world, including *its* light, is in light.<sup>292</sup> What applies visually to light, applies aurally to silence: in eternity, silence is not in or of the world, but the world, including humans, is in silence. The angel and the human to whom he appears are triply not together: the first is in light and silence, the second is in the world; the first is kneeling, the second is averting the eye; and, in the same present, the first, eternal, is prior to the second, temporal. What remained with him from seeing the angel was the equivalence of a feather and a rock, of a wing and a mountain, and the frictionless manner in which the angel moved. When in the fall of 1609 Galileo looked through a telescope he had just constructed and that had a twenty-fold magnification, he saw no angels; instead, he discovered, in January 1610, four moons revolving around

Jupiter and that there are many more stars than are visible with the naked eye. But how did this scientist who will be pronounced a suspect of heresy by the Inquisition in Rome in 1633 conceive, two decades earlier, the notion that "all objects fall at the same rate in a vacuum," dropping, according to his biographer Vincenzo Viviani, bodies of different weights from the top of the Leaning Tower of Pisa to demonstrate that the speed of fall of a heavy object is not proportional to its weight? Did he see an angel in his observatory? If so, the experience must have been breathtaking, since an angel does not move in the atmosphere, which belongs to the world, but in light; and vertiginous, since angels, who move without friction, and who are faith-full, do not feel any difference between moving a mountain and moving a feather. Full of faith, angels can move mountains, or even, in case these mountains are the kind shown in Chinese painting, emptiness. Can they for that matter move and raise humans? Can humans be the wings of an angel? Satan's first *reported* temptation of Jesus revolves around falling: "Then the devil ... had him stand on the highest point of the temple. 'If you are the Son of God,' he said, 'throw yourself down. For it is written: "He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone."' Jesus answered him, 'It is also written: "Do not put the Lord your God to the test"' (Matthew 4:5-7). If Jesus of Nazareth was no longer virtually cadaverous when he was baptized (Tertullian: "Is it not wonderful, too, that death should be washed away by bathing?" [*On Baptism*]), then angels could lift him from then on. But if he was no longer virtually cadaverous only at his resurrection, then we have to consider differently his refusal to jump when Satan challenged him to do so. While he could still through faith throw himself down from the highest point of the temple and yet not fall despite the cadaver he contained (he would soon do this, not fall through faith: his walking on water), the challenge and temptation posed to him by Satan was to jump and rely not on his faith, but on that of the angels. He had to

have faith not in God, the Father, but in the angels, in the angels' faith, since the angels could possibly accomplish the impossible, namely carry his virtually cadaverous body, only by faith. Did Jesus' faith in angels, in their faith, waver given that there had been fallen angels, indeed given that it was precisely a fallen angel who was challenging him to have absolute faith in angels?

What was the angel's message and gift? He allowed him to understand Jesus Christ's words: "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). The mountain seemed to be jiggling. In fear, he started running, tripped and fell. He apprehended the hand of the angel on his hand. He expected him to raise him, but instead the angel knelt down. The angel's proximity was so overwhelming, he passed out. He woke to the sound of approaching footsteps. He felt the familiar touch of a human hand. When he looked up, he saw a sturdy young man staring at him. With a little effort, the latter raised him up. Thinking back on what had happened, he felt confused: would a genuine angel kneel to a mere man? To an angel, the source of gravity is neither some force affecting mass, nor some curvature in spacetime, but the fall implicit in the cadaver (*cadaver*: "Middle English from Latin *cadāver* from *cadere* to fall, die"). To God even under His name *al-Jalīl* (The Majestic), the angels never prostrated themselves. They did so only to man as a virtually cadaverous mortal: "And when We said unto the angels: Prostrate yourselves before Adam, they fell prostrate ..." (Qur'ān 2:34). Fallen, Adam and Eve were already outside paradise, which is not under the sway of gravity. While walking in the Garden of Eden after eating from the mortality-inducing tree of the knowledge of good and evil, Adam heard a sound he could not recognize. He looked down toward its source. His look fell on a fig leaf beneath one of his feet. What an unsettling, novel sight: a leaf on the ground! While physically, falling is derivative of gravity, metaphysically gravity is derivative of the Fall implied in the cadaver

and introduced by mortality.<sup>293</sup> Metaphysically, we do not have nightmares in which we fall endlessly because we would be beings subject to gravity; rather we live in a world ruled by gravity and we have nightmares in which we fall endlessly because we are virtually cadaverous. Jesus Christ walked on water; so did Lazarus following his resurrection, since his body was no longer cadaverous. Physically, the gravity of the singularity of a medium-size black hole would tear man into shreds in a matter of seconds, but metaphysically, even such enormous weight has its source in the Fall of man implicit in the cadaver. On his way to relay the message, and given that the angel does not move in the atmosphere but, with *serene velocity*,<sup>294</sup> in light, nothing could make the angel fall, not even a black hole; but when he reached a mortal human, he knelt, even while still in the sky.<sup>295</sup> Now he had a shadow and fell to earth. He felt such a tug due to the fall implicit in the mortal Mary that, except for his face, he tumbled out of the halo. Even while kneeling on the ground, he felt that he was continuing to fall. With a modicum of faith the angel raised a mountain and, now his wing, flapped it to counter the fall imposed on him by the human mortal in front of him. In a painting, if the annunciation is depicted with the angel kneeling before Mary, this implies that the scene is represented at the point where he has just hailed her ("Greetings, you who are highly favored!") and is undergoing the enormous gravity contained in her as a virtual cadaver; if it rather shows him in a composite posture between kneeling and standing, then this indicates that the scene is being represented at the stage where the angel has already annunciated to Mary that she is to give birth to the Word become flesh, with the consequence that he is kneeling before the gravity of the cadaver contained in her and the human nature of Jesus, but upright in adoration before the divine nature of Christ. The room as well as the landscape visible through the window was poised between the illumination of the angel in light, and the gravity derivative of the mortal, fallen Mary, a virtual cadaver. As Mary discovered the pres-

ence of the angel, she felt lighter *and* knelt. Was her kneeling a gesture of adoration of a fallen one (“But Satan caused them to deflect therefrom and expelled them from the [happy] state in which they were; and We said: Fall down” [Qur’ān 2:36]) toward a being who is spiritually superior to her (“Thou hast made him [man] a little lower than the angels” [Psalm 8:5])? Mortals kneel to those who remind them of their Fall as well as to those who can kill them and thus precipitate them into their cadaverous mortality, thus into their endless fall: exemplarily Jesus Christ and Caesar. “Then he said to them, ‘Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s’” (Matthew 22:21): kneeling. Jesus Christ cried: “Lazarus, come forth.” Resurrected, Lazarus was surprised by how easy it was for him to raise the lid of the coffin. Did this ease make him suspect that he was dreaming? No. Now resurrected, he *rose to his feet*.<sup>296</sup> Since our height is already that of a fallen being, resurrected Lazarus looked much taller than before. Had he been painted, he would have looked elongated like El Greco’s figures. As he walked out of the grave, a rotten smell accompanied him. It did not issue from his body, but from the bandages still attached to his ankles and elbows. He walked to Jesus Christ and stood in front of him in awe, gratitude, and worship. When the others knelt in adoration of the resurrector, he failed to understand the meaning of their gesture. His sister Mary, who had “poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair” (John 11:2), approached him with trepidation and began removing the few bandages still attached to his body. He was repulsed by the smell of putrefaction that she exuded,<sup>297</sup> and simultaneously felt an incredible force push him down. He fell. He managed with difficulty to stand up again. Then, to their consternation, he knelt to each member of the crowd into whose proximity he came. It was an awkward kind of kneeling, more a fall than a genuflection. Some viewed it as an example of the humility honored by Jesus, others attributed it to the lingering rigidity of what was for four days a corpse in a state of rigor mortis. The

Nizārīs of Alamūt must have faced the following problem: How can we announce the resurrection if we are still virtually cadavers? Certainly the part of the Shari‘a that enjoins the repeated prostration during prayer (“Is he who payeth adoration in the watches of the night, prostrate and standing, ... [to be accounted equal with a disbeliever]?” [Qur’ān 39:9]) had to be abrogated during the Great Resurrection of the messianic period. I would think that additionally an explicit prohibition would have been promulgated then against kneeling or bowing to the imām, allowing such a gesture, even possibly instituting it toward non-Nizārīs. I imagine that the two Nizārī imams of the Great Resurrection never received any of the emissaries of their enemies, whether Abbassid or Seljuk, to spare their followers seeing them kneel before the latter. The hierarchical grades of being are not dissolved with the Great Resurrection, but only kneeling, for with the Resurrection the cadaver has been abolished. That Nizārīs continued to die between 1164 and 1210, including Ḥasan ‘alā dhikri-hi’l-salām (on his mention be peace) and his son and successor, Nūr ad-Dīn Muḥammad II, does not invalidate the Great Resurrection, for the Nizārīs could then have virtually contained not a cadaver but a corpse. What in the last instance determined Ḥasan, who first proclaimed the Great Resurrection in the name of another, the still hidden imām, to subsequently proclaim himself the imām? Did an angel appear to him with the good posture: not prostrating himself before him? One can imagine that the grandson of Ḥasan ‘alā dhikri-hi’l-salām reinstated the Shari‘a in 1210 possibly because, many political, strategic, and military factors aiding (the intensifying threat to his initiates from a Sunnism again on the ascendancy, etc.), an angel knelt to him or even to one of his Nizārī initiates, this implying that they were virtual cadavers, and therefore that there was no real resurrection.

Again, he suddenly became aware of the presence of an angel. This time the angel did not prostrate himself before him. He was unsure

whether this was because he, a Christian, was no longer a virtual cadaver: “As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22) (but if Christians are alive in Jesus Christ, how come they still sometimes have nightmares in which they fall on and on?); or because of angelic faith, one allowing the angel to accomplish something impossible, namely withstanding the enormous forceful attraction downward of the cadaverous mortal; or else because this angel was Satanic (“We ... told the angels: Fall ye prostrate before Adam! And they fell prostrate, all save Iblīs [Satan]” [Qur’ān 7:11]), a disbeliever in the virtual cadaverous mortality of humans.

And when thy Lord said unto the angels: Lo! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth, they said: Wilt thou place therein one who will do harm therein and will shed blood, while we, we hymn Thy praise and sanctify Thee? He said: Surely I know that which ye know not. And He taught Adam all the names, then showed them to the angels, saying: Inform Me of the names of these, if ye are truthful. They said: Be glorified! We have no knowledge saving that which Thou hast taught us. Lo! Thou, only Thou, art the Knower, the Wise. He said: O Adam! Inform them of their names, and when he had informed them of their names, He said: Did I not tell you that I know the secret of the heavens and the earth? And I know that which ye disclose and which ye hide. And when We said unto the angels: Prostrate yourselves before Adam, they fell prostrate, all save Iblīs. He demurred through pride, and so became a disbeliever. And We said: O Adam! Dwell thou and thy wife in the Garden, and eat ye freely (of the fruits) thereof where ye will; but come not nigh this tree lest ye become wrong-doers. But Satan caused them to deflect therefrom and expelled them from the (happy) state in which they were; and We said: Fall down ...

Qur’ān 2:30–36

Given the nonlinear nature of the Qur’ān, one cannot be positive that the order of the *ayāt* is the actual order of the events. By viewing the heavenly prostration scene as happening following the fall of mortality, we can understand both the angels’ response to God, “Wilt thou place therein one who will do harm therein and will shed blood ...?” (Qur’ān 2:30): shedding blood can be done only to a mortal (both the idiomatic Arabic expression *yasfik al-dimā’* and the equivalent English *shed blood* mean: to take life, especially with violence; kill), starting with Abel; and that Adam is told by God, “Inform them of their names” (Qur’ān 2:33): only a mortal can know not only the generic names of animals, plants and things, but also his own as well as other mortals’ proper names, only a mortal understands names, misunderstands God’s descriptions as proper names (“Inform Me of the names of these, if ye are truthful. They [the angels] said: Be glorified! We have no knowledge saving that which Thou hast taught us” [Qur’ān 2:31–32]),<sup>298</sup> only a mortal needs to know, *de jure* if not *de facto*, “all the names” (Qur’ān 2:31) since he is bound at some point during his death or dying before dying to exclaim, like Nietzsche at the onset of his psychosis: “Every name in history is I.”

The two most interesting takes on God in relation to mortality: God is either totally the God of death and therefore does not understand anything about life, as in Daniel Paul Schreber’s system: “*Within the Order of the World, God did not really understand the living human being and had no need to understand him, because, according to the Order of the World, He dealt only with corpses*”;<sup>299</sup> or else He is the Living One (*Huwa al-ḥayy*) (Qur’ān 40:65), the Living One Who dieth not (*al-ḥayy alladhī lā yamūt*) (Qur’ān 25:58), therefore a God who understands nothing about death as a realm implicated with the Freudian primary process, but only as based on life. “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden [including the tree of life] thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof

thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2:16–17). If the god who gave the command was The Living, then he would have expected that Man would either comply with his advice not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, or else that he would eat of it only after eating from the tree of life. Mortality not knowledge of good and evil was the unsuspected temptation, and non-mortal Man (the Hebrew *ʾā dām*) and Woman fell for it! An unexpected, Gnostic disaster happened as Man perversely chose not to eat first from the tree of life before eating from the mortality-causing tree of the knowledge of good and evil,<sup>300</sup> thus introducing and unleashing a mortality that is not based on life, therefore a mortality of which God was unaware. If *we* can possibly understand that someone may choose mortality as such over life, it is because we are already fallen, mortal. With one exception, the angels “fell prostrate” (Qur’ān 2:34) to Adam when he turned a mortal, they were sensitive to what was virtual about him even while he lived: the cadaver. If Iblīs is a disbeliever, he is so first of all in the incredible perversity of man (and woman)—he incited man to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but did not specify the order in which the latter opted to do so—and therefore in the mortality of Adam, thus in the enormous gravity folded in Adam as a virtual cadaver. Ethically, “knowing what is in the hearts and minds” refers not to psychological secrets but to the virtual. Satan, the moral being *par excellence*, is solely of, and is concerned merely with the actual present, therefore he does not feel the virtual cadaver in Adam’s living body. Having understood what God had proffered morally rather than ethically, Satan felt offended by the unreasonableness of God’s command to him to prostrate to Adam: “I am better than him. Thou createdst me of fire while him Thou didst create of mud” (Qur’ān 7:12).<sup>301</sup> The antinomianism of messianism does not consist so much in getting rid of prescriptions as in indicating that they are ethical, or rather in preserving only the ethical ones among them. In order to bring an end to this fallen world, the angel Iblīs’

failure to kneel to Adam through disbelief in his mortality has to be repeated and corrected: this time the angel does not fall prostrate to a descendant of Adam either because the latter, like the Nizārīs of the Great Resurrection (between 1164 and 1240) and resurrected Jesus, is no longer virtually a cadaverous mortal (the messianic, redeemed state is the equivalent to the pre-fall state: in it gravity will lose its grip on man and the world); or else because through faith he, the angel, counters the infinite fall in the cadaverous descendant of Adam.

#### Arriving Too Late for Resurrection:

Once he, a photographer, was present during the slaughter of someone. He had hurriedly taken out his small camera from his bag and snapped several photographs. Later, he could not stand the fact that he had witnessed that event without intervening to save the man’s life, indeed that what had most preoccupied him then was instead whether there was enough light and, given that he did not have enough time to focus, whether the resultant photographs would be blurred. For a long time after that, he stopped taking photographs. Some friends tried to convince him to go back to photography, invoking such illustrious photographs as Robert Capa’s *Death of Loyalist Militiaman*, 5 September 1936, which Capa took from close range just as a bullet hit the militiaman; and Eddie Adams’ *Murder of A Vietcong by Saigon Police Chief*, February 1968. He answered: “But at least Capa was killed as he detonated a land mine during a reportage on the French Indochina War for *Life*.” Then one day he was asked by a relative to bring the camera with him to the funeral of a kinsman to take a photograph of the deceased. After some hesitation, he complied. From that day and for some time, he just photographed corpses: it was the best way to avoid a repeat of the emergency that had made him temporarily stop photographing. But one day, after perusing his photographs of corpses, he was seized with the same sensation as before and decided again to stop photographing. Before a corpse, a

photographer should face the same sort of dilemma he or she encounters in front of someone on the verge of being killed: do I simply stand there as a bystander, not try to intervene, and just take my photograph? But if I feel I should intervene, then in what way, to do what, given that the person is already dead? To resurrect the dead.

He arrived around noon to the vampire's lair. Unfortunately for him, the vampire's freezing affected time directly, making it undergo time-lapse, so that when he reached the coffin from the entrance of the sepulchre, it was already sunset. Fortunately for him, he was not fooled by the seeming animation of the vampire, who does not breathe, commanding him: "Dracula, come forth!" It is amazing that no vampire film shows the living protagonist trying to resurrect the vampire, an undead, instead of trying to kill him definitely by piercing his heart with a stake and beheading him. What made it difficult for *Dracula's* Arthur, Lord Godalming, to slaughter his fiancée Lucy now a vampire? Was it only that she had the form, likeness of the erstwhile living Lucy? It was also that she is resurrectable.

While ascending the stairs to his apartment, he heard the phone ringing. Was it her? He rushed to the door, then ran to the phone, only to hear from her sister that she had died a quarter of an hour earlier. He collapsed. Then he noticed the blinking light of his message machine. He felt a chill as he heard her voice. "It's J— —. Call me." How curious that she had prefaced her message with her name, as if he would no longer be able to recognize her voice or was already forgetting her name. He deeply regretted then that he had bought a machine that did not provide the time of the calls. When her sister first discovered that she had no pulse, she shook her desperately again and again, screaming: "J— — ! J— — ! J— — ! Answer me!" In and from the realm of undeath, J— — had tried to answer. She turned but her turn was overturned by an over-turn. And so the corpse did not end up reacting to the call. The corpse would have answered the call if the dead was not already undergoing over-turns. Soon, the

living no longer called her: they viewed her as only this inert mass on the deathbed. While disavowing the death of the beloved, most melancholiacs nonetheless no longer call him or her, but utter his or her name as that of an object one refers to but does not address. Could she blame them unreservedly? Was she not guilty of the same disregard? For why otherwise did she in the mirror not turn toward herself, if not because she was no longer being called by herself,<sup>302</sup> but treated by herself as something one does not call? To be dead is no longer to be called—except by terrified people trying to awaken from a nightmare, thus in the act of abandoning the dead whose help they are invoking. This is part of the ordeal of death: one is called only by the terrified. To almost any living person, the dead can say: "*In your dreams* you called me." Unlike the living, who when they overhear their names in a nearby conversation listen more attentively, as to something that regards them directly, sometimes volunteering some correction or acknowledgment; the dead, by the time the traditional period of mourning has finished, do not pay any attention when we utter their names while talking about them rather than to them in a call. The living are implicitly called even when others are talking about them; the dead are interpellated only when one explicitly calls them. Suddenly, J— — heard someone call her name. It was the lover whom she had phoned several times while on her deathbed, leaving him unanswered messages imploring him to come see her or at least call her back, and with whom she used to have heated discussions to refute his view that objects and almost all animals have no proper names ("*appeler un chat un chat*: to call a spade a spade" [*Le Robert & Collins Senior, Dictionnaire Français-Anglais/ Anglais-Français*, 5th ed.]), who was now posthumously calling her who was reduced by the others to an object, the corpse.<sup>303</sup> While she thought with misgivings, almost with resignation that she would not be able to successfully respond to the call, her turn getting once more overturned, she was elated to hear someone call her. How strange, wonderful to be called

again, to be treated other than an object.<sup>304</sup> Again, she turned, but this time her turn was not over-turned. To resurrect the dead, one has to reach them across the over-turn. Having just been in the realm of undeath, it was such a stark change for resurrected J— to suddenly again face the inanimation of objects, in its most rude form, that of her own body, a corpse. She made a Herculean effort to raise her eyelids, now a dead weight. He detected a barely perceptible twitch of her eyelids. With the exception of that spasm, the body had remained stiff. Despite his revulsion for the presently tactless body, he had the impulse to hug it. While to the living seated around the deathbed, the corpse is a body firmly resting on the bed, to the one who has just been resurrected, and thus recalled to the dead body, it is a cadaver, an indefinite fall. “Cadaver: Middle English from Latin *cadāver* from *cadere* to fall, die”<sup>305</sup>—this fall is the dead’s grave (felicitously, the French *tombe* means *grave* but is also the indicative present tense of the verb *tomber*, to fall). It was then that she wondered whether she was dreaming the whole episode, since she was feeling the same kind of indefinite bodiless fall one experiences in certain nightmares. In these dreams, and in the last moments before the dead detaches from the cadaver, or in the first moments when, resurrected, he or she is back in the dead body as a cadaver, one experiences what Adam must have felt on eating from the mortality-generating fruit. Adam’s fall resides as much in the change of his body into a potential cadaver, as in some Gnostic degradation across ontological spheres and levels. The change was so stark that Adam, for a weighty moment, must have already intimated the fall in the cadaver that he was already potentially. By eating of the mortality-generating fruit, Adam and Eve experienced *the unbearable lightness of being*, both because that act was the first they did not fully will, i.e., will to return eternally, and because they became virtually cadaverous, experiencing the weightlessness of an endless fall. This change into a potential cadaver is what has to be portrayed in paintings of the Fall. The most salutary experience of

the resurrection was that of being called again; the most dreadful was momentarily experiencing the cadaver as an endless fall, and the apprehension of being unable to raise the eyelids, and thus of being buried alive—in the corpse. Suddenly, the fall stopped: the cadaver was now again a living body. It was then that she was indeed “*raised* from the dead.” The organic dying of a (resurrectable) human is as nothing compared to that of an animal, exemplarily of a bull in a corrida; the only phenomenon that equals in intensity a bull’s death in a corrida is the resurrection of a human, Lazarus coming out from the grave. Her eyelids “opened to reveal something terrible which I will not talk about, the most terrible look which a living being can receive, and I think that if I had shuddered at that instant, and if I had been afraid, everything would have been lost, but my tenderness was so great that I didn’t even think about the strangeness of what was happening, which certainly seemed to me altogether natural because of that infinite movement which drew me towards her.”<sup>306</sup> The far more frequent and regrettable phenomenon in these resurrections is that just as the eyes of the resurrector and those of the resurrected come into contact, and the resurrector sees in the latter a reflection of the dreadful realm where the resurrected was, he or she in horror instinctively closes the resurrected’s eyes. This, rather than shutting the eyes of the corpse, is the paradigmatic gesture of closing the dead’s eyes. Indeed, the gesture of closing the eyes of the corpse probably originated, at least in the Christian era, in witnessing someone hurriedly shutting the eyes of a dead person whom he had resurrected. Were humans one day to no longer believe in resurrection and to have forgotten it consequent of a withdrawal of the epoch when some people were resurrected, it is likely that they will no longer close the eyes of the corpse. I find it disappointing that none of the vampire films I have seen, and I presume no vampire film at all shows what is likely to take place during the initial encounter of the vampire with his living guest: what the guest apprehends in the undead’s eyes

is so horrifying, he instinctively raises his hand toward the vampire's eyes to close them, only to hear the vampire, who had already had to tackle this reaction numerous times, say: "Your arms feel very tired. You long to rest them against your hips." Hypnotized, the guest let his now very heavy hands fall down. When he later saw the vampire in the coffin, he did not think of closing the frozen undead's open eyes. On first meeting his new living guest, the vampire already knew that he was in the presence of someone with infinite tact: for this guest did not try to close his eyes. To resurrect someone successfully one must have the infinite tact not to close his or her eyes once he or she opens the shut eyes of the corpse. She blinked several time. He asked her whether the light in the room was bothering her, whether it was too bright. "No. I was enjoying the regained lightness of my eyelids. I believe that Lazarus must have had to exert as much if not more of an effort to raise his eyelids than had those who removed the heavy rock blocking the entrance to the tomb where he was buried." Now that she was alive again, she felt happy when the others talked to her, for she understood that such an address implies a call. But she was elated when they explicitly called her. She faced away from the door, hoping that those who entered would call her name. Unfortunately, some misunderstood her gesture, thought that she was shunning them. Others, out of consideration for her frail condition, walked to the other side, faced her and only then spoke to her. Only, once, a child explicitly called her name: "J— —." She joyfully turned with some difficulty toward him. She did not close her eyes again until sleep overcame her, for she was still worried that she would not be able to open them, that the eyelids would revert to being a dead weight. She soon had troubled dreams, seeing "what she called 'a perfect rose' move in the room," and shortly suddenly said "with great anguish: 'Quick, a perfect rose,' all the while continuing to sleep but now with a slight rattle."<sup>307</sup> Then, she experienced an indefinite fall, woke up screaming, and asked: "Was I dead?" Her tactful lover

hugged her warmly, answered, "You were dreaming. You are alive," and offered her the most appropriate flower: a resurrected one a la that in Cocteau's *The Testament of Orpheus* or Godard's *King Lear*. What presents a mortal danger to the resurrected person is not so much to know that she has been brought back to life: if she did not believe in resurrection, it would not have happened. It is rather that they be reminded that they were in the labyrinthine realm of undeath: since they were not introduced into that realm, having missed its "entrance" in the trance that seizes one there, and thus cannot recall any experience of reaching it from life, they would feel certain that they have always been, and consequently always will be in it. It is this certitude that the resurrected person must not be reminded of, and that the resurrector must not witness or must have the infinite tact of overlooking, for it undermines the resurrection. One closes the eyes of the dead both in dread of the reflection of the undeath realm in them, and to eschew believing what even the rigid inanimation of the corpse, its becoming "no more than a statue,"<sup>308</sup> did not manage to convince one of: that she has always been, and will irremediably always be dead. While every mortal is already dead even as he or she lives, and thus de jure can resurrect another mortal, only the resurrected or the one who died before dying can *actually* resurrect someone else: Johannes, the mad for a time, the one who *died before he died*, can resurrect the dead Inger, and resurrected Inger can resurrect her husband into faith in Him who is "the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). In *Death Sentence*, the narrator can resurrect J— — because he himself is already dead before dying, since the doctor had, seven years earlier, given him only six months to live.<sup>309</sup> Although he otherwise belittles the doctor, he writes: "One last [but not least] thing about this doctor ... he was, it seems to me, a great deal more reliable in his diagnosis than most."<sup>310</sup> The moribund J— — does not include him in her will,<sup>311</sup> not because she is angry at him for advising her to commit suicide, but because he is already dead, and only the living can

be included in and carry out a will. This clarifies why despite both the tact he shows at every stage of her ordeal of dying and resurrection, and her trust in and gratitude for that tact, she nonetheless did not ask that her will be changed so that he would be included in it or become its executioner. Doctors are associated with vampires and the undead in many books and films on the undead. This should not be as in *Vampyr*, where the doctor is merely one of the vampire's aids, but as in Blanchot's *Death Sentence*, where the doctor's prognosis puts a term to the time a person would live, so that by surviving that *deadline* the latter becomes either an undead, as in Blanchot's novel, or the double of who he was, as in Patricia Highsmith's *Ripley's Game*, a novel where the doctor prognosticates that Jonathan would die from his myelocytic leukemia after 6–12 years—Jonathan was entering his sixth year at the beginning of the novel. In such cases, the doctor's prognosis becomes a performative. If the resurrection of the one who was alone in the world of death is to be done neither by a resurrected person nor by one who died before dying but by his or her living accomplice, it has to occur in front of many, otherwise the living who resurrects another or witnesses such a resurrection is at a high risk of being projected in time either past death into undeath or madness,<sup>312</sup> or, still this side of death, into senility. Only the resurrected or the one who died before dying, or a living person who forms a pair with them, can kill the undead: in *Vampyr*, were it not for Gray's dying before dying, the manservant would not have been able to kill the vampire.

We (almost) always resurrect another than the one who died. Is this why the second part of *Death Sentence*, which starts with "I will go on with this story" addresses the narrator's relationship with women other than resurrected J— — ? Many messianic figures are supposed to be defeated and killed and then to come back and have final victory. Unless the one who died is, like Jesus Christ, the Resurrection and the Life, "he" will come back not exactly the same, but another. One would consequently expect that while he lived he would be

unsure that he is The One. In Andy and Larry Wachowski's *The Matrix* (1999), having asked the protagonist if he believed he is the Messiah, and having heard him confess his uncertainty, the oracle tells him he is not ready: "Maybe in another life." He misunderstands that to mean that he is not The One. Soon after, it seems inevitable that he is going to be killed, but in a miraculous happening, he is spared death. This confirms for others that he is the one. To their surprise and mystification he persists in being unsure. Later, he is mortally shot. When he saw the gun aimed at him, he felt a thrill, that of awaiting himself—across death, for it is across death that he will become the Messiah, since it is across death that I is another ("Je est un autre," Rimbaud).

"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 *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."<sup>313</sup> By the time both arrive, the moribund is already dead. The moribund are bound to feel consternation that these people who were always there for them, now, at the hour of greatest need, have uncharacteristically deserted them. *Death Sentence's* narrator must have intuited that he can do nothing to save the dying person, and that he may not recover from his complete helplessness to prevent her death. *Death Sentence's* narrator arrives only once the doctor, who, at least until now, functions in the timely, and who has center stage as long as the patient is still struggling to maintain her life, now that she was dead, has withdrawn. Jesus Christ and *Death Sentence's* narrator arrive just in time for the resurrection. Jesus Christ would have been uncaring about Lazarus and the narrator of *Death Sentence* about the dying J— — only if, having arrived too late, they did not go on to resurrect them. While the J— — of *Death Sentence* fights ferociously against death, not least in surviving beyond the deadline set by the doctor for how much longer she can expect to live, her courageous fight is

not one that precludes resurrection. But there are fights for life which with their infinite desperation and finality preclude any resurrection. With the exception of Jesus Christ, nobody can come too late to resurrect the Chamberlain Christoph Detlev Brigge of Rilke's *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*. However long *Death Sentence's* narrator could have tarried, he still would have arrived while the Chamberlain Christoph Detlev Brigge was still alive, within the ten weeks his death demanded and had. The Chamberlain's fight against death goes on for too long, less in terms of the average span it takes others to be convinced by the sickness and resigned to death, than in relation to the too late of resurrection: it is too long for anyone to show up too late in order to resurrect. In terms of clock time, J— — survived longer than the Chamberlain Christoph Detlev Brigge: judging from the doctor's early prognosis, at least two years, and from his final prognosis, two extra weeks. But unlike him, not for too long: for example, she did not manage to stay alive till the morning, when she was supposed to meet the narrator. Although it is not explicitly mentioned by the narrator, I presume that those present there must have greeted him with reproachful looks for arriving after J— — had already died. But if they really believed it was too late, the resurrection could not have happened. When one arrives posthumously and those there confront one with "it is too late" and one acquiesces, one detects a very subtle disappointment on their part. Could a resurrection have happened in the presence of the Chamberlain Brigge in the apartment of J— — ? No. "By their fruit you will recognize them" (Matthew 7:16); and by their manner of dying, you will know whether they believe in resurrection or not. Already at the turn of the twentieth century, the Chamberlain Christoph Detlev Brigge no longer belongs to the era of the resurrected Jesus Christ. The neighboring villagers and the minister, who were immensely disturbed by his dying, must have intuited this. "They prayed that there might no longer be a master at Ulsgaard ...

And what they were all thinking and praying, the minister said aloud up in the pulpit, for he too had no nights anymore and could no longer understand God"<sup>314</sup>—that is, the God of resurrection. People began to die differently when the one who is the Resurrection and the Life showed up on earth. This would have been or must have been one of the signs that clued contemporaries that an epochal change had happened. How much weaker was Lazarus' dying struggle when compared to the struggle of dying people only a generation before. For, like his sister Mary, he already believed in resurrection.<sup>315</sup> The resurrected Lazarus must have subsequently died "peacefully," in his dreamless sleep, with no struggle. In our light manner of dying we still believe in resurrection, and if it is no longer the Christian one through the one who is the Resurrection and the Life, it is now through computer simulation. Frank Tipler would have found it far more difficult to envision universal resurrection at the Omega point in his *The Physics of Immortality* if he had encountered a dying a la that of the Chamberlain Christoph Detlev Brigge. The more computer simulation is perfected, the more our death will become lighter, less substantial. The coming resurrection of Jesus Christ was already foreshadowed by the lightness of his death. It was precisely the death of someone who did not believe in his own death, who is the Resurrection and the Life, and it set an example for others by its lightness. How now, Jesus Christ's death was a light one?! Isn't it the case, according to the New Testament, that while he was crucified but still alive, "from the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land" (Matthew 27:45), and that when "he gave up his spirit ... the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook and the rocks split" (Matthew 27:50–51)? Notwithstanding these upheavals, one would expect much more from the death of a god, let alone of God. For a divine equivalent of the struggle that the dying human Chamberlain Christoph Detlev Brigge waged, one would have to look for the dying of a god who

not only is not a divinity of resurrection, but also one not within a single epoch, but at the cusp between two, so that his or her death would be apprehended as doubly final by him or her.

Guilt is part of the work of mourning. If someone dies in a manner that does not preclude resurrection, we feel guilty for not resurrecting him or her, since we have a foreboding that even though, unlike mystics and schizophrenics, we have not explicitly undergone dying before dying, we nonetheless de jure if not in fact should be able to resurrect him or her since we are already dead even while we live. If he or she dies in a manner that precludes resurrection, his awesome protracted dying will sooner or later induce those around to wish or even pray that he would die as speedily as possible. I presume that like the neighboring villagers and the minister, I too, and for that matter Rilke also, at some additional delay, would have ended up praying for the Chamberlain Brigge to die. The difference between people is not that only some end up wishing for such protracted awesome dying to come to an end speedily: they all do; but in how long they forebear doing so. The work of mourning would be shorter and far less intense with regards to someone like Chamberlain Christoph Detlev Brigge, since part of the work of mourning is to believe in the finality of the death of the other. The Chamberlain's death is historically timely as it happens between the spreading loss of faith in resurrection through Jesus Christ and the time when "you die the death that belongs to your sickness (for since all sicknesses are well known, it is also known that the various fatal endings belong to the sicknesses and not to the people; and the sick person has, so to speak, nothing more to do)."<sup>316</sup> *Death Sentence's* doctor is "a great deal more reliable ... than most" because his diagnosis of the sickness is medically accurate, while his prognosis is a performative that turns the person who survives the deadline he proffered into a dead person.<sup>317</sup> In our age only the dead (before dying), for example *Death Sentence's* narrator and J—, are able not to die of their sickness.

His mortally-wounded beloved began to totter. He rushed toward her and held her in his arms. Unfortunately, moments later she expired. He momentarily felt not a spirit coming upward, but a body falling down. He deposited her gently on the bed, but did not try to resurrect her. His friend told him: "The recently dead is falling, goes on falling." "I don't understand what you mean." "This implies that you have never tried to resurrect a mortal. *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* could only have been written by someone who has never tried to resurrect, and about characters who also have never tried to resurrect. It would have been preferable to your presently dead beloved had you let her body fall abruptly to the ground when she expired but then tried to resurrect her, that is, tried to stop her endless fall in the cadaver. You would then have experienced the unbearable heaviness of being, something we intimate in Dreyer's resurrection film, *Ordet*."

#### **Dreamless:**

When he was sleeping and God molded woman out of his limb, the man [*Adam*] did not dream. It is on the night of eating of the mortality-inducing tree that Adam and Eve first dreamt. While he slept in the boat that was transporting him with his disciples to the other shore (Matthew 8:23–24), was Jesus Christ dreaming? No. One of his disciples asked him later: "What have you dreamt?" He did not understand what that meant. Henceforth, when he recounted to his disciples his dreams, they listened without volunteering any comment, as these were visionary dreams, ones related to *'ālam al-mithāl*. One day, he said to Mary: "What have I to do with you woman? I don't even dream." Another day he encountered someone who had dreamt the previous night and "cured" him. Lazarus had recurrent nightmares as he was very sick. He would wake up screaming. When asked what it was he was dreaming, he answered each time: "I kept falling, indefinitely." Now that Jesus Christ, who had shortly before resurrected Lazarus, and the other guests had left, Lazarus' two sisters felt

very scared of spending the night with a person who hours earlier was rotting in a grave. As he headed to his bedroom, they wished him pleasant dreams. He seemed puzzled, did not grasp what they were saying. Later in the night, he woke up. One of his sisters, still awake, asked him: “You seemed to have had an anguished sleep, tossing and turning all night. Were you having nightmares?” He looked uncomprehending. What did she mean by *nightmare*? Resurrected Lazarus no longer dreamt. When Jesus said to his twelve disciples, “We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!” (Matthew 20:17–19), the response of one of them was: “When did you, the Son of God, know that you will die?” “The day I first dreamt.” “What was it in the dream that indicated this to you?” “It was nothing in the dream content; the mere fact that I dreamt was in itself prophetic of my coming death.” While on the cross, Jesus closed his eyes. One of the crowd of onlookers yelled: “He is dead.” Actually, there, suspended on the cross, he was dreaming. In Scorsese’s *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988), that Jesus dreamt at all non-visionary dreams, thus ones implicated with mortality and the unconscious, was as such sinful, irrespective of the content of the dream. Shortly, one of the two criminals crucified at his side asked him: “What did you dream?” “I do not recall much. I was falling on and on. Then there were three characters in the dream.<sup>318</sup> One of them—or was it a fourth one?—asked me: ‘But what about you? Who do you say I am?’ [Matthew 16:15].” His interlocutor interpreted the dream for him.

#### ***In Your Dreams:***

In *Twelve Monkeys*, Terry Gilliam’s remake of Chris Marker’s *La Jetée*, one of the survivors of a bacterial epidemic that killed five billion people and devastated much of the earth’s biosphere dreams

again a nightmare in which a woman at what seems to be an airport gate unsuccessfully tries to dissuade someone from shooting him. He is present in that scene also as a child witness. He is jolted out of the dream, not by anxiety, but by the voice of a guard informing him that he has been chosen for a mission. Shortly scientists conducting experiments in time travel send him to the past with the goal of tracing the source of the epidemic, and, if possible, stopping it at its inception. Appearing in the past, he quickly encounters the woman of the dream. His recurrent recalls to the future to report to the scientists and the mental stress of experiencing the temporal vertigo of time travel soon make him wonder whether he is dreaming his sojourns in the past. Back in the pre-disaster period, and having to escape the police on his trails, both he and that woman, now wanted by the police as his accessory, seek refuge in a cinema theater. She suggests that they take their minds off the enervating impending end of the world by flying away to some island on a vacation. He consents, possibly having reasoned that the events of the scene at the airport could not have transpired in the manner he sees them in his dream, but must have been subjected to the dream-work mechanisms of condensation, displacement, secondary revision, etc. But if the events did not take place as in the dream, how did they actually happen? Unfortunately, owing to post-traumatic amnesia, he can access that catastrophic period only in the distorted reflection of the dream. She briefly goes away then returns with some masquerade articles. She disguises him with a wig and a mustache. He is moved by her concern about the possibility of his apprehension by the police, but also disconcerted that she is dressing him in his death costume, the one in which in the dream, and according to the dream, he is killed. She then places a blonde wig on her head: the same one in which she appears in the dream! It is then, through the coincidence between the changes suggested or imposed by the vicissitudes of the world, namely evading detection by the police, and those attributable to the dream work, that

she really becomes a dream woman to him. Now, he felt that the dream may get actualized. Nonetheless, he did not retract his consent to head to the airport: part of him wanted the past to recur so that he would know what had happened. On their way to the airport, he came across additional dreamlike elements: he saw giraffes, gorillas, and a lion moving amidst the cars on the highway (he was shortly to learn that they had been released from the zoo by a gang called Twelve Monkeys). At the airport, his companion discovers the scientist who is transporting vials of highly dangerous bacteria to disperse at the different destinations of his scheduled flight around the world. She quickly conveys this information to him. Again, the blonde woman yells to the police not to shoot the protagonist as he runs past the security gate in pursuit of the scientist heading to the plane. Again he is shot and his murder is witnessed by himself as a child. The simultaneous presence in the same scene of oneself at different ages is possible through time travel, but also in dreams. While he had all along his time travels wondered whether he was dreaming, now that he was actually doing so, he, no lucid dreamer, felt certain that he was awake. Some propose that were we able to travel back to the past, we would not be able to alter the block universe of spacetime. *Twelve Monkeys* provides one manner in which this may happen: at every critical moment one is overcome by a hypnoid state and dreams. He thus missed both the chance of altering the past and of seeing how the events had transpired at that decisive moment in the past. Both *La Jetée* and *Twelve Monkeys*, which revolve around a trauma, are circular, but in different ways: the former starts with reality and ends with the same reality through time travel; the latter starts with a dream and ends with the same dream. *Twelve Monkeys* is a strange circular time-travel film where what happens at the decisive moment in the past rather than being shown twice, from the two perspectives of the protagonist as a child and as an adult, as in *La Jetée*, is elided. If the dream can show his murder, it is that he was not murdered and that such a

false murder obfuscates the real, repressed trauma, namely that he was dreaming at that critical moment when he had a chance, however slim, of saving the world.

The first time he heard a young woman in her early twenties tell him that she would very much like to be his friend, and go on to affirm that most women would dream of a man like him for a lover, he responded: "It won't work between us in terms of friendship, for you're too young: the only relationship we can possibly have is love, since in love, as Lacan put it, a woman gives 'what she does not have.'"<sup>319</sup> Like most people, she was too thrifty to give even what she did not have. Along the subsequent weeks and months, he heard other young women tell him how much they would like to be his friends, and then add the line about how most women would dream of a man like him for a lover. How did he come to suspect that he had become a vampire? The first inkling he had that something eerie was beginning to happen to him was that more and more women, *mostly strangers*, were telling him that they had dreamt of him; he soon deduced that he was becoming a dream creature. When he met another vampire, the latter told him that he first deduced that there is a second vampire in the city not so much from the periodic news items about men and women and children found mortally drained of blood, but from the similarity of the descriptions by some of his victims of the man who used to attack them in nightmares.

#### On the Failure of Memorable Dream Books:

Jalal Toufic

7/9/1997

To Richard Foreman, New York:

The Overlook Press sent me a copy of your first novel (in parts): *No-Body*. I just began reading it. And I just began being unable to remember what I read.

There is a strong connection of your book to the unconscious. I

see it in some of the images; in the free association with which many of the links are made; but mainly in the manner in which the images, events and lines have a tendency to disappear from memory the same way one's dreams are forgotten upon waking. One would have to exert the same sort of effort to remember your writing in *No-Body* as one would to recall a dream. Most dream books fail to induce in the reader the sensation that he or she is unable to remember them. I remember Kathy Acker's *My Mother: Demonology*, with its many dream sequences; and Burroughs' *My Education: A Book of Dreams*. Unlike the inability of the dreamer to recall the dream upon waking, the failure to remember experienced in relation to your book, and which affects not the writer or dreamer but the reader, is not mainly linked to a repression concerning the Freudian unconscious. To what then is it linked?

While watching your play *Eddie Goes to Poetry City: Part II*, in 1991, I felt at times that I was missing many of the associations according to which the moves between the images, postures, and lines were happening, and wished I had the opportunity to consider at least the lines at some leisure. Four years later the play was published in *My Head Was a Sledgehammer*. Through that book, I have the time to attend to and remember the lines. That is why *No-Body* provides a closer feel of the experience I had while watching your play than reading it in *My Head Was a Sledgehammer*.

#### Am I Dreaming?

Past his encounter with the vampire, who does not dream in his coffin but lies frozen there, his victim frequently wondered: *Am I dreaming?* It suddenly struck him that the Freudian way of interpreting a dream—"Whenever my own ego does not appear in the content of the dream, but only some extraneous person, I may safely assume that my own ego lies concealed, by identification, behind this other person"—could apply to his present case: it could well be that he

himself was just the substitute by identification (through a common element) of the dreamer, and this to evade the censorship of an agency of the latter's psychic apparatus. In which case, it is that other who would wake-up. The vampire said to his guest: "While I don't dream since I am frozen in the coffin during daylight; you not only dream when asleep, but additionally, since you've 'met' me, encounter a dream world even when awake—after all is it me who metamorphoses into mist or a pack wolves or rats, or is it you who are dreaming even while awake, thus subjecting my image to the dream-work mechanisms of condensation, displacement, etc. [you should not take your dreams at face value but interpret them]? Let me suck your blood, so that although while awake during the day you will continue to be in a dream world, as you lie supine in a coffin you will not sleep and therefore not dream, but will be frozen."<sup>320</sup>

#### Am I in a Film?

Serge Daney: "Nothing happens any longer to humans; it is to the image that everything happens."<sup>321</sup> This proposition has to be qualified: things still happen to humans in some states of altered consciousness, since in these states the diegetic world itself functions in a filmic manner: 1) The lapses in epilepsy,<sup>322</sup> hypnosis, schizophrenia, LSD trips, and undeath permit editing in reality. As a demonstration, a hypnotist entranced a subject shortly before sunset, conducted him to a different location, and there snapped him out of his trance an hour or so later when it was already night, the subject experiencing a jump cut between the two locations-times. While in many a Morissey-Warhol film, the flash frames at the end of the shot were left in the film, in Herzog's *Heart of Glass* it is the frequent closing of the eyes of the entranced, after they say their lines, that is included in the film. 2) The immobilizations in undeath and dance are the equivalent of cinema's freeze frames, allowing all sorts of temporal special effects. If undeath and dance are such purely cinematic subjects, it is because

they confront cinema with what is essential to it, not motion (*motion pictures*) but real immobilization, one that affects time directly, making possible temporal irregularities that pertain not only to the time and speed of narrative but also to the time and speed of story. 3) *Kinematic vision*, during which one perceives (in) stills, occasionally occurs in undeath, acute psychoses, in some cases of migraine auras and epileptic seizures, and in *encephalitis lethargica*. Regarding the latter, one of Oliver Sacks' patients told him: "Sometimes these stills form a flickering vision, like a movie-film which is running too slow."<sup>323</sup> Moreover, Hester Y. and other patients discussed in Sacks' *Awakenings* told him that sometimes they experienced "the displacement of a 'still' either backwards or forwards, so that a given 'moment' may occur too soon or too late."<sup>324</sup> 4) The positive and negative hallucinations and the post hypnotic sequelae in hypnosis are a form of matting. 5) Schizophrenics and those undergoing a bad LSD trip, who are suffering from a decathexis of the world, occasionally have the impression that the people around are mere extras.

While watching *Persona*, I have the impression that the cracking of the on-screen image in the middle and its burning, and the backward sound (as occasionally happens during film editing), and the repetition in the scene in which Alma's removal of a snapshot of Elisabeth's son from under his mother's hand and her speech to the latter about her relation to her son is shown twice, once with the camera on Elisabeth, a second time with the camera on Alma (while it is a standard procedure when filming angle/reverse angle scenes to shoot with the camera first on one actor, then on the other, then to intercut the two set-ups, here the two takes, from opposite angles, are not intercut but added) are all diegetic. One way for these to be diegetic is for Alma to be dead, since in the undeath realm reality is sometimes cinematic, the dead person asking himself or herself: "Am I in a movie?" I therefore formulate the following hypothesis: Alma is dead, and look for a confirmation. Near the beginning of *Persona*, a corpse's closed eyes are

suddenly, in a jump cut, open. Later in the film, supine Alma's closed eyes are, also in a jump cut, abruptly open. These shots of the corpse and of Alma are taken from an identical position and angle of view. A correspondence is thus established between the two woman: Alma is dead.

Bazin: "The guiding myth, then, inspiring the invention of cinema, is the accomplishment of that which dominated in a more or less vague fashion all the techniques of the mechanical reproduction of reality in the nineteenth century, from photography to the phonograph, namely an integral realism, a recreation of the world in its own image ... If the origins of an art reveal something of its nature, then one may legitimately consider the silent and the sound film as stages of a technical development that little by little made a reality out of the original 'myth.' ... The cinema was born ... out of a myth, the myth of total cinema."<sup>325</sup> It is because in undeath and states of altered consciousness reality is filmic<sup>326</sup> that film can move toward total cinema only asymptotically, for otherwise it would become reality's double, precipitating reality's demise.

Dissociation sometimes permits one to observe the edited film where one is. For the dissociated self to be able to re-edit the fragments of that film, it has to be not only passive but also a participant. From this perspective hypnagogic states as well as many meditative states are abortive—unless one (re)edits the film through the master. Where is one when dissociated? Notwithstanding Bazin's assertion that "there are no wings to the screen. There could not be without destroying its specific illusion, which is to make of a revolver or of a face the very center of the universe," one is then in the wings, ones that paradoxically function in a cinematic manner.

#### **Photographic Memory:**

He, who felt a strong affinity and attraction to certain kinds of tallness, for example that of the village women of al-Qaryatayn in Syria



as they stand with their earthenware jars on their heads, and that of ancient Egyptian statues, whose gazes overlook the one facing them level with their eyes, was now thrilled by the length of the shadow of the host. When one of two conversing people inadvertently stepped over that shadow, an unsettling thing happened: as if pinched, the host abruptly jumped to the side. The person who had stepped over the shadow instinctively drew back apologetically. After the other guests had left, the host sucked his blood. The following morning he was unsure whether he had dreamt the anomalous events of the previous night. But a few days later he got a confirmation that he had been attacked by a vampire: he was turning into one. At the insistence of the host, he set the camera on automatic and rushed to stand next to other guests. When he perused the developed photograph, he was amazed not to witness himself with the others. Instead, his shadow



was on the floor at the edge of the bottom frame, as if he was still standing behind the camera.



Some days later, he along with other, new guests was invited to a masquerade in some castle in a faraway village. The host suggested they fly to the nearest city in his private jet. While in the air he intermittently was struck by how flimsy the jet seemed. He had to constantly look from the window at the wings with their engines and the mountain ranges far below to regain the feeling that he was sitting in a powerful machine. He felt great relief when the plane landed. But as he was walking toward the airport exit, he glimpsed briefly another plane at the point of taking off: again it seemed unreal, a painted set up! They reached the village around noon. They headed to the nearby lake to rest and enjoy the afternoon. For an hour, the setting was idyllically relaxing. But then things went wrong. Three persons were sitting in a boat: one was smiling, another was holding an oar. While the two boats behind theirs were small, they were not so according to perspective foreshortening, so that the diminution in size seemed unconvincing, artificial. Moreover, the boat was two-dimensional, the

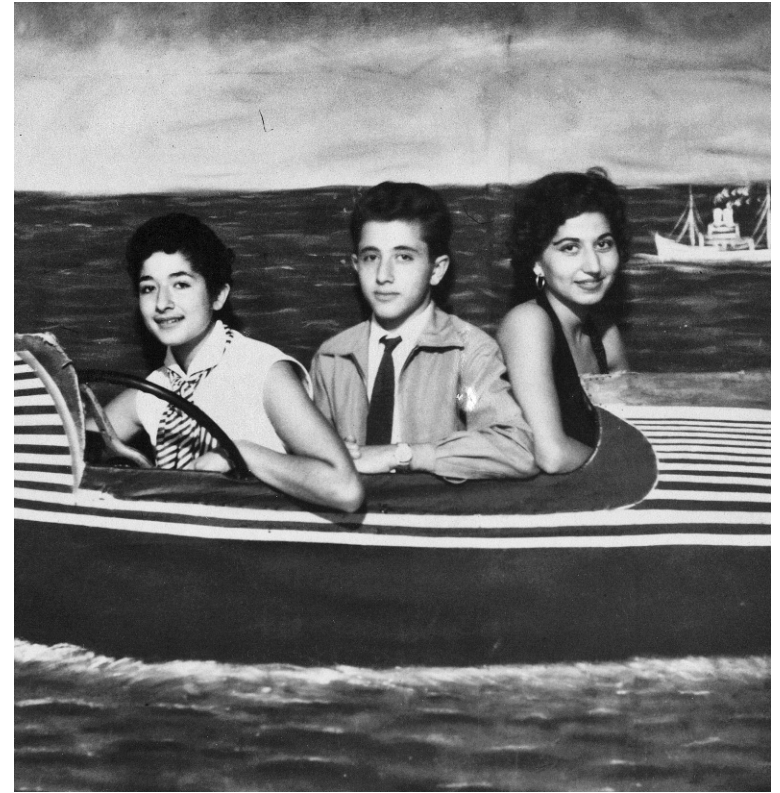


waves against it were frozen, and, as far as the landscape around the lake was concerned, "the trees and hedges were of cardboard, placed here and there, like stage accessories."<sup>327</sup> He now felt that the one who was smiling was actually laughing at him. Panicked, he walked away hurriedly. Shortly, he came across some children. He became fearful as some of them appeared masked.





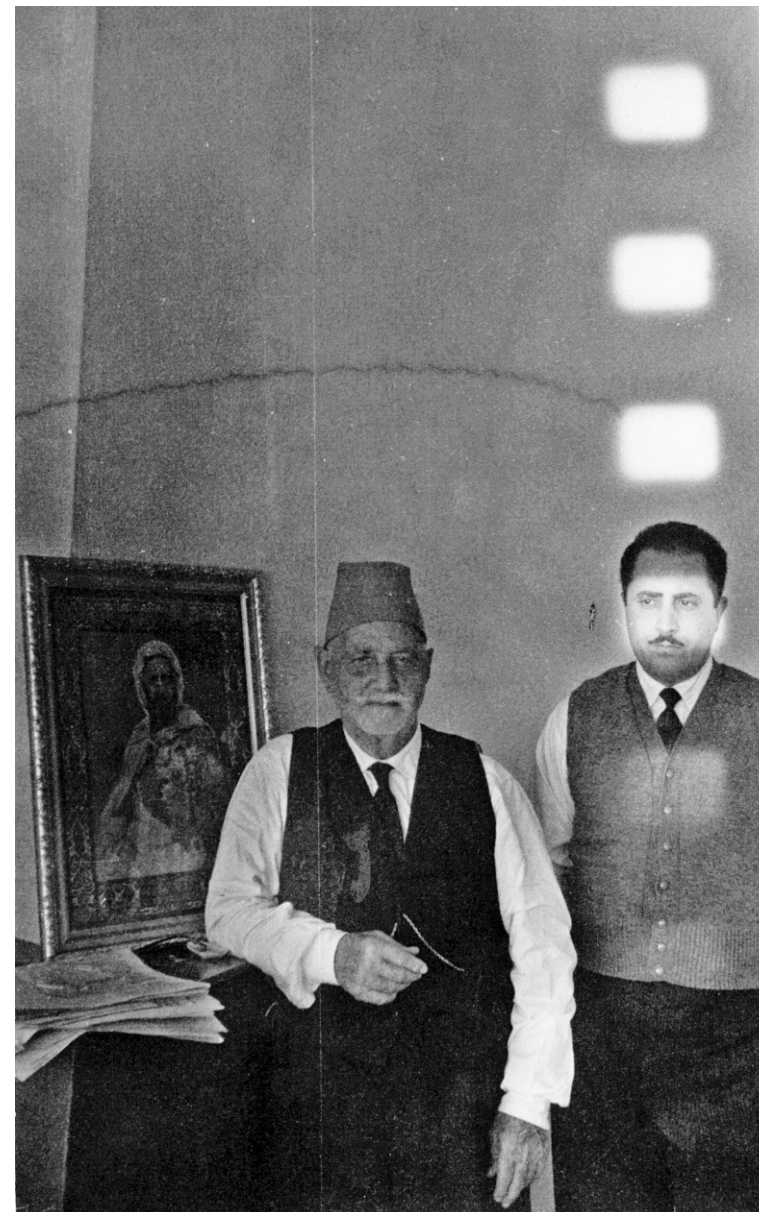
He rushed back toward his companions on the lake's shore. Again he saw the anomalous boat. It was now at a different spot of the lake! How did it reach this other spot when the waves were frozen?



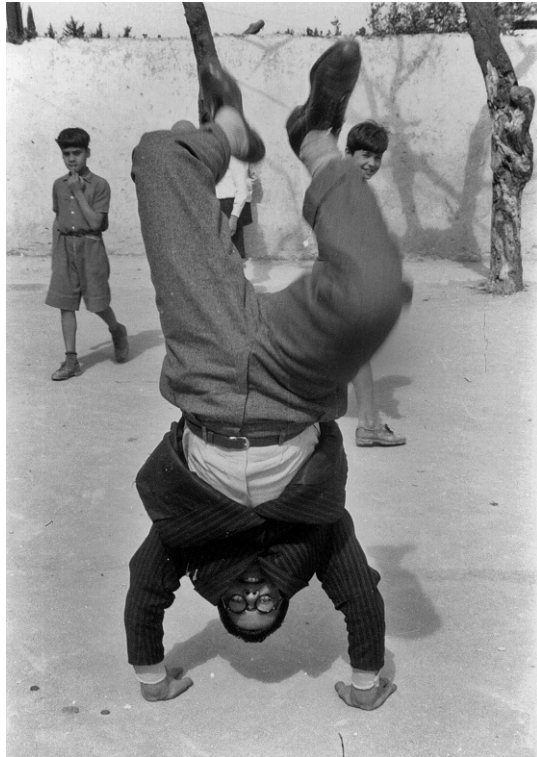
He implored his companions to leave the lake's shore and head to the host's house. There, he felt relieved to see people who were not masked, but merely physically costumed. He quickly became bored by the hackneyed impersonations, for example that of a vampire by two women who were dressed in black cloaks, and one of whom had made up her cheeks very white, as if devoid of blood.



He moved to another room. On the shelf were the many volumes of Encyclopedia Britannica. He opened one of them to take his mind off the strange happenings. The page before him was on senescence! "In semelparous forms, reproduction takes place near the end of the life span, after which there ensues a rapid senescence that quickly leads to the death of the organism. In plants the senescent phase is usually an integral part of the reproductive process and essential for its completion. The dispersal of seeds, for example, is accomplished by processes—including ripening and fall (abscission) of fruits and drying of seed pods—that are inseparable from the overall senescence process." He was interrupted by the entrance of two men. The older of the two introduced to him the other as possessing a photographic memory. "You mean something along the lines of what A. R. Luria describes in *The Mind of a Mnemonist: A Little Book about a Vast Memory*?" "Yes." "I too have a photographic memory." "Prove it. Repeat to me what you have just read." "You misunderstand me." He had photographic memory neither because whatever he saw, he could later reproduce verbatim or describe fully; nor because he had formed his memory of certain countries, topics, etc., through perusing documentary photographs of them; but because, panicked, he could have of phenomena only glimpses—quasi snapshots—before averting his anxious look. Suddenly but naturally the light changed in the fluctuating weather of February. A pattern of vertical squares appeared on the wall, one of them illuminating the face of the younger of the two men. Why did that man not seem at all bothered by the brightness and blink? Had the light not really changed, but he, the observer, was suddenly apprehending the sprocket holes in reality, reality as filmic? He swish-panned his look. What intensified his fear was that as he did so he heard the characteristic sound of the click of a camera. Was there someone around taking photographs? He was too apprehensive to ascertain. Later he felt angry with himself for fleeing the room instead of staying to check if there were certain square openings in



the facing wall through which the light pattern could have been produced. When he reconsidered the matter later, he was amazed that he had not tried to go back to that room: it was as if he was reasoning unconsciously that it was in a film, and consequently that it was senseless to return to check part of an off-screen that was at no point on-screen. He got out of the house to the garden. A man was standing upside down. He felt dizzy. While falling to the ground and before losing consciousness, a procession of images from various films and paintings passed through his mind: Coppola's *Dracula* moving upside down along a wall, several Georg Baselitz paintings.



Through the protracted mental suffering caused by these hallucinations, as well as by voices, paranoid ideas of reference, and thought broadcasting, this vegetarian who had responded one day to his mother's insistent pleas that he resume eating meat with, "For me to eat meat, I would have to become brainless. I would consider ending my vegetarian eating habits only were you to present to me my brain, cooked, on a platter," developed the urge to eat the organ he thought the locus of these anomalous mental processes, a brain, ideally his own. That same night, after sucking his blood, the vampire told him: "Tomorrow, I will take you along on a hunting trip: to initiate you into feeding on blood. But as an introduction to that, today I will treat you to your last dish of meat. Like so many anorexics and vegetarians, I am a fabulous cook." As the vampire headed toward the kitchen, he moved back to his bedroom. The door opened before him on its own. This auto-mobility of objects, which is encountered in hypnosis, implied that he was becoming entranced. He locked the door. Shortly, he saw the vampire standing beside him. How did the latter manage to be by his side without entering through the locked door? The vampire now extracted his brain from his skull and returned with it to the kitchen. While the vampire could not be constrained in any space since he could tunnel through walls, even in open space he was constrained width-wise by the virtual edges of the coffin, walking with his hands laid tightly against his body (Murnau's *Nosferatu*). Half an hour later, he came to lead him to the dining room. Walking before him while trailed by the very long tail of his coat, the host seemed quite tall. As the vampire failed to be reflected in the mirror he had hung in his room, he realized why the length of his host's shadow struck him at the party a few nights before: the shadow had become material by a transference of part of the body's materiality to it. The impression of inordinate tallness induced by the circumstance that the long tail of his host's coat functioned as a material shadow was reinforced as they "sat" on dinner chairs whose backs were the height



of an average standing human adult: even when sitting, the vampire gave the impression that he was still standing. His host served him his brain cooked with the most exquisite sauce and surrounded by fresh vegetables. "I do not want you to be mindless like zombies, but brainless, like vampires. I want you to become that rarity in the (keyed) midst of the common mindless: a brainless person. So eat your brain. Today you will be finished with this Bergsonian filter of the mind."



Now that he was sure that he was turning into a vampire, he dreaded aging at an accelerated rate. But instead, he became hypersensitive to the senescence of others, to the processes of decomposition in them. He who was known for the weakness of his sense of smell now smelled putrefaction in the presence of not only aged people, but also persons in their thirties and twenties. He remembered a striking line in Cees Nootebaum's *The Following Story*: "If one is immortal oneself, the stench emanating from mortals must be intolerable." Given that though undead, he was in principle not immortal since he could be killed, he did not smell such stench with all mortals, for

instance not with young girls the age of Balinese dancers. “All of the players and dancers of the exceptional troupe *Tirta Sari*, from the village of Peliatan, are children, ranging in age from seven to fourteen” (Muriel Topaz, “A Letter from Indonesia,” *Dance Magazine*, 12/01/1997). Indeed, the two young girls who play *legong* must retire by the time they reach puberty.<sup>328</sup> Wasn’t biological death introduced with sexual reproduction? Wouldn’t senescence therefore begin with puberty, the onset of the physiological capability for sexual reproduction, i.e., for the pubescent’s replaceability? He was repulsed by the vast majority of adults because of their putrid odor and because while they were now stamped by the dying process, they did not assume death through an explicit initiation as people used to do in ritualistic societies. Since contemporary culture in general was oblivious of initiation, with rare exceptions, he could still stand and respect only those who were not yet of an age to undergo it: prepubescents. His desperate attempt to flee putridity started him on a perverse process. He developed a fetish for sailor suits worn by Japanese schoolgirls. During another masquerade party, the host asked him: “When are you going to get married? How many children do you plan to have?” During the subsequent conversation, he was dumbfounded by what he learnt about marriage laws in Lebanon. It seemed to him that the felicitous approach in a country that did not allow for marriage between a man and a woman of different religions and did not provide civil marriages—on March 24, 1998, then president Elias Hrawi stated that 22% of Lebanese marriages were civil ceremonies held abroad and registered in Lebanon (*Daily Star*, 4/7/1998); but on the other hand in principle allowed Moslem men to marry girls of a very young age, was humor: “An ironist is someone who discusses principles; he is seeking a first principle, a principle which comes even before the one that was thought to be first ... He constantly goes up and down. This is why he proceeds by questioning, he is a man of conversation, of dialogue, he has a particular tone, always of the signifier. Humour is completely

the opposite: principles count for little, everything is taken literally ... Humour is the art of consequences or effects: OK, fine, you give me this? You’ll see what happens” (Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, 68). Their conversation was interrupted by a boy costumed as a sailor, who addressed his interlocutor as “mother.” As he turned, he saw another boy also dressed in a sailor’s suit, then a third. At this point, the mother said to him: “Why don’t we take a photograph of our sailors?” He nodded a Yes. She handed him a camera. He framed the three boys. On the point of taking the photograph, he heard her say: “Please wait; there’s another child.” She then yelled: “Nadia!” A little girl appeared from the adjoining room. She too was dressed in sailors’ suit. He felt both paranoid: had they penetrated into his fantasies and were hinting at his fetish? and offended: it seemed to him sacrilegious

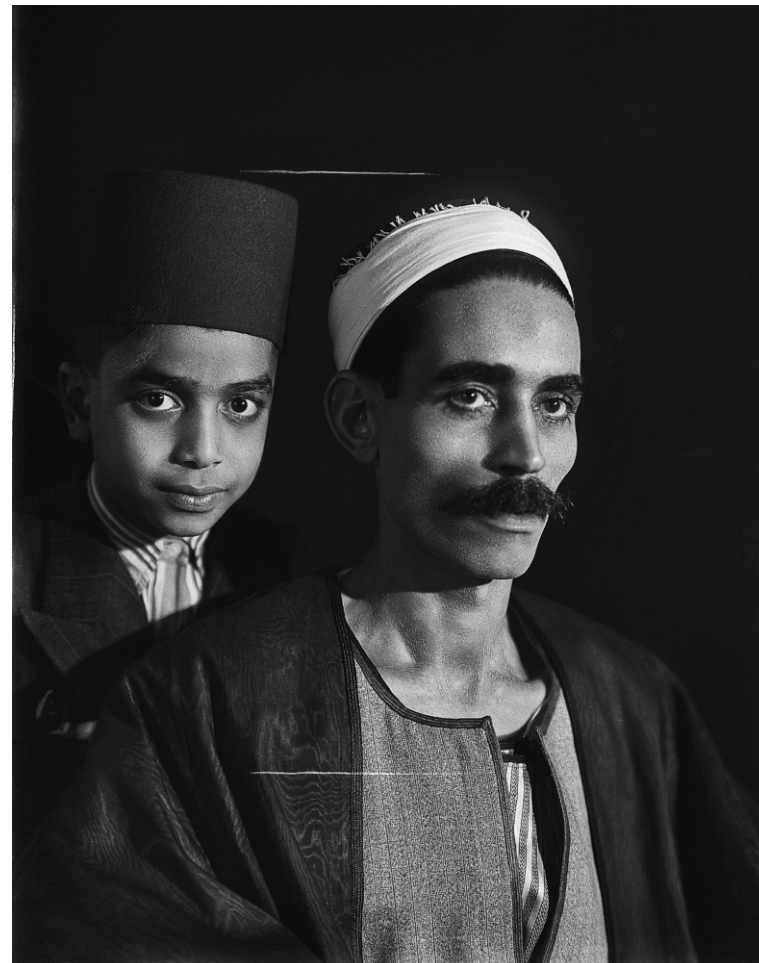


that such a suit be worn by any “girl-child” without it inducing a fetishistic thrill. Adding kitschy insult to injury, the four children stood in profile in a line of ascending height. He found himself screaming at the little girl, to the anger of her parents and the hostess: “Go get dressed.” He quickly corrected himself: “Change your clothes!” A fortnight later, he married a dainty eleven-year-old. Given his adamant resolution not to bring to the world a child, others had no right to object: “But she is the age of your daughter!” He first sucked her blood on the second night of their marriage. A year later, a putrid smell began to come off her. He knew that his wife had reached puberty and so divorced her.

He had thought that death would be the end of him. But it was not. Death was the end of the world. To die is to experience the end of the world. The end of the world was manifesting itself to him not only in the widespread physical destruction and human slaughter in Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, Rwanda, Sudan, etc., but also in:



— A frequent immobilization and flattening of people and objects, the kind that happens at the event horizon of a black hole, the edge of the universe.<sup>329</sup> He saw a father and son standing together. The father looked flat, as if a photograph. The same phenomenon was repeated a few days later, now with a woman and her child: this time it was the child who appeared flat.



— The sensation that he was carrying his own body. He saw an old man holding a large chunk. He seemed to be very far away, as if at the end of the universe, precisely at the event horizon of some black hole, where one is weighted down by one's own body, the difference between the gravitational pull on the thigh, closer to the black hole, and that on the head becoming not only noticeable but excruciating. He could not discern what the chunk was: a water container? A cow's thigh? That man's own thigh? The latter possibility reinforced his sense of the wavering and ambiguity of dimensions, the thigh as big as the whole person.



#### Death-Size Body:

When we die, we feel what Christ experienced not only on first being incarnated in Jesus of Nazareth, but all along his incarnation in the latter: an endless fall.

He felt shivers go through his body whenever he saw the scene in Resnais' *Hiroshima mon amour* where Duras' entranced heroine says to her Japanese lover about her then freshly dead German lover: "The moment of his death escaped me, really, because even at that moment, and even after—yes I can say even after—I can say I could not find the slightest difference between his dead body and mine. I could find only resemblances between this dead body and mine!" Now again, he felt a shiver as he had the apprehension that he too would soon feel no difference between his body and the corpse of his beloved. When he entered the room in which the corpse was laid, he felt unsettled: while somewhat, he could very well gauge the metrical distance to the corpse: it was a little less than one meter, the same distance as the one that would be separating him from that body were it



still alive; at another level, the corpse seemed very far. The impression of inordinate remoteness was immediately confirmed by the steep downward stares of the mourners around the bier: they seemed to be looking across the edges of the coffin into an abyss. The dead as cadaver is continuously falling, is an abysmal entity. The body of the dead laid on the deathbed is both inert—but not frozen still, as the undead can be—covering only where it is, and a constant fall as cadaver; it is conjointly an excess of presence, hysterical as it lies there inert on the bed, and an endless withdrawal. A detail struck him: one boy was resting his hands over the edges of the coffin. There was



something brutal about the boy's gesture. How is it that he did not feel vertigo? Brutality is this absence of a sense of thresholds; contrariwise, subtlety is a heightened awareness of thresholds. Shortly, the boy's gesture made him feel the defenselessness of the corpse. In Lars von Trier's *The Kingdom*, 1994, as he stands in front of a corpse soon to be dissected, a doctor asks one of his students: "Would you mind if I touched your face?" "No, thanks!" He then asks another:

"You. Stand next to him. Closer! Closer, closer, closer!" "I don't like it." "Do you think the people who lie on this table *like* it. Would they like it when we begin to cut them up?" "I don't know." "I say that the fear of being touched, of getting close to people, is the fear of death. Why? Because it is the fear of fellowship. Every time you move along the seat of the bus to avoid contact, every time you avoid poking your finger in the wound of a patient's illness, it is the fear of fellowship, of that greater fellowship. Everyone we work on here has accepted his place in the fellowship. A corpse makes no demands. With sublime generosity a corpse delivers its body to the science that belongs to all of us.... The law of the dead is to *give*. That invokes respect. Right ... the first incision."<sup>330</sup> The corpse now seemed embarrassing, like an idiot. The corpse's made up somberness, as well as that of the mourners, who were assuming a hieratic attitude and posture, seemed now derisory. Were the mourners dead serious? No, they could not be: only the dead as undead is dead serious. While the undead is dead serious, the corpse is idiotic. Suddenly he began giggling. The passing maid was taken aback by his abrupt laughter, lost her balance, the tray of refreshments and the pie she was carrying splashing over the corpse's face. His laughter intensified. The brutal child, whose hands had transgressed so nonchalantly the borders of the coffin, as well as his parents were disturbed by the idiotic behavior of the lover. The similarity between the lover and the corpse of his beloved was not physical rigidity and coldness, but idiocy. The other mourners too looked at him with consternation and embarrassment. He was not intimidated by their disapproval. Then in a strange synchronization, he addressed the corpse, and the mourners addressed him with: "Stop playing the idiot!" He remembered now that he had heard some acquaintances say that they "wished to be like a corpse, so as not to feel anything any longer, to have an arrest of all operations, thoughts." While he had on several occasions had the desire to be brainless, he never had the wish to be a corpse, and he understood now why that

was: for that he had to accept to play the idiot. In *The Kingdom*, notwithstanding the teacher's aforementioned eloquent words, one of his medical students soon decapitates that same corpse in a prank on a nurse who had refused his advances. To have one's legs played with, or one's head cut or a pie thrown at one's face defenselessly is to be in the position of an idiot. Is it surprising then that Von Trier went on a few years later to make a film about a group of people who feign to be idiots (*The Idiots*, 1998)?

September 28, 1970. Momentarily, the corpse of Gamāl 'Abd an-Nāṣir, this body that used to be magnified by its charismatic voice often radioed all over the Arab world,<sup>331</sup> now mute, lay small, even puny on the bier. Outside, tens of thousands and soon hundreds of thousands were assembling for the funeral procession. By the time the coffin was moved through the streets of Cairo, the crowd had swelled to over a million. They wanted to touch the coffin, partly in an atavistic gesture and impulse, as if it could give them *barakāt* (blessings). Hysteria soon seized the crowd, making of it a compact, single body, so that one could truly say that the corpse was raised on the hands of everyone in the crowd. One of the pallbearers who had carried the coffin to the house where it temporarily lay the previous night felt an incredible fatigue on seeing the hysterical myriads who were trying to touch the moving bier and who were thus participating in its lifting and procession: how could he with only a few others have earlier transported this corpse? It was now as difficult, indeed more difficult to carry the cadaver of 'Abd an-Nāṣir than it would have been to carry the colossal statues of Rameses II that guard the entrance at Abū Simbul in Aswān, Egypt. Whence came the corpse's unrecognizable excessive heaviness? From its change into a cadaver, an endless fall. Whether or not it would remain steady while being jolted by the myriads of mourners trying to touch it along its procession, the corpse was already falling indefinitely as a cadaver. A moment may come during tremendous funerary processions when the huge



number of people takes itself for an infinite one, wagers that it can counter the infinity of the cadaver, of the endless fall implicit in the cadaver.<sup>332</sup> To the millions at his funerary procession, if ‘Abd an-Nāṣir was not definitely dead, this was not as someone who has through his influential life and memorable funeral been assured of lasting fame, but because it seemed possible to counter the fall implied in his cadaver and thus resurrect him (to resurrect, one has to counter not only the over-turn but also the infinite fall implicit in the cadaver). “While he was alive, they felt larger than life through him. Now that he is dead, they are, through him, feeling themselves equal to death, to resurrection.” “Regarding the first part of your statement, I would prefer to say: ‘While he was alive, they felt equal to life through him.’ There is nothing larger than life: ‘It is a mistake to suppose that birth turns into death. Birth is a phase that is an entire period of itself, with its own past and future ... Death is a phase that is an entire period of itself, with its own past and future. ... In birth there is nothing but birth and in death there is nothing but death.’ (Dōgen, “Birth and Death” [*Shōjō*]).” These people, who had challenged with him the Western powers with the nationalization of the Suez canal, were now undergoing an even bigger challenge with him: countering the infinite fall in the cadaver. Indeed the cries “Nāṣir, you are alive!” and “Abū Khālīd, you are alive!” could now be repeatedly heard. Twice did ‘Abd an-Nāṣir leave Egyptians in the lurch, and twice did Egyptians descend to the streets to make him return. On 1967, as he decently declared on TV his resignation from all his positions consequent of the speedy, crushing defeat of Egypt by Israel, thousands of Egyptians descended to the streets in demonstrations of allegiance to him, convincing him to stay in power. On September 28, 1970, when he left them by dying, millions of Egyptians again descended to the streets with the vague idea of making him return ... to life, resurrect him. If there was something blasphemous about his funeral it was less in the idolization shown during it, than in the unconscious attempt at

resurrection. If he did not come back the second time, this was probably because they did not manage to counter the infinite fall included in the cadaver—in which case, Jesus Christ’s effective order to dead Lazarus to come forth demonstrates more might than that exerted by the millions at Nāṣir’s funeral.

In a number of Mughal-influenced Deccan paintings, and in some Islamic miniatures, the main personage is rendered conspicuously bigger than the other subjects. While this convention strikes me now as kitschy when applied to monarchs, it does not do so when applied to a prophet who died before he died, for example Adam (“God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden [including the tree of life] thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”) and Jonah. In some tremendous funerary processions, the body, which while alive was as large, or more precisely as small as other bodies, assumes its *death-size*. It has then the magnitude of either the surface covered by the myriad of people who touched it then, or, in case the mourners hysterically became one, the surface covered by all those at the funeral—one feels then that not just the soul but also a large part of the dead body is invisible. Rilke’s moribund Chamberlain Christoph Detlev Brigge has not only a tremendous, singular dying but also achieves a death-size body: “The long, old manor-house was too small to hold this death. It seemed as if additional wings would have to be built on it, for the chamberlain’s body grew larger and larger, and he continually wanted to be carried from one room to another, falling into a terrible rage when, though the day had not yet come to an end, there was not a room left in which he had not already lain.”<sup>333</sup> I, who am neither a charismatic leader nor a celebrity, and thus cannot hope to have a tremendous funeral procession that would provide me with a death-size body, can ill-afford not to have a demanding dying a la that of Rilke’s chamberlain Christoph Detlev Brigge. A very large number of



*The Book of the Songs (Kitāb al-Aghānī)*  
 Enthroned prince surrounded by his retinue, frontispiece  
 Region of Mosul, circa 1220  
 Millet Kütüphanesi, Istanbul (Feyzullah Efendi 1566)

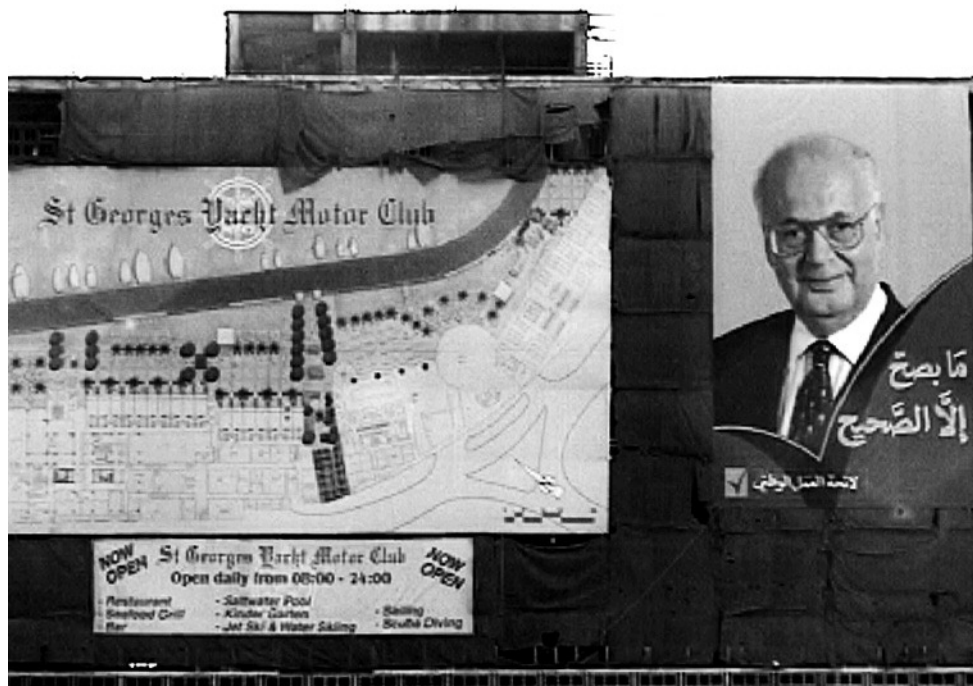
*page below*  
 Dmitri Baltermants  
 Gorbachev, the sixth Secretary General, 1989.



*Adam and Eve with Their Twin Children*  
 Miniature from the manuscript *Zühdetü't Tevarih* by Lokman  
 37.1 x 35.6 cm, dated 1583  
 Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, Istanbul



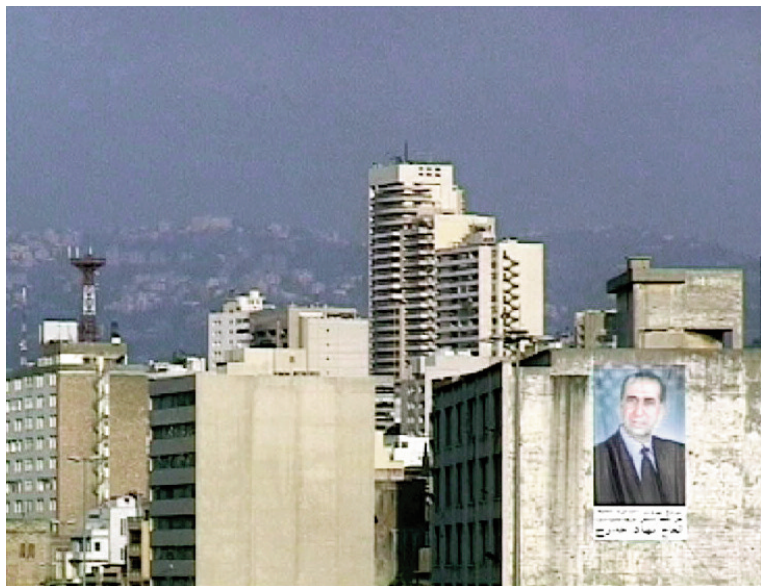
others are implicated in the death of each: in virtually all cases, death exposes one to the plural singularity of *every name in history is I* (Nietzsche); moreover, in a few cases, during tremendous hysterical funerals, the dead body assumes its death size through the tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands, or even millions of participants contributing to its carrying. During his tremendous funerary procession, 'Abd an-Nāsir's body, now death-size, became the equal of his erstwhile radioed voice.<sup>334</sup> He had wondered as he was repeatedly jostled left and right, why he had come to 'Abd an-Nāsir's funerary procession, he who loathed the masses, their stench, and their hysteria, which in other contexts could be unleashed so brutally on all sorts of sacrificial scapegoats; and who, notwithstanding his admiration for Nāsir, had a number of compelling reservations about his regime? It now was clear to him that this was not just an issue of Nāsir's charisma, but had to do with contributing, through the effort of countering the indefinite fall implicit in the cadaver of Nāsir, to the appearance of that rarity, a death-size body. Achieving a death-size body may have been leader 'Abd an-Nāsir's and star Umm Kulthūm's most stupendous exploit, eclipsing all their feats in their lives (Can a death-size body be bought? I would hope not, but I cannot be sure. One day the power of manipulation of TV or its subsequent avatars may be such that it may succeed in making millions descend to the streets and try hysterically to touch and participate in carrying the bier of some magnate or celebrity). Egypt, which has given us mummies in its ancient periods, was giving us in the funeral of 'Abd an-Nāsir, and later in that of Umm Kulthūm, a death-size body.<sup>335</sup> If the outsize posters and photographs, spanning several stories, of the parliamentary candidates that could be seen all over Beirut in the month leading to the election on August 27 and September 3, 2000, are kitschy irrespective of any aesthetic value judgment, this is because it is virtually certain that none of the candidates will assume a death-size body during his or her funeral, but will remain life-size even then.













**One Cannot Go Back to the Other Side of the Point of No Return Even in Memory:**

Those who encounter the undead most often become amnesiac: one cannot go back to the other side of the point of no return even in memory.

The amnesiac's diary as his letters to himself.

Someone who has no mirror image either has no memory or else can also remember the past of others.

Were someone who had already seen *India Song* to watch *Her Venetian Name in Deserted Calcutta*, which has the same sound track but a different image track, and thus is a sort of double of the previous film, his or her resultant memory of *India Song* would be haunted by amnesia, rather than, as in *Hiroshima mon amour*, doomed to forgetfulness.

Amnesia produces a discontinuous forgetfulness. Amnesia is a lapse in both memory and forgetfulness.

There is an element, a presentiment of amnesia whenever a surprise happens.

The following structure recurs in some of my unpublished short stories and unfinished videos: an episode is narrated, in the short story, or shown, in the video, with a minimum number of cuts or ellipses, then the protagonist, either while remembering the episode or while narrating it to another person, mentions an event that was not narrated or shown. Is it a delusion/confabulation, or did it actually happen? Really memorable events and people can exist only as a memory. Concerning them, and in a reverse manner to having a déjà vu feeling, where an event is experienced as having already happened in the past, one feels that one is remembering an event that never occurred. True, sometimes when dealing with such memories one has felt that they did occur an original time, but always simultaneously feeling that one is having a déjà vu experience. Do not misunderstand me when I write: *I will be remembered*.

Many Lebanese intellectuals and artists and writers decry the postwar amnesia. Should we view this as a reaction only to their compatriots' oblivion of the war years, or should we extend it to cover an apprehension that they are being forgotten by the ghosts since they are not being haunted? Is it the Lebanese who have forgotten their dead, or is it their dead who have forgotten them by not becoming revenants, ghosts? Is it both conjointly, a reciprocal forgetting? Where there is a definitive absence of an intensely loved person, a death, the affect can be melancholia; what is the affect when there is an absence of revenants?

In Tarkovsky's *Solaris*, one of the cosmonauts records his testimony on a videotape to inform the future viewer, specifically his friend and colleague Kris, whose imminent arrival is expected at the station, of some urgent matter. Let us imagine someone destroying the tape. What will happen then? Will the unfinished business be forgotten? Not necessarily: it is probable that the dead cosmonaut will now haunt in the form of a revenant. The ghost does not have a memory; he is rather the spectral embodiment of a memory, that of his unjust, untimely death and the consequent need to redress it and settle some unfinished business: he is really like an audiovisual record that each time plays back the same message. Were I to do a second adaptation of *Hamlet*, after my *Gertrude, or Love Dies* (in *Forthcoming*), then I would have King Hamlet, as he began feeling the nefarious effect of the poison placed in his ear by his treacherous brother, trudge toward a paper and a quill and write a summary incrimination of his brother, Claudius. It is only once King Claudius discovers accidentally the incriminating piece of paper and destroys it that the ghost of King Hamlet begins to haunt Elsinore as in Shakespeare's play.

**Unfinished Business:**

There was and continues to be a prohibition against someone dying with unfinished business, be *living* this outstanding business.

“The Scots held that the corpse of a suicide would not crumble until the time that he or she would have died had nature taken her course.” In Maramures in the northern part of Transylvania, Romania, if an unmarried person of marriageable age dies, a *wedding of the dead*<sup>336</sup> is performed in which the deceased is dressed in wedding clothes and symbolically married. Sequelae to the hypnotic session, in the form of age-regression or shrinking in size, etc., may happen if the subjects did not adequately comply with the suggestion during the hypnosis session, that is, if they thought of it as unfinished business.<sup>337</sup> In *The Passenger*, Locke, who has exchanged identities with the dead Robertson in order to make a fresh start, is haunted by his and Robertson’s unfinished business: the latter included not only the unconsummated arms deals but also a heart condition. Having exchanged identities with someone who died of a heart attack, Locke should have checked the condition of his heart. Heedlessly, he died, like Robertson, of a heart attack in a hotel room. Unfinished business is the most basic obstacle to becoming. Indeed, what is personality if not unfinished business? That which has no unfinished business is our original face (*honrai-no-memmoku*), our buddha-nature (*bussō*).

The failure to successfully bury the corpse incognito in Hitchcock’s *The Trouble with Harry* results from both: 1) The taboo on unfinished business: the dead person has to be recognized by the authorities as dead, his death has to be inscribed, accounted for in the public register. 2) The obsessional neurotic behavior of the half dozen people who discover the corpse in their role as private persons, as revealed by both the understatement that characterizes their reactions to events: an instance of *isolation*, the depriving of an event of the corresponding affect; and the erasure of the event of the discovery of the corpse by each of them (this is the other way of reacting to unfinished business: magically erase what is asking for the deployment of its consequences). The recurrent burying of the corpse and digging it up can also be viewed from the perspective of the obses-

sive’s doubt as to whether he has performed a certain act, in this case, whether he has buried the corpse, so that he has to repeatedly dig it up to check that he did actually bury it.

We can exit the cycle of death-rebirth only when we no longer have or are an unfinished business, liberated from debt or obligation: *on peut tout quitter définitivement seulement quand on est quitte*.

At the most basic level, to die before one’s time is to die organically without having *died before dying*.

The world and virtual reality are going to become truly indistinguishable only when not just the living but also the dead can no longer differentiate between them, revenants beginning to appear and haunt the virtual world, asking for a virtual body, the latter being different from the spectral one with which they haunt. While in earlier historical periods, one warned against mistaking a hallucination for a real body or a mystical vision, soon enough one is going to warn about mistaking a specter or an astral body for a virtual body.

*Her Venetian Name in Deserted Calcutta* has the same sound track but a different image track than that of the previous *India Song*. As a consequence, the earlier film haunts the latter, which becomes a *double feature* even when one sees it on its own.

Michael Powell’s *Peeping Tom*: as if the voyeur had to commit crimes or adultery so that someone would assign a detective, that other peeping Tom, to follow him. The shadow needs a shadow to follow him in order to exist in his own right.

I am speaking on the phone to John Corbett. Suddenly, it hits me that he is speaking to me with *my* voice. Horrified, I beseech him: “Speak to me with your voice.” He answers: “But I am doing that!” It is still *my* voice!

If you see yourself hitchhiking, pick yourself up.

We are unique only in death, to wit precisely when we are penetrated by everything else, confused with everything else. Even in death we, for example the yoga master and the layman, are not equal.

To J— — and T— — on their wedding day: “I wish you a happy couple life, for one will live both absolutely alone and penetrated by everyone and everything enough in death-as-undead.”

The circumstance that the dead have no individuality, or a larval one that is penetrated by many others, is inscribed in Anthony Minghella’s *Truly, Madly, Deeply* in the form of having the dead person gradually bring back with him an ever-increasing number of the dead.

Does the subtitle of Coppola’s *Bram Stoker’s Dracula*, “Love Never Dies,” belie that death is an end? It does only if one misses its irony. Judging from Coppola’s film, love never crosses the entrancing threshold to labyrinthine death: Dracula cannot meet his wife despite the circumstance that as someone who committed suicide, and as a consequence was withheld burial in consecrated ground, she is herself an undead.

She’s speaking to me. She interrupts herself. I expect her to wonder aloud: “What was I saying?” Instead she laments: “You seem somewhere else, like a zombie.” Wasn’t there in that most famous love story, *Romeo and Juliet*, mention of the undead: “And this distilled liquor drink thou off ... / No warmth, no breath, shall testify thou livest ... And in this borrow’d likeness of shrunk death / Thou shalt continue two and forty hours, / And then awake as from a pleasant sleep” (4.1)?

Coppola missed a beautiful opportunity in the scene in his *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* where Mina tells the vampire about his voice, “It comforts me when I am alone”: the camera could have then panned to a mirror where we would have seen Mina *alone* while hearing Dracula’s voice speaking to her.

The vampire’s fascinated victim said to him, “Don’t disappear again for days on end,” as she brought him closer to her in a hug. What could he answer as he did not see himself in her pupil?

She, who supposedly adored vampire films and novels, and specifically the figure of the vampire, tried to stay away from her lover to produce some kind of aura through her absence. She should have learnt from the vampire the flair of appearing and disappearing simultaneously, which is shown by his appearance at a location but disappearance in the mirror at the same location.

The lover of the vampire, of the telepathic one who does not appear in mirrors, jotted down in her diary: “How crowded Beirut seems now that you’ve left. Come back: inflate its emptiness.”

Even more deserted than the empty-looking city slumbering at dawn in the beginning section of *The Man with a Movie Camera* are the cities in the dreams of those asleep in such a city, where the undead finds himself as the only survivor (the dream sequence in Bergman’s *Wild Strawberries* and in Buñuel’s *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*).

The *dead water* of Wismar’s canals in Herzog’s *Nosferatu* is stiller than the bridge over it; the bridge is more stagnant than the water under it.

He could not smoke during the LSD trip because he lost all sense of the existence of a boundary between the inside and the outside—

exhalation and inhalation thrive on this distinction.

Michael Snow's *The Central Region*: by the same movement whereby the camera is freed from gravity, the atmosphere is liberated from its gravitational attraction to Earth, so that the sky becomes cosmic and abysmal, and the Earth, one before or after man existed, with nothing but the circles of flare in the camera lens landing on it.

La Rochefoucauld: "Neither the sun nor death can be looked at with a steady eye."<sup>338</sup> While the living cannot stare at the sun, the undead can. Daniel Paul Schreber: "I can look into the sun unperturbed and am dazzled only very little, whereas in days of health, I, like other people, would have found it impossible to look into the sun for minutes on end."<sup>339</sup>

Film rarely achieves true figures of light. The running heroine of *Meshe of the Afternoon* is unable to reach the gloomy, mysterious walking figure. The latter becomes a figure of light, since, like light, she remains at a constant speed in relation to the one following her however much the latter increases her speed. Although to the film spectator the mysterious figure does not look overexposed, an undead would speak about an excess of light when referring to her.

At the speed of light, time slows down to zero. Light, the eternal, is what can destroy the vampire, the ageless.

Is Murnau's *Nosferatu*, which contains shots in negative footage, a black and white film? The white of negative footage is unanalyzable into colors: it is itself a color.

The use of negative footage renders the sensation that near-death persons, hypnagogic subjects and people on LSD have that objects

are illuminated by their own light. In Hitchcock's *Suspicion*, not only do the paranoid wife's thoughts begin to link on their own, the glass of milk is illuminated by its own light (Hitchcock hid a light inside it). In the last section of *L'Ange* there are so many projected lights that it is as if the images on the screen are projecting themselves, the screen illuminating itself.<sup>340</sup>

The undead managed with difficulty to recall Moritake's haiku "Fallen petals rise / back to the branch—I watch: / oh ... butterflies!" as, lying undecomposed in the earth, he heard the sound of the time-lapse movement of the dry leaves and the petals on the ground.

In Boorman's *Exorcist II: The Heretic*, people and animals flee in all directions during the passage of the devil over them. One should have also seen the landscapes themselves fleeing the devil's passage in time-lapse.

We don't protect ourselves only from things, but also and mainly from their tempo: the too quick or the too slow.

Absolute immobilization is not encountered in the world (except possibly at its border, the event horizon of a black hole), therefore when I witness freezing I ask myself: "Am I no longer in the world? Am I dead?"

As in Sherrie Levine's work (*After Walker Evans*, etc.), the recently dead does not know at first that he or she is dead: *after-life*.

How is it that most humans manage to live, instead of survive, while already undead? How is it conceivable that the singularity of a black hole, a region where—according to quantum gravity as it is currently understood—"time ceases to exist" ("no longer can we say that 'this

thing happens before that one”), and space becomes “a random, probabilistic froth,” or “—according to the laws of general relativity—the curvature of spacetime becomes infinitely large, and spacetime ceases to exist”—can so easily be disposed of through radiation, which results, at the end of a long process of evaporation, in the black hole’s explosion and hence the singularity’s disappearance?

It is not modern science that induces one not to believe in religion, but the presence of atheist schizophrenics, for the existence of the latter shows that other worlds different from this one can be undergone without the necessity of interpreting them in religious terms.

Someone may think he is not in trance when in fact he is; the hypnotist tapped the table with his pencil—the cue for the posthypnotic suggestion—and challenged the skeptic: “Try to raise your hand from your lap.” Perhaps every effect is caused by a posthypnotic suggestion: the deployment of the cause-effect scheme would then presuppose a universal hypnosis. In which case, miracles happen when the posthypnotic suggestion is canceled (whether the hypnosis itself is suspended or not) or replaced by another suggestion.

The undead was startled the first time the sound of the cicadas persisted despite his movement nearby. But this prepared him a little better for the absence of his image in the mirror.

The vampire, whose shadow dissociates from him, does not announce himself, does not lag behind himself.

With people who continue to be surprised, for instance by the difference between a *b* (the one in *billard* in “*les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux billard*” [the white letters on the cushions of the old billiard table]) and a *p* (the one in *pillard* in “*les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du*

*vieux pillard*” [the white man’s letters on the hordes of the old plunderer]), the absences they undergo may be inhabited virtually by all the events and geographies of Raymond Roussel’s *Among the Blacks* or *Impressions of Africa*.

The Blessed Mary is a virgin not because her hymen was not penetrated, but because what she later brought to the world remained unmanifested. “Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear ...” (Matthew 13:13) should be understood within this context and not as a criticism Jesus Christ is directing at the people: Christ remained the site of the possible because he remained, although begotten, although incarnated, unmanifested.

The world depends more or less on the questions asked. Sorcery and everyday life ask different questions since they deploy different measurement apparatuses: the body-as-organism in everyday life and the body-as-egg with light filaments in the sorcery world of Castaneda’s don Juan. *The world depends on the questions asked* applies fully only in the latter case and cases of the same nature, such as yoga. In yoga there is a concentration on withdrawing from the world: the elimination of all psychosensory events whether they be exteroceptive or proprioceptive (similarly, all internal monologue should stop in Zen and in don Juan’s system). This absence of measurement-observation puts one in a state similar to that of the quantum system between the source and the detector, i.e., prior to the measurement-observation. This leads, as in the case of the quantum world (especially in John Archibald Wheeler’s delayed choice and participatory universe model), to a dependency of the result on the experimental apparatus. By working, the slave objectifies, changes and humanizes the world (Kojève), but the idle spiritual master/guru/shaykh (“Sitting quietly, doing nothing, / Spring comes, and the grass grows by itself”) accesses another world.

A friend of John Corbett took LSD and felt at one point that she had a revelation. She scribbled it on a piece of paper. When she woke up the next day, she hurriedly looked for the paper and found out to her disappointment that she had written: "There is a strange smell in the room." Was that disappointment warranted? On being asked why Bodhidharma came to China, Joshu said: "An oak tree in the garden."

We cannot experience eternity in our present body, for eternity is not possible as long as any refractory period, during which the nerve cell cannot react to a stimulus after it has just been subjected to one, exists.

While the saint's corpse is a biological body, the vampire's corpse is already a subtle body in an altered realm, and its subtlety is indicated by its non-appearance in the mirror—it is to the other side of the mirror.

I've been and I am still very interested in entities that fit only partly where they are, for example vampires, who while seemingly at a certain location are revealed by the mirror not to be there; and the unworldly entities that erupt in radical closures, which induce the impression that they are matted there.

It is less Nicholas Ray's diatribes against Wenders that show his view of the filming of *Lightning Over Water*, which took place during several extended breaks in the filming of Wenders' *Hammett*, than the inclusion of a section from his rehearsals of Kafka's "A Report to an Academy" in the film—his adaptation of "A Report to an Academy" is, unlike *Hammett*, not an interruption of *Lightning Over Water*.<sup>341</sup> There is a statistically significant deviation from chance in the concordance between the first version of the film, which was edited by Peter Przygodda, and Kafka's short story, which is presented in the

form of a monkey's report on the vicissitudes of his forced education to become a human: "They were good creatures, in spite of everything. I find it still pleasant to remember the sound of their heavy footfalls which used to echo through my half-dreaming head ... When they were off-duty some of them often used to sit down in a semicircle around me; they hardly spoke but only grunted to each other. If I were to be invited today to take a cruise on that ship I should certainly refuse the invitation ... there was one of them who came again and again, alone or with friends, by day, by night, at all kinds of hours; he would post himself before me with the bottle and give me instructions. He could not understand me, he wanted to solve the enigma of my being ... there was no attraction for me in imitating human beings; I imitated them because I needed a way out."<sup>342</sup> Wim: "Are you ready? I didn't come to talk about dying, Nick." Nick: "I didn't come to talk about dying, Nick." Wim: "But we might have to." Nick: "But we might have to." This concordance is for the most part lost in the second version (where the film crew and the shooting of the film in Ray's apartment are far less manifest), the one which Wenders edited. Did Ray begin working on his production of Kafka's story before the filming began, or did he decide to do so and include it in *Lightning Over Water* in response to what was taking place during the filming? Were more of the rehearsals shot but edited out by Wenders (the part of Kafka's short story included in the film is not the relevant one)? It is through the inclusion of a link to Kafka's "A Report to an Academy" that *Lightning Over Water* is also *Nick's Movie*. Who plays the role of the vampire in this film? Wenders, with his crew in Ray's apartment proliferating like the rats in Herzog's *Nosferatu*? Or the camera over the empty junk (like [Herzog's and Murnau's] *Nosferatu* or [Browning's and Badham's] *Dracula* on the empty ship transporting them from Transylvania to Bremen, Wismar or London [same circular movement around the empty ship in Herzog's *Nosferatu* and the empty junk in *Lightning Over Water*]), with both Ray and Wenders its victims?

The vampire in the coffin on the ship in the storm in Badham's *Dracula*. I would have liked to see traced on the coffin the word "Fragile."

Rick Silverman cut a hologram of a vase into three pieces, which he then put next to each other, producing *Rough Cut* (1979); each of the three sections can reproduce the whole. It is as if Arman's *coupes*, for instance *Ascent into the Sky*, 1961, *Virtuosity*, 1961, *Dividend*, 1962, *Treatise on the Violin*, 1964, were a premonition of the coming of the holistic holograms and a precocious attempt to deal with, resist, their totalizing propensity: since the hologram cannot be divided into pieces which do not contain the whole, one has to slice the object beforehand.

One of the hypotheses concerning the cause for hypnosis in animals (it has been observed in insects, crustaceans, fish, amphibians, reptiles, chicken [Herzog's *Every Man for Himself and God Against All*], lower mammals ...) is that it is a *death feigning* mechanism. It is also *death feigning* in the case of human beings: the unconscious attained in hypnosis is not the unconscious of death.<sup>343</sup>

The discovery in states of altered consciousness that a double can think in one's mind facilitates one's detachment from the stream of consciousness once one is back in a normal state.

Mortal writers and thinkers move from initially mistaking themselves for "immortal" ("one whose fame is enduring" [*American Heritage Dictionary*]) writers and thinkers, thus Nietzsche mistaking himself in his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 1872, for Schopenhauer (he writes in August 1886 in the "A Critical Backward Glance" that opens the second edition of the book: "What a pity, though, that I did not yet have the courage [or shall I say the immodesty?] to risk a fresh lan-

guage in keeping with the hazard, the radical novelty of my ideas, that I fumbled along, using terms borrowed from the vocabularies of Kant and Schopenhauer to express value judgments which were in flagrant contradiction to the spirit or taste of these men! ... It certainly is too bad that I had to obscure and spoil Dionysiac hints with formulas borrowed from Schopenhauer"<sup>344</sup>); to mistaking themselves for the double, thus Nietzsche, who wrote a book titled *The Anti-Christ*, signing some of his last letters while dying before dying with *The Crucified*, and writing to Jakob Burckhardt on January 5, 1889: "Every name in history is I." Between these two manners of mistaking himself for others, the great singularity that is Nietzsche, the stylish thought of Nietzsche.

In Zemeckis' *Back to the Future Part II* (1989), when the two versions of the doctor, one of which has come from the future, are in the same frame, instead of witnessing a convincing simulation of a natural interaction during their brief conversation—and we know from *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* that Zemeckis is quite adroit at making the matted and non-matted characters interact convincingly, even in the limit case of an interaction between human and animation characters—the spectator sees one of them look obliquely while speaking to the other, at other times have his back to him, so that the eye-directions of the two do not match. It is due to the taboo on encountering one's double that the spectator witnesses this unconvincing mating. Some filmmakers/writers try to find situations where the awkwardness and sloppiness that plagued their earlier writing/film-making is now necessitated by the subject matter itself and is—the awkwardness and sloppiness—this time executed soberly and in control: *back to the future*.

Most of those who had a psychotic episode know that the end of the world is simultaneous with the continuing world.

The coexistence of widely diverse architectural styles, which is a facet of the anachronistic realm of the undead, is increasingly becoming a facet of the world in postmodern culture, where the late modern can coexist in the same building with the ancient Egyptian and/or the Roman and/or the baroque.

While not bald à la Herzog's *Nosferatu*, the undead's forehead, by expanding into the scalp, rather than making the latter glabrous, has itself become bald (Frank Auerbach's *Head of E.O.W.*, 1960; *Head of E.O.W.*, 1956; *Head of E.O.W.*, 1957).

In Billy Wilder's *Fedora*, which is based on Thomas Tyron's story by the same title, but which can be viewed as a superb adaptation of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the eponymous heroine can look at her corpse, oversee her funerals, making sure that the physical image of the ageless movie star Fedora remains identical with itself, only because 1) she is no longer Fedora, since the beginning of her daughter Antonia's counterfeit of her is simultaneous with her counterfeiting the dead Countess Sobryanski; 2) she no longer looks like herself *or how she would have looked when old*, due, in the book, to the deleterious cumulative effect of the injections to prolong her youth, and, in the film, to a disastrous youth-prolonging operation; 3) according to Tyron's story, she has trouble seeing—this precautionary measure resorted to by Tyron even though nothing would be eliciting it were Fedora looking at the corpse of her daughter indicates the degree to which the slightest, remotest *possibility* of their transgression immediately reactivates taboos.

In Fassbinder's *Despair*, Lydia walks from the bedroom through a corridor lined with glass, her reflection appearing in the first of the glass' sections as she passes it. When she reaches the third section she looks to her right. The camera pans slightly to reveal her husband standing

looking at her. We think that we are looking at his reflection in the mirror and hence that he is standing to the same side of the glass as she is, only to discover as he crosses to the other side and joins her that the glass is not that of a mirror but transparent. Having reached the corridor, he looks at her for a second, then looks furtively off-screen to what would have been his position if what we had seen previously had been his reflection in a mirror. Lydia leaves frame left to the bathroom. Superposition of two reasons for his sideways glance: either as an order to Lydia to go to the bathroom to finish freshening up, or to look at himself. If the spectator is to be drawn into the film it is neither simply through identification with the characters, nor even through the structuring of the film around him or her in Hitchcock's suspense (which led to the character becoming a spectator in *Rear Window*), but by the objective status of this misimpression: the audience's (programmed) mistake, that of taking the transparent glass for a mirror, has consequences in the film: the protagonist undergoes dissociation, experiencing a detached ecstasy—I *am beside myself*.

Murnau's *Sunrise*: the close-up of the maid shouting to inform her master that his wife, who was presumed dead, has been found alive echoes the face of his mistress as he strangles her in a medium shot—especially since the maid's two hands, cut by the frame a little above the wrist, hence appearing not to belong to her, encircle her face (to form a resonating funnel for the shout) and seem to be strangling her. It is this substitution of the face of the maid with that of the mistress being strangled (again the theme of sacrifice, which we find in Murnau's *Nosferatu* and *Faust*), and not her shout, or not her shout alone, that stops the man from finishing his erstwhile mistress, saving her. This could not have ensued without the husband somewhat sensing the framing.

It is neither through identification with the characters of *The Thousand*

and *One Nights* nor through resemblance between what is happening to them and events that occurred to me, the reader, that what I am reading is my biography. It is rather through the belief—especially widespread in the nineteenth century—that were I to manage to read that book in its entirety, I would die. There is another book which once I finish reading I die: the book of my life. “And everything small and great is written down” (Qur’ān 54:53). It is through this correspondence between the two books, and through the widespread changes of identity and doubling in *The Thousand and One Nights*, that the latter book becomes personal in relation to the reader without having anything to do with his or her biography and although it frequently deals with the fantastic.

Murnau’s *Nosferatu* presents examples of the unconscious as ultimately attributable to the subject: Harker’s dropping of Mina’s picture while getting something from his pocket to give to the vampire is a parapraxis revealing a sacrificial unconscious wish. But Murnau’s film also presents instances of an unconscious that is external to the psychological subject: the juxtaposition of the shot of Nosferatu in Transylvania walking from screen left to right with the shot of Ellen in Bremen hands outstretched toward the right creates a desire that remains unconscious both to Ellen *and* to her unconscious, the one that is traceable to events in her life, its traumas and *enigmatic signifiers* (Jean Laplanche).<sup>345</sup> Contrariwise, if the yogi still looks like he has some desires, this is only an effect created by the editing (Kuleshov effect), hence no further karma is produced.

“You only talked about it, I *only* did it.” Only someone free can understand the second *only*.

The link between occurrences has itself to be an occurrence. Only then does one no longer feel that other than what occurred could

have done so. No corrections and no unfinished business. This is not determinism, because determinism presupposes the conceptual possibility of other alternatives that do not actualize.

Having died before dying, the concern of this rebel with *and* without a cause was now freedom. In the absence of either Dzogchen self-liberation of events, which presupposes non-discrimination; or Lyotard’s occurrence, which presupposes the precedence of the *quod* over the *quid* (“The essence of the event: that *there is* ‘comes before’ *what* there is”),<sup>346</sup> one either accepts the law of karma as supreme, or one refuses it by intentionally and at the price of extreme artificiality disconnecting the effect from the cause, establishing the realm of the arbitrary. The other may be sensitive to the manner of linking, in this case to the arbitrariness, the initial absence of connection occasioning another absence of connection—with his or her past. This arbitrariness sometimes takes the form of a reversal; but one has to get to the reversal prior to the double (Freud: “reversal, or turning a thing into its opposite, is one of the means of representation most favoured by the dream work ...”<sup>347</sup>). The crucial question then is: how far and for how long can one try to disconnect the normal associations before one finds oneself sinking into an altered, fascinated state where things, images and words link on their own?

Beyond the extreme is exaggeration. Exaggeration is the total bondage to the extreme.

Poverty glues us to reality; utter poverty often glues us to unreality.

Krzysztof Wodiczko was only able to show *The Homeless Projection* in a New York Gallery instead of his proposed site of Union Square, where it was supposed to be projected onto buildings:<sup>348</sup> an exile from exile.

Although the pedestrian in the background of Edvard Munch's *Evening on Karl Johan* (1896) continues to recede, he keeps facing the frontal figures in the foreground. His walk away, rather than extricating him, further implicates him since the more space he covers the more numerous the faces staring at him become. What gazes at the spectator of the painting are not the faces facing him in the foreground, for between him or her and them is the one walking in the background; but rather the mask-like infantile faces that appear in the cartouche that underlines the lower frame of the representation.

What would we, who are blind to perspective and its virtual lines, do without Richard Foreman's strings?

At each transition threshold in far from equilibrium dissipative nonlinear systems two new stable structures become spontaneously available from which the system takes one. One must not immediately take for choice the indeterminacy produced by the circumstance that the bifurcation branch that will be taken cannot be predicted, since if, due to a change in the non-equilibrium, a dissipative structure is forced to retreat in its evolution, as long as there are no strong perturbations, it takes the same path in the reverse direction (traditional memory). Choice is a matter of a two-way indeterminacy, and hence applies only in the case of dissipative nonlinear structures that undergo strong perturbations and hysteresis, losing their memory of the path that led to where they are (this amnesia is part of choice).

Choice does not consist in seemingly selecting one of many preset alternatives, but in creating a bifurcation point, all of whose branches are taken. Choice is hence unknowable, except through writing and art, which receive by creation from the other version(s) in an otherwise parallel universe.



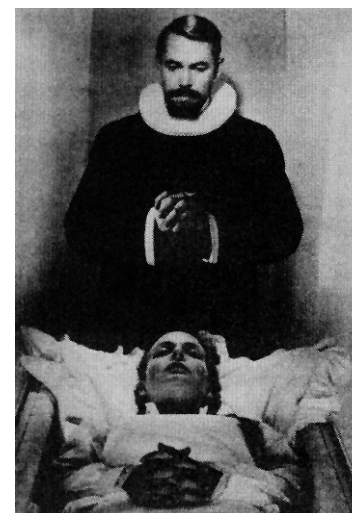
*There is something unsettling about this photograph where the head of the embalmed corpse in the open coffin is not directed, as customarily, upward, but toward the camera. The spectator experiences a dissociation, feeling he is in two places simultaneously: with respect to the gaze of one of the mourners who is looking straight at the camera, I am standing where the camera is, looking in the direction in which the lens is aimed; but with respect to the dead woman, I cannot be in the place of the camera since I cannot reciprocate the look implied by "her" directing her face toward me, so that I have been displaced by the same angle as her head has been from the traditional straight position.*

The link between the writer and his amnesiac version in a realm of altered consciousness is to allow both to elude the constant linking of ideas on their own. In the latter's case, a linking clearly experienced in the modality of imposition: paranoia/possession by the double; in the former's case, a linking that takes the form of the deduction of intelligent objective thoughts from each other by an academic who speaks mostly in generalities, and this in large part because he or she is not receiving from someone who has experienced, among other things, *every name in history is I*. This link is a reception that can be accessed only through a creation.

What relieves the witness of the horror of a situation? It is that the protagonist can still react to it, even in the form of the interior monologue. Why is it that a song, even one that expresses the situation in an intense manner, allows its listeners to feel the horror? It is because it is not a reaction. When the sensorimotor schema breaks, and I cannot react to what is happening, even in the form of my interior monologue, then I am praying. Prayer is not a reaction to an event, but rather the (sublime) form of the inability to react to it.

— I lied to you.

— I too lied since I *believed* you.



*Are the two praying for each other? If not, who is praying for the other? She is praying for him.*

Appendix to “Photographic Memory”:



Photographer, Descriptive title, Year.  
Location, Country. Collection.

*left*  
Anonymous, Georges and 'Āyda Qa'wār, 1954.  
Palestine. Collection AIF (Arab Image Foundation)/'Āyda Krikorian Qa'wār.



Jibra'il Jabbūr  
Collection AIF/Norma Jabbūr.



Marie al-Khāzin, Juliette on a haystack, 1933.  
Dārāyya, Lebanon. Collection AIF/Muḥsin Yammīn.





Anonymous, Locomotive used to pull railway wagons, 1939.  
Rusayfa phosphate mines, Jordan. Collection AIF/Tawfiq Amīn Qa'wār.

*previous page*

Anonymous, Marguerit Dyce-Share Taq-Taq and friends paddling in the Dead Sea, 1920.  
Dead Sea, Palestine. Collection AIF/Sāmī Khūrī.

*left*

Anonymous, Farmer woman carrying load of bush.  
Syria. Collection AIF/Nigol Bezjian.



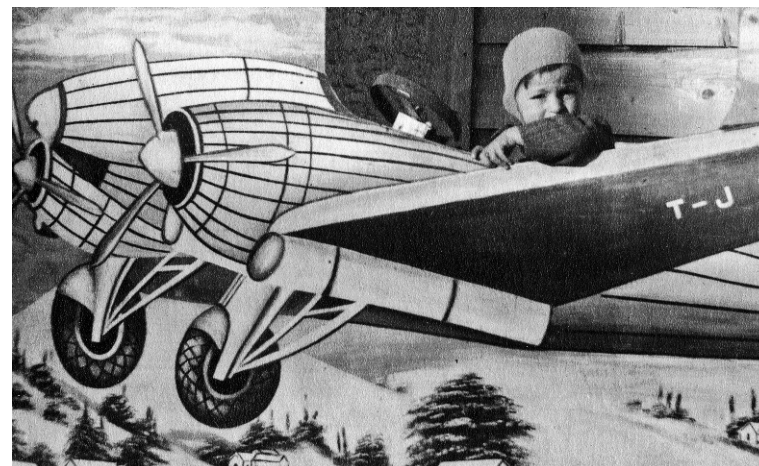
Anonymous, First two from left: Yvette and May Far'ūn.  
Lebanon. Collection AIF/Alfred Far'ūn.



Anonymous, From left: 'Adnān Ḥarātī, Nabīha Luṭfī, Maha Luṭfī, Nuhād Ḥashīshū, Nabīh Ḥashīshū, 1947.  
Zaḥla, Lebanon. Collection AIF/Nabīha Luṭfī.



Anonymous, Antoine and Nabīl Ṣiḥnāwī, circa 1958.  
Zaḥla, Lebanon. Collection AIF/Layla Ṣiḥnāwī Ziyāda.



Bedros Doumanian, from the Doumanian family, 1950.  
Jordan. Collection AIF/Bedros Doumanian.



Anonymous, Antoine and Micheline Şihñāwī, 1958.  
Zaḥla, Lebanon. Collection AIF/Layla Şihñāwī Ziyāda.



Anonymous, Seta Manoukian (behind wheel) with other children from the family, 1952.  
Zaḥla, Lebanon. Collection AIF/Seta Manoukian.



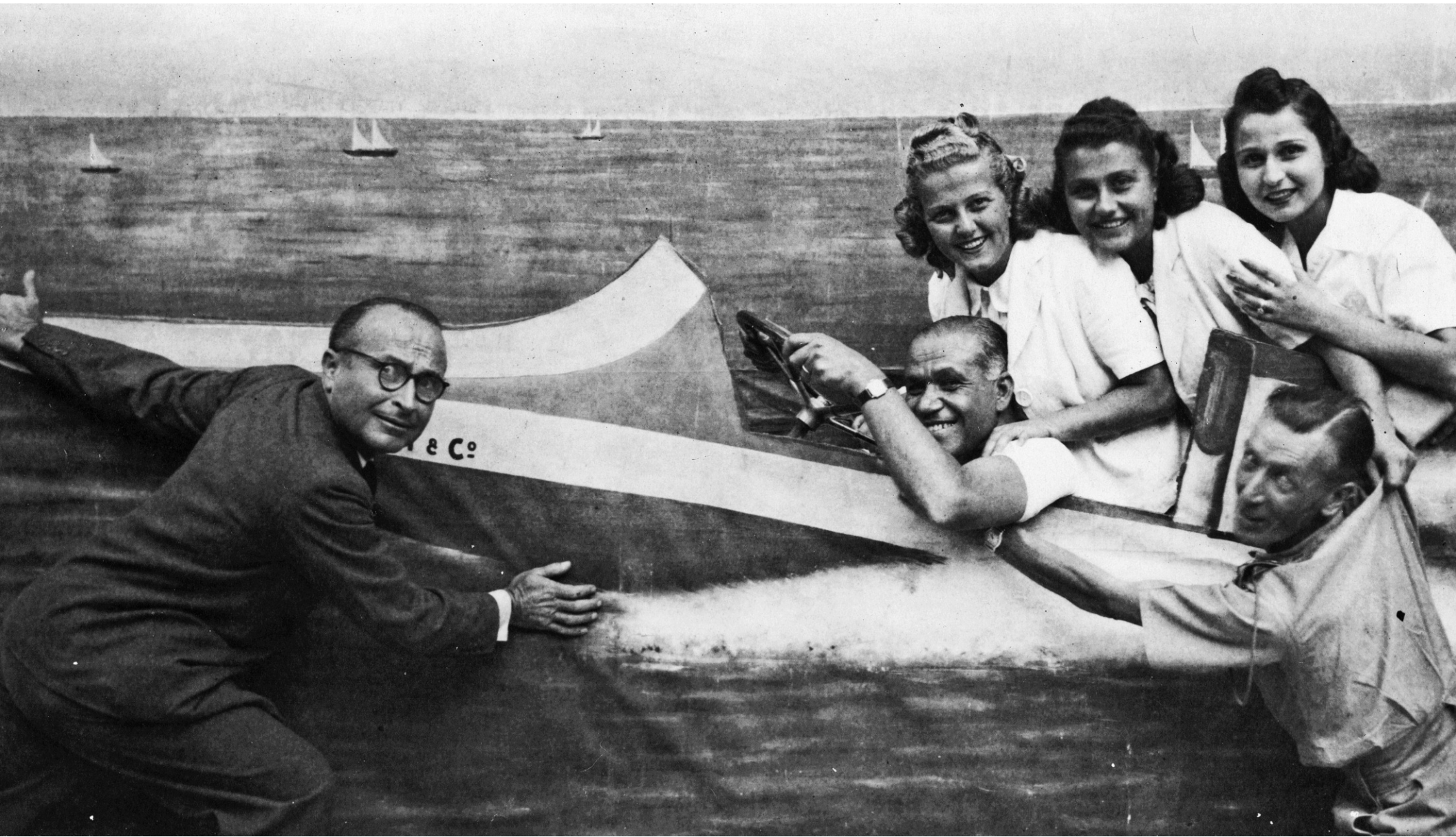
Anonymous, Leyli Sa'd with a friend, 1947.  
Zaḥla, Lebanon. Collection AIF/Michel Sa'd.



Anonymous, Henri Qaşīr, circa 1920.  
Zaḥla, Lebanon. Collection AIF/Muḥsin Yammin.

*next spread*

Anonymous, Marcelle Haddād Naqqāsh (behind the driver) and friends.  
Lebanon. Collection AIF/Marcelle Naqqāsh.





Antranik Anouchian, Studio Portrait, circa 1960.  
Tripoli, Lebanon. Collection AIF/Muhsin Yammīn.



Antranik Anouchian, Studio Portrait, 1940 .  
Tripoli, Lebanon. Collection AIF/Joseph al-Ḥajj.

Appendix to “Death-Size Body”:



Kamīl al-Qāriḥ, Funeral of Ḥawwā aḍ-Ḍāhir, widow of Sulaymān aḍ-Ḍāhir, circa 1910.  
Lebanon. Collection AIF/Muḥsin Yammin.



Kamīl al-Qāriḥ, Funeral, circa 1920.  
Lebanon. Collection AIF/Muḥsin Yammin.

*next spread*

Shafiq al-Sūsī, Funeral of Father Na“ūm, 1954.  
Ṣaydā, Lebanon. Collection AIF.





Kamīl al-Qāriḥ, Funeral of a member of the Kashana family.  
Zgharta, Lebanon. Collection AIF/Muḥsin Yammin.



Kamīl al-Qāriḥ, Funeral, 1927.  
Zgharta, Lebanon. Collection AIF/Muḥsin Yammin.



Kamīl al-Qāriḥ, Funeral of a child of al-Qāriḥ family, circa 1930.  
Zgharta, Lebanon. Collection AIF/Muḥsin Yammin.



Kamīl al-Qāriḥ, Funeral, 1929.  
Zgharta, Lebanon. Collection AIF/Muḥsin Yammin.



*previous spread*

Kamīl al-Qārīḥ, Funeral of Ghānim Hermanos.  
Lebanon. Collection AIF/Muḥsin Yammin.



Hāshim al-Madanī.  
Lebanon. Collection AIF/Hāshim al-Madanī.



Hāshim al-Madanī.  
Lebanon. Collection AIF/Hāshim al-Madanī.

*next spread*

Muḥyi 'Arīf, Funeral of Muḥsin as-Sa'dūn.  
Baghdad, Iraq. Collection AIF/Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ghaffūr 'Abd aṣ-Ṣāḥīb.



**Credits:**

Page #	Photographer, Descriptive title, Year. Location, Country. Collection.		
236	Jibrā'īl Jabbūr, Village women carrying earthenware jars, 1950. Al-Qaryatayn, Syria. Collection AIF/Norma Jabbūr.	245	Alban, A woman from the Sursuq family, 1933. Cairo, Egypt. Collection AIF/Ḥabīb Lṭayf.
237	Jibrā'īl Jabbūr, Jabbūr's wedding picnic, 1926. Lebanon. Collection AIF/Norma Jabbūr.	247	Anonymous, Rashīd al-Khattābī and son. Morocco. Collection AIF.
238	Anonymous, May and Freddy Far'ūn, 1945. Zaḥla, Lebanon. Collection AIF/Alfred Far'ūn.	248	Hāshim al-Madanī, 1950. Ṣaydā, Lebanon. Collection AIF/Hāshim al-Madanī.
239	Anonymous, Khāzin family, 1954. Zaḥla, Lebanon. Collection AIF/Fāyza Salīm al-Khāzin.	250	Yertchan, Funeral of Dankikian. Lebanon. Collection AIF/Muḥsin Yammīn.
240-241	Yertchan Dankikian, Dressed up for the "Barbara" feast day. Lebanon. Collection AIF/Muḥsin Yammīn.	251	Anonymous, Mr. Skāff in four different positions, 1922. Bethlehem, Palestine. Collection AIF.
242	Anonymous. Lebanon. Collection AIF/Simūn Shmālī.	253	Antranik Anouchian, Studio Portrait, 1940. Tripoli, Lebanon. Collection AIF/Joseph al-Ḥajj.
243	Anonymous, Khāzin family, 1954. Zaḥla, Lebanon. Collection AIF/Fāyza Salīm al-Khāzin.	254	Alban, Studio Portrait, circa 1945. Cairo, Egypt. Collection AIF/Georges Mikaelian Family.
244	Alban, Studio Portrait, 1945. Cairo, Egypt. Collection AIF/Georges Mikaelian Family.	255	Alban, Studio Portrait, circa 1945. Cairo, Egypt. Collection AIF/Georges Mikaelian Family.
		256	A.D. Reiser, circa 1900. Egypt. Collection AIF/Yusrī & Nāhid Naṣrallāh.
		257	Kamīl al-Qārīḥ, Funeral. Lebanon. Collection AIF/Muḥsin Yammīn.

- 258      Kamīl al-Qāriḥ, Funeral.  
Lebanon. Collection AIF/Muḥsin Yammīn.
- 261      Unidentified, Gamāl ‘Abd an-Nāṣir.  
Port Said, Egypt. Collection AIF/‘Amr Sharīf.

## Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> *Life*, February 1989, 62.

<sup>2</sup> Norman F. Dixon, *Preconscious Processing* (New York: Wiley, 1981), 70.

<sup>3</sup> A middle ground had to be reached between delaying publishing (*Vampires*) to give more chance for *Distracted* to be read, reviewed and acknowledged so that the telepathic connection between the two should not be obscured, and minimizing the temptation such a delay would provide to continue editing.

<sup>4</sup> Murnau's handling of the theme of the warning in *Nosferatu* is disappointing since in that film the worst that can happen to Harker is that he would die (he does not die in the film), for those who are bitten by the vampire do not become undead in Murnau's film (the analogy the professor makes between the carnivorous plants he shows to his students and vampires stresses the sucking facet of the vampire rather than the fact that he is undead).

<sup>5</sup> In some vampire films, stairs serve to lessen the floating movement of the vampire and of the somnambulist; in others, they function as trance deepeners: "As you go down the heavily carpeted stairs, you are going deeper and deeper into trance" (Somnambulist Descending a Staircase).

<sup>6</sup> "Caution *n.* 4. A cautious action; a precaution" (*American Heritage Dictionary*).

<sup>7</sup> Nothing in the *opening scenes* in vampire films indicates whether it is the vampire rather than his visitor who makes the door open without touching it (Murnau's and Herzog's *Nosferatu*, Stoker's *Dracula*, etc.); and whether it is the vampire who is translucent or the visitor's vision that tunnels through him. Moreover, in some films it is the future victim of the vampire who is the first to drink blood: in Browning's *Dracula*, Harker accidentally cuts his finger and proceeds to lick his blood. Thus the visitor is already invested with the powers and weaknesses of the vampire even before he is bitten by and loses blood to the latter, indeed in many cases even before he meets him. In which case, a *false threshold* was crossed by the visitor prior to his first encounter with the vampire, and the vampire's sucking of the blood of the victim is merely the apparent threshold of the latter's transformation.

<sup>8</sup> Larry Weiskrantz, "Neuropsychology and the Nature of Consciousness," in *Mindwaves*, ed. C. Blakemore & S. Greenfield (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 313–4.

<sup>9</sup> For an example from the field of physics: at atmospheric pressure and below 100°C, H<sub>2</sub>O exists as liquid. At atmospheric pressure and for a temperature over

100°C, H<sub>2</sub>O exists as vapor. At 100°C at atmospheric pressure, a phase transition occurs, with an abrupt change in the density: the vapor is one thousand six hundred times less dense than the liquid. The boiling temperature (T<sub>b</sub>) depends on the atmospheric pressure: it increases smoothly—hence, the phase transition can be made less abrupt—until at P = 218 atmospheres, T<sub>b</sub> = 374°C. The latter temperature and pressure is the *critical point*, where the difference in densities between the liquid and vapor phases vanishes. Critical point means no surprise, no catastrophe in the sense René Thom gives that term.

<sup>10</sup> For an example from the field of biology: many insects avoid freezing by undercooling, a physical phenomenon by which the body fluids freeze at a temperature well below 0°C. This state is precarious, since undercooled water is metastable with respect to ice and becomes increasingly so with decreasing temperature.

<sup>11</sup> *Super-* and *under-* forms of maintaining a state beyond itself should not be mistaken with phenomena of *after-*, for instance *after-image*, *after taste*.

<sup>12</sup> Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (New York: Bantam Books, 1981), 11.

<sup>13</sup> Once more, the vampire asked his hypnotized victim: “Where are you now?”

<sup>14</sup> In the latter case, the victim will probably have the illusion that he underwent a lapse, missed something, and hence that it could have been otherwise—but how can one miss what takes no time (the vampire, like a subatomic particle, has no trajectory)?

<sup>15</sup> J. Sheridan Le Fanu, *In a Glass Darkly* (London: Eveleigh Nash and Grayson), 412.

<sup>16</sup> Maybe in years to come people will think that teleportation was invented to make transportation possible in a world plagued by frequent blocks of walking or running: the cause viewed as the remedy.

<sup>17</sup> To check that the induction has succeeded, the hypnotist may challenge the subject to raise his arm from his lap or to separate his two hands.

<sup>18</sup> Virginia Woolf, *The Waves* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1931), 64.

<sup>19</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea*, trans. Lloyd Alexander (New York: New Directions Books, 1964), 10. Later, Sartre will write in *Being and Nothingness* (trans. and introd. Hazel E. Barnes [New York: Washington Square Press, 1956], 583): “We hope simply that we have shown that the will is not a privileged manifestation of freedom but that it is a psychic event of a peculiar structure which is constituted on the same plane as other psychic events and which is supported, neither

more nor less than the others, by an original, ontological freedom ... freedom is one with the being of the For-itself.” It seems there is always an encounter (even if it is a *gedanken* experiment) that reveals to one how unfree one is, inciting the search for freedom. Freedom fighters: by risking his life, the Hegelian master shows his freedom from given life; but the freedom of the other master, the guru, is from both life and death (a matter of life *and* death precisely in that it is not just a matter of life and *its* absence), thus attaining a nonconditioned mode of being.

<sup>20</sup> He got rid of the clean garbage strewn around in an ordered way that they call chairs, tables, closets. You see nothing in his apartment but the white walls and a few laconic books. But there remained, since he was a Stanislavsky actor, the imaginary object that he could evoke as if it were real and rehearse with it. So then he got rid of his acting.

<sup>21</sup> Constantin Stanislavski, *An Actor Prepares* (New York: Theater Arts, 1948), 26–7.

<sup>22</sup> In Robert Wiene’s *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920) the light and shadow patterns are painted; in Hollis Frampton’s *Poetic Justice* (1972) the cup of coffee and the vase with flowers remain next to pages of the script describing what happens to them. Is the undead to deduce from this impossibility of moving objects that he or she is looking at the past?

<sup>23</sup> Caro W. Lippman, “Hallucinations of Physical Duality in Migraine,” *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 117 (1953): 347. The same applies in the case of Virginia Woolf’s Rhoda in *The Waves*: “I have to bang my hand against some hard door to call myself back to the body” (44).

<sup>24</sup> It is this ability at non-interference that helps one later to deal with these unstoppable objects or states of thinking and behavior, allowing one not to be enslaved to the latter as compulsions and obsessions.

<sup>25</sup> Somnambulism is manneristic. Witness a somnambulist getting water from a well: one component of him holds the rope attached to the bucket, neutralizing the weight of the water filling it, while the second component pulls the bucket out of the well, exerting just enough force and effort to raise an empty container.

<sup>26</sup> An outside that belongs to the section in Kane’s past when he was playing on his sled Rosebud.

<sup>27</sup> André Bazin, *What is Cinema?* vol. II, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 35.

<sup>28</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and

Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 33–34.

<sup>29</sup> Dziga Vertov, *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*, ed. and introd. Annette Michelson, trans. Kevin O'Brien (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 41.

<sup>30</sup> André Bazin, *What is Cinema?* vol. I, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 50–52.

<sup>31</sup> First a Behr-gun stuns him by percussion.

<sup>32</sup> In Herzog's *Nosferatu* and in Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, Harker's hypnosis at the entrance to the castle is implied by the door that opens on its own (motionlessness of objects is a phenomenon encountered in hypnosis, e.g., the hand of the entranced subject that levitates outside his control following the lead of the hypnotist). The vampire seldom entrances his guest by staring him in the eye; he does so rather by not appearing in the mirror or by the auto-mobility of objects (door, ship, etc.) that his freezing allows. That the door opens on its own for Harker in Coppola's film indicates either that he is at that point already hypnotized; or that the door is hypnotizing him: the passivity of the guest of the vampire as the door, which has become auto-mobile through the freezing of the vampire, opens or closes on its own before or behind him does not remain at the level of action but becomes extended to the complementary level of intention and will: he or she becomes entranced.

<sup>33</sup> For additional examples, see Dante's *Inferno*. In "Canto I," we read: "I cannot clearly say how I had entered / the wood; I was so full of sleep just at / the point where I abandoned the true path" (Dante Alighieri, *Inferno*, Canto I: 10–12, trans. Allen Mandelbaum). The transition between Canto III and Canto IV, and therefore between the Ante-Inferno and the First Circle, or Limbo, happens in a similar manner. Canto III ends with, "A whirlwind burst out of the tear-drenched earth, / a wind that crackled with a bloodred light, / a light that overcame all of my senses; / and like a man whom sleep has seized, I fell"; and Canto IV begins with, "*Dante's awakening to the First Circle, or Limbo ...* The heavy sleep within my head was smashed / by an enormous thunderclap, so that / I started up as one whom force awakens; / I stood erect and turned my rested eyes / from side to side, and I stared steadily / to learn what place it was surrounding me." Similarly, Canto V ends with, "And while one spirit said these words to me, / the other wept, so that—because of pity— / I fainted, as if I had met my death. / And then I fell as a dead body falls"; and Canto VI begins with, "Upon my mind's reviving—it had closed / on hearing the lament of those two kindred, / since sorrow had confounded me completely— / I see

new sufferings, new sufferers."

<sup>34</sup> Probably this is what initially drew me, an aphoristic writer, to death: it is the exemplary realm of the absence of introductions.

<sup>35</sup> Matthew Edlund, *Psychological Time and Mental Illness* (New York: Gardner Press, 1987), 81.

<sup>36</sup> Exceptions: primitive cinema, Hitchcock's *Rope* (1948), many of Warhol's films ...

<sup>37</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. and introd. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 238.

<sup>38</sup> As was the case with the modernist stress in painting on the flatness of the canvas (Jasper Johns' painted targets and flags ...), the shape of the support, the properties of the pigment.

<sup>39</sup> Alain Robbe-Grillet, *For a New Novel: Essays on Fiction*, trans. Richard Howard (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 1989), 152–3.--

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>41</sup> Margiad Evans [pseud.], *A Ray of Darkness* (New York: Roy Publishers, 1953).

<sup>42</sup> André Bazin, *What is Cinema?* vol. I, 97.

<sup>43</sup> Schizophrenia being an altered state of the mind, a far from equilibrium state of consciousness, it is not surprising that the schizophrenic sometimes feels that a specific, rather mundane change, for example whether or not one falls asleep before a specific hour, whether or not one goes through a door, will radically alter the state of the universe—a phenomenon similar to the *butterfly effect* encountered in the case of the weather, that paradigm for chaotic, far from equilibrium states.

<sup>44</sup> Philippe Ariès, *Western Attitudes Toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, trans. Patricia M. Ranum (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), 34–37.

<sup>45</sup> Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking-Glass* (New York: Nal Penguin, 1960), 16.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 26. Was one replaced during the lapse that precedes the psychedelic state by the *dead ringer*? Was this why one's friends did not recognize one then? Or was it that one merely hallucinated that they didn't? Yoga makes it possible for the yogi to go through phase transitions without the lapses/blackouts/synapses that occur then and that permit possession and doubles. The yogi has no double, that is, he manages, through psychomental withdrawal, to be absent from absence, to make his double absent, liberating and becoming the astral

body.

<sup>47</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (New York: Avon Books, 1965), 226.

<sup>48</sup> Frieda Schaechter, "The Language of the Voices," in *Language Behavior in Schizophrenia: Selected Readings in Research and Theory*, comp. and ed. Harold J. Vetter (Springfield, Ill.: Thomas, 1968), 151.

<sup>49</sup> Stan Brakhage, *Film at Wit's End* (New York: McPherson and Company, 1989), 104.

<sup>50</sup> In Dostoyevsky's *The Double*, had even one person at the office commented on the newcomer's remarkable physical similarity to Golyadkin, the newcomer would no longer be Golyadkin's double but simply a twin or a clone, or the similarity would be a fluke.

<sup>51</sup> If one intends to generalize the theme of vampires from the strictly literal (the vampire as an undead that sucks the blood of the living) to the economic and political (Marx: "Capital is dead labour, that, vampire-like, only lives by sucking living labour, and lives the more, the more labour it sucks" [*Capital*, vol. 1]), one has beforehand to take into consideration the way the undead realm literalizes the metaphoric.

<sup>52</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, 99.

<sup>53</sup> There is no jealousy in the indistinguishability of faces: the shot in *Persona* where Elisabeth faces the camera while *behind her back* her double Alma and Elisabeth's husband have a conversation and kiss, which reproduces the spatial positioning of the protagonists in Munch's *Jealousy*, is a bad forgery of Munch's painting.

<sup>54</sup> *In a Glass Darkly*, 412.

<sup>55</sup> For an interpretation of such a scene/procedure in terms of fetishism, see Roger Dadoun's "Fetishism in the Horror Film," in *Fantasy and the Cinema*, ed. James Donald (London: British Film Institute, 1989).

<sup>56</sup> These kinds of simultaneity are encountered also in the affined realm of dance: next to a number of dancers immobilized by the diegetic silence-over, a couple of dancers were moving to the accompaniment of the saving diegetic music-over. The freezing in the realm into which dance projects the dancer having allowed an auto-mobility of objects, the dancer was moving while not moving, since the floor on which he was standing motionless was gliding.

<sup>57</sup> Arts create aesthetic facts. When in a film a dancer is convincingly shown penetrating a two-dimensional object such as a mirror or a book illustration, rather than assuming that the dancer has the same kind of body we normally

have, and concluding that such a feat is impossible, and that therefore it must be either a character's fantasy or dream or a genre convention, one should ask what kind of body the dancer has acquired for such a feat to be possible.

<sup>58</sup> Michel Serres, *Statues: le second livre des fondations* (Paris: Éditions François Bourin, 1987), 114 (my translation).

<sup>59</sup> Regaining my seat after getting a coffee refill, I resume looking at the street: this is the third homeless person to search in the same garbage can in the last five minutes. The second homeless person had found an empty bottle that the first one had skipped. The garbage discarded by one homeless person is visited, as still not useless enough, by a second, then a third homeless ... Something almost Buddhist in this gradation in nothing. This society makes those it does not recycle, the homeless, extract what it missed recycling.

<sup>60</sup> Philippe Ariès, *Western Attitudes toward Death*, 47.

<sup>61</sup> Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, trans. Iain Hamilton Grant, introd. Mike Gane (London: Sage Publications, 1993), 126 (I myself would have put quotation marks around *inferior races*). See also Michel Foucault's *Madness and Civilization* on the exclusion of the mad (at least until the start of deinstitutionalization in the 1960s). It is not by living in a cemetery, as hundreds of thousands of Egyptians do in Cairo, that one will reach the dead's space, the labyrinth where one is homeless, ending the dead's confinement.

<sup>62</sup> An observer on the outside of a black hole's event horizon is not affected by the breakdown of predictability at the singularity, for no signal can reach him from it. Are black holes' singularities the universe's hallucinations? What goes on in the minds of schizophrenics and of those on LSD may be as objective as what goes on inside a black hole, where at the singularity—according to quantum gravity as it is currently understood—"time ceases to exist" ("no longer can we say that 'this thing happens before that one'"), and space becomes "a random, probabilistic froth," or "—according to the laws of general relativity—the curvature of spacetime becomes infinitely large, and spacetime ceases to exist."

<sup>63</sup> One notices an intriguing similarity between reports of the transportation of entities of extended death (undeath) and reports of the transportation of items of extended life (cryonics); compare the *Nosferatu* intertitle to: "The first embryos were sent from Oldham to David Whitting for freezing in London—by courtesy of British Railways—and the guards on the Manchester-London expresses can have had no idea of the momentous contents of the packages they handled for us so efficiently!" (my italics).

<sup>64</sup> Lotte H. Eisner, *Murnau* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973),

224.

<sup>65</sup> Andreas Mavromatis, *Hypnagogia: The Unique State of Consciousness Between Wakefulness and Sleep* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), 163.

<sup>66</sup> How does the earth “feel” about its inability to digest the non-biodegradable, plastic and vampires?

<sup>67</sup> Alan Greenberg, *Heart of Glass* (München: Skellig, 1976), 21.

<sup>68</sup> Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine*, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 23.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 4–5.

<sup>70</sup> Jean Genet, *Prisoner of Love*, trans. Barbara Bray, introd. Edmund White (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1992), 24.

<sup>71</sup> *American Cinematographer* (July 1988): 48.

<sup>72</sup> When, near the end of the film, Marnie and her husband return to her mother’s house, it is raining. The water makes the ship as well as the painted bricks of the houses look glossy. When the film’s director of photography, Robert Burks, and the production designer, Robert Boyle, remarked to Hitchcock how phony the set looked, Hitchcock’s response was: “I don’t see anything wrong with it Bob. I think it looks fine.”

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.un.org/unrwa>.

<sup>74</sup> The invisibility of these Dreyer characters is equivalent to the absence of the reflection in the mirror in vampire films.

<sup>75</sup> Sergei Eisenstein, *Film Essays, with a Lecture*, ed. and trans. Jay Leyda (London: Dennis Dobson, 1968), 150.

<sup>76</sup> This is a more fundamental fall than the one that still admits of a ground at which to stop.

<sup>77</sup> Van Gogh: “*A night sky with a moon without radiance*, the slender crescent barely emerging from the opaque shadow cast by the earth ... *one star with an exaggerated brilliance ...*” (my italics).

<sup>78</sup> Ilya Prigogine & Isabelle Stengers, *Entre le temps et l'éternité* (Librairie Artheme Fayard, 1988), 60.

<sup>79</sup> It is resonant that Walter Benjamin uses the image of bullets and ballistics to write about sudden changes in space, lighting and angle between shots, and that Eisenstein tries to create the effect of the impact of a bullet hitting the eye by having a jump cut.

<sup>80</sup> “Nearby objects (many out of ‘view’ of the patient’s body) could often be seen (cardiac monitor behind the patient’s bed, etc.)” Michael B. Sabom and Sarah S. Kreutziger, “Physicians Evaluate the Near-Death Experience,” in *A*

*Collection of Near-Death Research Readings*, comp. Craig R. Lundahl (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1982), 150.

<sup>81</sup> One can also find the telepathic correlation between what is not *interacting* in Natasha Uppal’s *Site*, 1991 (the French title should be *Ci-gît*): the drop-like points on the superimposed glass panes are washed by the water from another plane.

<sup>82</sup> Nor, as Šaddām would like to believe, Nebuchadnezzar. Nor is Baghdad (illuminated by the fireworks of ineffective ground-air defense on the first day of the Gulf War), as in one shot in Herzog’s otherwise sublime *Lessons of Darkness* (1991), Kuwait City (on the initial day of the Iraqi invasion). It is praiseworthy to consider flying to Mars or Saturn to find “images that are still pure and clean and transparent” (from an interview with Herzog in Wenders’ *Tokyo Gā*); unfortunately the danger then is that from such a distance one might easily mistake Baghdad for mere Kuwait City. Through dying before dying, Blair’s Jacob Maker, more sober, visited many planets without incurring such mistakes.

<sup>83</sup> “Iis” is the present third singular of “bee.”

<sup>84</sup> Some use themselves as the experimental sample, their writing as the control sample.

<sup>85</sup> Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 3, *The Last Phase 1919–1939* (New York: Basic Books, 1957), chapter 14.

<sup>86</sup> Similarly, owing to the identification of the camera with the character in the first scene of Carpenter’s *Halloween*, the rest of the shots in the film, even those that follow his death, are haunted by him.

<sup>87</sup> See Jean-François Lyotard, *Heidegger and “the jews”*, trans. Andreas Michel and Mark S. Roberts, foreword by David Carroll (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), chapters 4–6; Jean-François Lyotard, “Emma,” *Misère de la philosophie* (Paris: Éditions Galilée, 2000), 55–95; Jean Laplanche, *New Foundations for Psychoanalysis*, trans. David Macey (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1989); Jean Laplanche, *Essays on Otherness*, ed. John Fletcher (London; New York: Routledge, 1999); Jean Laplanche, *Entre séduction et inspiration: l’homme* (Paris: Quadrige/Presses Universitaires de France, 1999); and Jean Laplanche, *Le primat de l’autre en psychanalyse: travaux 1967–1992* (Paris: Flammarion, 1997).

<sup>88</sup> Sergei Eisenstein, *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*, ed. and trans. Jay Leyda (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), 106.

<sup>89</sup> André Bazin, *What is Cinema?* vol. I, 36.

<sup>90</sup> No one who has seen without consternation an ancient Egyptian seated figure, exemplarily that of Osiris, the god of the underworld, should be surprised

at Magritte's seated coffins: *Perspective II: "Le balcon" de Manet and Perspective I: "Madame Récamier" de David*.

<sup>91</sup> A. Deikman quoted in Mavromatis, *Hypnagogia*, 113.

<sup>92</sup> Marguerite Duras, *Marguerite Duras*, contributors, Joel Farges et al., trans. Edith Cohen & Peter Conner (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1987), 87.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 103. For an antithetical, but equally interesting approach, one where there is a definite incarnation, one has to look at the films and aesthetic of one of Duras' favorite filmmakers, Robert Bresson. Bresson's *models* are exempt in principle from reincarnation. Humbert Balsan, who was Gauvin in *Lancelot of the Lake* (1974), reported: "It is precisely on finishing the post-production, that is, the post-synchronization, and while saying goodbye to Bresson, that he told me: 'Above all, don't ever again work in cinema'" (Philippe Arnaud, *Robert Bresson* [Paris: Cahiers du Cinéma, 1986], 147). Thus I am disconcerted that Jacques Rivette would use Balsan, whose first screen appearance was in that Bresson film, in *Norôît* (1976)—subsequently, being no longer a model but an actor, it was appropriate for Maurice Pialat, Samuel Fuller and others to use Balsan; or that Jean Eustache would use Isabelle Weingarten, whose first screen appearance was in Bresson's *Four Nights of a Dreamer* (1971), in *The Mother and the Whore* (1973)—again once she was no longer a model, it was appropriate for Ruiz, Wenders, Manoel de Oliveira and Schlöndorff to use her; or that François Truffaut would use Jane Fonda, whose first appearance on the screen was in Bresson's *A Gentle Creature* (1969), in *The Green Room* (1978); or that Godard would use Anne Parillaud, whose first screen appearance was in Bresson's *Au hasard Balthazar*, in *La Chinoise* (1967)—after which it was appropriate for Pasolini and Garrel to use her; or that Alain Resnais would use both Roland Monod, whose first screen appearance was in Bresson's *A Man Escaped* (1956), in *La Guerre est finie* (1966), and François Leterrier, whose first screen appearance was also in Bresson's *A Man Escaped*, in *Stavisky* (1974); or for that matter that Bresson himself would use Jean-Claude Guillebert, whose first appearance on screen was in Bresson's *Au hasard Balthazar*, again in *Mouchette* (1967)—after which it was appropriate for Godard to use him in *Week-End* (1967). Bresson models: Maurice Beerblock, Jean-Paul Delhumeau, Charles Le Clainche, and Roger Treherne in *A Man Escaped*; Florence Carrez, Jean Darbaud, Philippe Dreux, Jean-Claude Fourneau, Jean Gillibert, Michel Herubel, Roger Honorat, Marc Jacquier, E. R. Pratt, André Régner in *The Trial of Joan of Arc* (1962); Philippe Asselin, M. C. Fremont, Walter Green, Nathalie Joyaut, Jean Rémignard, and François Sullerot in *Au hasard Balthazar*; Laelita Carcano, Nicolas Deguy, Geoffrey Gaussen, Régis Hanrion,

Robert Honorat, Tina Irissari, and Antoine Monnier in *The Devil Probably* (1977); Didier Baussy, Michel Brigueat, Andre Cler, Marc-Ernest Fourneau, Bruno Lapeyre, Christian Patey, Vincent Risterucci, and Béatrice Tabourin in *L'Argent* (1983).

<sup>94</sup> Marguerite Duras, *Marguerite Duras*, 87.

<sup>95</sup> *Specimen #4* ("Habiter/Live in"), January 1998 (Wissous, France: Éditions Amok), 68.

<sup>96</sup> The voice-over in Duras functions as either:

1. An ahistorical, unworldly irruption in the radical closure delimited by the temporal end of the world (*Le Camion* ["Look at the end of the world, all the time, at every second, everywhere"], *Her Venetian Name in Deserted Calcutta*). Had I been offered to produce a science-fiction film on black holes, I would have asked Duras to write and direct it, suggesting for possible title: *Cynergus Song* (such a film would certainly have been as uncharacteristic of the genre as Tarkovsky's *Solaris*). In *Her Venetian Name in Deserted Calcutta*, the two unworldly female voices-over talking from the end of the world juxtapose with the mundane gossip of the guests at the reception.
2. A voice-over-witness that reports on what is to the other side of a trauma's event horizon.
3. A voice-over reporting the monadic unfolding of information at the end of the world in the form of the event horizon.

<sup>97</sup> Deidi von Schaewen, *Walls* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977).

<sup>98</sup> Humor in Kubrick's film of having the same person who was brought to the hotel as a caretaker to fix any malfunctions and deterioration from lack of upkeep precipitate the sudden turning of the whole place into a ruin.

<sup>99</sup> See Mike Davis' *Ecology of Fear: Los Angeles and the Imagination of Disaster* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998) for a thorough investigation of the various scenarios of an imagined destruction of Los Angeles.

<sup>100</sup> The Lebanese literary critic Yumná al-ʿĪd tells me, based on her extensive knowledge of Lebanese literature, that there are virtually no specters in Lebanese novels and short stories. It seems that the same sweeping judgement can be applied in the smaller domain of Lebanese film and video. A notable exception is Ghassān Salhab's film *Phantom Beirut*, 1998. In this film, some years into the war and the civil war in Lebanon, a man, Khalil, disappears. His sister and his friends believe he was killed. One day one of them comes across an identical-looking man while at the airport to receive a friend flying in from abroad. He and several

of Khalil's former friends shadow the man in question. When the latter ends up coming to the apartment of the missing man's sister, both she and his friends are uncertain whether it is actually Khalil or his ghost, one of them apprehensively touching him to make sure that he is actually, physically, there with them. They grow to feel that he is Khalil, and come to the conclusion that his disappearance was a scheme to make them think that he died and abscond with the money collected by their militant association. And yet at the end of the film, in a symptomatic structural mistake, strangers hired to kidnap another person kidnap him instead. The mistake of these kidnapers is mortal even if they do not end up killing him, since he is revealed by their misapprehension as affected, haunted by the other, and therefore someone come back from the dead, a revenant, a phantom. He could fool his sister and his former friends but not *objective chance*.

<sup>101</sup> 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.

<sup>102</sup> Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *Great Short Works of Fyodor Dostoyevsky*, introd. Ronald Hingley (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), 33.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>104</sup> Notwithstanding that the ghost appears to one only when one is alone, since he is a labyrinthine entity and in the labyrinth one is lost, including to others; he or she is not necessarily a personal affair, but is often a communal one: commenting on the ghost's appearance, Marcellus says, "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark."

<sup>105</sup> Or else is to be ascribed to the vampire's ability to tunnel ("For the dead travel fast"), hence to her ability to be in different places during the chase without covering the trajectory between them.

<sup>106</sup> So is the phone call that reaches one of the travelers in the labyrinthine Zone of Tarkovsky's *Stalker*.

<sup>107</sup> Certainly if there is anything that is going to make me leave Lebanon, it will be, more than the Lebanese's entrenched religious sectarianism, the inhuman conditions in which the Palestinians are maintained in the refugee camps, Lebanon's increasingly ugly architecture, the country's legalized wiretapping of phones, the racial discrimination against foreign maids, etc., the recurrent question: "Why did you come back to Lebanon? Why would anyone come to Beirut?"

<sup>108</sup> Edward William Lane, *An Arabic-English Lexicon*, 8 volumes (Beirut, Lebanon: Librairie du Liban, 1980), entry *jīm sīn dāl*.

<sup>109</sup> Gilles Deleuze: "The Gods are dead but they have died from laughing, on

hearing one God claim to be the only one ... (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra* III, 'Of the Apostates'). And the death of this God, who claimed to be the only one, is itself plural," *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 4. One of these deaths is proclaimed by the madman in Nietzsche's *The Gay Science*; another one was performed by Nietzsche through his feeling *every name in history is I* and consequently his signing one of his letters *The Crucified* during his psychosis, i.e., his death before dying.

<sup>110</sup> The *M* written in chalk on the back of the criminal's jacket in Fritz Lang's first talking picture, *M*, is an intertitle.

<sup>111</sup> Muḥammad 'Alī al-Tahānawī, *Mawsū'at kashshāf iṣṭilāḥāt al-funūn wa-al-'ulūm*, introduction, supervision and review by Rafiq al-'Ajam; ed. 'Alī Daḥrūj; translation from Persian to Arabic by 'Abd Allāh al-Khālīdī; English and French translation of headings by Jūrj Zinātī, 2 volumes (Beirut, Lebanon: Maktabat Lubnān, 1996), 1547–1548.

<sup>112</sup> Trans. Paul Keegan. Cf. Sigmund Freud: "At about the same time as the sexual life of children reaches its first peak, between the ages of three and five, they also begin to show signs of the activity which may be ascribed to the instinct for knowledge or research.... The assumption that all human beings have the same (male) form of genital is the first of the many remarkable and momentous sexual theories of children." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, volume VII (1901–1905), translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953–1974), 194–195.

<sup>113</sup> Iranian cinema's sexual inhibition is discernable not only in the films revolving around adults, but also in those whose protagonists are children: in scores of films produced by the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, children are not shown as sensual beings (see on the contrary Syrian filmmaker Usāma Muḥammad's *Sundūq al-dunyā* [*The Box of Life*], 2002, and the recent work of the Kuwaiti artist Tamara as-Samaracei, who resides presently in Beirut), and their perverse polymorphousness (Freud) is nowhere to be seen. I was for years concerned with schizophrenia and with schizophrenics, who appeared in my *Credits Included: A Video in Red and Green*, 1995; and I am now interested in "the little girl," whom I expect to appear in my coming vampire film, *Transit Visa to the Labyrinth* (*Al-funūn junūn* Productions). At one level, the Thirteenth Series in Gilles Deleuze's *The Logic of Sense*, 1969, "The Schizophrenic and the Little Girl," can thus be retrospectively viewed as a program for the work

of a decade on my part.

<sup>114</sup> Duras' *Hiroshima mon amour*.

<sup>115</sup> Postmodern dance can be considered in part from this perspective: the reduction of distance.

<sup>116</sup> With its frequent absence of the mirror image, the horror film or novel is often a preparation for, a sort of condition of possibility of tackling the portrait.

<sup>117</sup> Cinema is implicated with death because it is a form of defense against it, the latest avatar in embalming the body (Bazin)—with the caveat that much of the importance and efficacy of the image comes from its magical equation in our unconscious with the thing itself; and also in so far as in the undead realm one at times asks oneself: "Am I in a film?"

<sup>118</sup> The combination of painting and dance in *An American in Paris* is a happy one, since the diegetic freezings made possible by dance with its diegetic silence—allow for *tableaux "vivants"* of three-dimensional people.

<sup>119</sup> This scene is based on the following text Thomas Johannsen wrote for a presentation for my workshop on death at DasArts, Amsterdam, October–November 2001: "Martin was inspecting his shoes while I observed him. Now he searched through his pockets, bringing little bits of paper out into the dim corridor light and looking at them. Suddenly he looked up. I, ashamed, turned my eyes back to my own reflection and gasped. For a split second I saw my mirror image observing Martin. For the briefest moment, my own reflection was not looking back at me but was gazing at my lover behind me, at the end of the corridor." This is certainly a moment of radical accompaniment of one's lover: if my mirror image is not facing me as I look at it, but looking at my lover in the background, then this means that notwithstanding my *sous-entendu* interpellation of it, it is far more preoccupied with my lover.

<sup>120</sup> It is likely that Munch's use of graphic arts is partly motivated by the fact that they allowed him, who suffered from over-turns (*The Scream*), to have the 180° turn of the left-right inversion, achieving mirror reflections of the painted versions (this inversion is also present in the two photographs titled *Self-portrait in a Rented Room*, 1906).

<sup>121</sup> Kip S. Thorne, *Black Holes and Time Warps: Einstein's Outrageous Legacy* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994), 30–31.

<sup>122</sup> Installation art has for the most part substituted for cinema's affinity with tracing a territory the investigation of what is site-specific.

<sup>123</sup> It is so difficult to accomplish the dispersal of the universe since we have a tendency through the (Freudian) secondary process to link, to give sense

(Richard Foreman: "Understand—it ALWAYS makes sense. Sense *can't* be avoided. If it first seems to be non-sense, wait: roots will reveal themselves." *Reverberation Machines: The Later Plays and Essays* [Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press, 1985], 190), and because, with rare exceptions, when a person sees the universe beginning to falter, when for instance during his interrogation by three agents his two lips become sewn together (*The Matrix*), most often he resorts to waking up to convince himself that he was dreaming—one can then try again to wake him by telling him: "Dream on!"

<sup>124</sup> Indeed *Hamlet* is punctuated by abrupt *Enter the Ghost* or *re-enter Ghost* and *Exit Ghost*:

BARNARDO Last night of all,  
When yon same star that's westward from the pole  
Had made his course t'illuminate that part of heaven  
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,  
The bell then beating one—

*Enter the Ghost ...*

MARCELLUS

Peace, break thee off. Look where it comes again.

...

BARNARDO See, it stalks away.

HORATIO Stay, speak, speak. I charge thee speak.

*Exit Ghost*

MARCELLUS 'Tis gone and will not answer.

...

*Enter the Ghost*

HORATIO

...

But soft, behold, lo where it comes again!

Cf. also Hamlet: "A king of shreds and patches,— (*Enter Ghost*) / Save me, and hover o'er me with your wings, / You heavenly guards! What would your gracious figure?"

<sup>125</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, 206–207.

<sup>126</sup> For an additional allusion, among numerous others, to zombies in *Hamlet*, cf. Hamlet: "How long will a man lie i' the earth ere he rot?" First Clown: "T'faith, if he be not rotten before he die—"

<sup>127</sup> (Death before) death can only be undergone by one person alone—but, so as to be able to come back from this non-local realm, that person has to have

an outsider, even if it is only the *hidden observer* (reality begins only with two—not counting the double).

<sup>128</sup> Gregory A. Waller, *The Living and the Undead: From Stoker's Dracula to Romero's Dawn of the Undead* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 32.

<sup>129</sup> And if what is received telepathically is ambiguous, open to interpretation, and hence uncertain, we must keep in mind that the character encountering the vampire is himself suffering from uncertainty (for example: Is the vampire at a certain location, or is he rather, as indicated by the absence of his image in the mirror at that location, not there?) and an inflammation of interpretation, and hence receiving a letter from him would in no way produce a clearer version of what was happening.

<sup>130</sup> Unfortunately, this strategy often backfires, playing into the hand of the vampire: it is precisely by writing letters and hence no longer fully belonging to the present that the victim enters into contact with the vampire, who himself does not fully belong to the present.

<sup>131</sup> See "The Michelson-Morley Experiment," Chapter 2 in Martin Gardner, *The Relativity Explosion*, 2nd ed. (New York: Vintage Books, 1976).

<sup>132</sup> The Kennedy-Thorndike experiment (1932) disproved the Lorentz hypothesis.

<sup>133</sup> W. M. Itano, D. J. Heinzen, J. J. Bollinger, and D. J. Wineland, *Physical Review A* 41 (1990): 2295–2300.

<sup>134</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, 1.

<sup>135</sup> Carl Theodor Dreyer, *Four Screenplays* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1970), 101. The expression "the dead eyes of a blind person" is a metaphor humorously constructed of two terms that apply literally to the subject of the statement, since the blind person in question is dead. It thus instances another version of the literality of the figurative in the case of the undead and schizophrenics (see the section "Death").

<sup>136</sup> There is at least one confirmed case of a Haitian zombie, reported in Wade Davis' *Passage of Darkness*: Clairvius Narcisse. Although rendered motionless, he remained conscious and could hear his sister's weeping when he was pronounced dead in the hospital. He felt the cover being pulled over his face. Narcisse does not recall how long he remained in the grave before the zombie makers came and took him out. Houngans say that a zombie may be raised from the grave up to three days after the burial (for three days and three nights did Jonah remain in the belly of the Whale, Lazarus in the grave). According to ethnobotanist Davis, the houngan's poison contains tetrodotoxin. Tetrodotoxin poi-

soning results in: pallor; paresthesias of lips, tongue and throat, which spread gradually until the whole body is numb, so that the person feels that his body is floating, and which cause respiratory difficulty, the body becoming cyanotic; paralysis beginning in the throat and larynx resulting in aphonia; subnormal temperature; the eyes becoming fixed and the pupillary and corneal reflexes lost (see B. W. Halstead, *Poisonous and Venomous Marine Animals of the World* [Princeton: Darwin Press, 1978], 714), this resulting in glassy eyes; the patients feeling ants crawling over them or beneath their skin and biting them; a peeling of the skin; the person becoming comatose while retaining consciousness until shortly before death. Article 249 of the Haitian penal code prohibits substances that induce a coma indistinguishable from death. If a victim of such poisons is buried, the act is considered murder whatever the end result. The prohibition occults rather than clarifies the phenomenon of the zombie, for it is not enough to induce a deathlike stupor in the person who is to become a zombie, making others, including doctors, believe he is dead. Spending up to three days in the grave completely paralyzed yet conscious does not produce a zombie: witness the many cases of blower fish poisoning, where the person who was believed to be dead and spent several days in stupor recovered after that. For example, Akashi reports the case of a gambler who was thought dead after eating puffer fish (which contains tetrodotoxin) and put in storage until an official from the region to which he belonged could examine him. A week later he regained consciousness and recovered from all the symptoms. He was able to recall what he went through, his major fear all along being that he would be buried alive (Wade Davis, *Passage of Darkness: The Ethnobiology of the Haitian Zombie* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988], 156 and 159). To become a zombie, the person in whom a deathlike stupor was induced must additionally be abruptly thrown into the undeath realm: zombies are given datura after they are retrieved from the grave (Haitians call *Datura stramonium*, *concombre zombi* [the zombi's cucumber]). The plant induces stupor, hallucinations and delusions, followed by confusion, disorientation, and amnesia. *Datura* is associated with initiation rites among the Luisena Indians of Southern California, the Algonquin of northeastern North America, and the Jivaro of South America. In parts of Highland Peru, *Datura* is called *huaca*, the Quechua name for grave.

<sup>137</sup> Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), whose events take place at the same period that all sorts of indexical modes of recording (photography, etc.) are being introduced and becoming widespread, already renders problematic such indexical recording: the absence of the vampire's image from the mirror.

<sup>138</sup> This paragraph was written in 1990 (Library of Congress copyright for the first, 3/13/1991 version of [*Vampires*]: TXU 468-283). It was fulfilling to see a confirmation of this “point of view shots between us” in *Until the End of the World*, released in the U.S. end of 1991, where a scientist succeeds in designing a camera that allows a blind person to “see” a simulation of a referential image on the condition that the latter be remembered by, seen in the mind’s eye of the one who recorded it for the camera.

<sup>139</sup> It turns out that the aforementioned film shot of Adjani and Kinski does not exist (in the film) but is a production still!

<sup>140</sup> Jean Louis Schefer, *The Enigmatic Body: Essays on the Arts*, ed. and trans. Paul Smith (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 133–134.

<sup>141</sup> Roland Barthes, *The Responsibility of Forms: Critical Essays on Music, Art, and Representation*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985), 96.

<sup>142</sup> Patricia Highsmith, *Ripley’s Game* (New York: Penguin Books, 1974), 36.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>145</sup> The fear-induced swish pan or tilt must have made Ralph Eugene Meatyard sensitive to the swish pans or tilts of REM (also the acronym of his name) that are intrinsic to the process of vision itself and that make it possible; he managed to render them, to find a literal equivalent for them in his Light on Water series, for instance *Light #3*, 1959, and *Light Abstraction*, 1967.

<sup>146</sup> The words in italics in the brackets are my additions to the captions that appear in *Ralph Eugene Meatyard: An American Visionary*, ed. Barbara Tannenbaum (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, and Akron Art Museum, 1991).

<sup>147</sup> The hands of the child are as still as the two wing-like figures of peeling paint above him, which they echo.

<sup>148</sup> Will not be included here any of the photographs of the No-Focus series, since it is clear that in that series the blurriness is produced by intentionally setting the lens out-of-focus; as well as photographs, such as *Untitled* (Girl twirling in front of shed), 1965, and *Untitled* (Group of children with dolls and masks), 1963, where the blurriness can easily and justifiably be construed to be due to the normal movement of the one in the photograph being too quick with respect to the slow exposure time. If there is a site of an occultation of the fear in his photographs in Meatyard’s work, it is to be found in the temptation such photographs present both us and Meatyard to consider the blurriness in his photographs in general as due to a normal movement of the characters.

<sup>149</sup> Hence these masks have little to do with those in the work of Cindy

Sherman (an admirer of Meatyard), which are hysterical; even if we do not consider the masks in Meatyard’s Lucybelle Crater series as produced by the fear-induced swish pan, but view them as pertaining to the people shown in the photographs, the indistinguishability between the latter is psychotic (no mirror image) rather than, as in Sherman’s Historical Portraits series, hysterical.

<sup>150</sup> We are dealing with a swish-tilt in the case of these two photographs.

<sup>151</sup> Cf. *scary* *adj.* 1. Causing fright or alarm. 2. Easily scared; very timid. (*American Heritage Dictionary*).

<sup>152</sup> Jean Laplanche, *New Foundations for Psychoanalysis*, trans. David Macey (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 98–101.

<sup>153</sup> Unlike in the case of turning into a statue, where the floating is annulled since the pedestal, however thin, represents the ground moving up, doing away with the floating feel (though some statues, mostly Buddhist ones, manage to float over their pedestals).

<sup>154</sup> Alain Robbe-Grillet, *La Maison de Rendez-vous* and *Djinn*, trans. Richard Howard/Yvone Lenard and Walter Wells (New York: Grove Press, 1987), 141.

<sup>155</sup> Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Last Year at Marienbad*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Grove Press, 1962), 20.

<sup>156</sup> While the corpses of saints exist in time but are spared corruption, the vampire in the coffin during the day is not in time but frozen.

<sup>157</sup> Roland Barthes, “The Third Meaning: Research Notes on Some Eisenstein Stills,” in *Image, Music, Text*, essays selected and translated by Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977).

<sup>158</sup> Annette Michelson, “‘The Man with the Movie Camera’: From Magician to Epistemologist,” *Artforum* 10, no. 7 (March 1972): 65.

<sup>159</sup> Sergei Eisenstein, *Film Form*, 43.

<sup>160</sup> Similarly, the freezings permit the diegetic fast forward in René Clair’s *The Crazy Ray* (the French title of Clair’s film, *Paris qui dort*, is a misnomer; the American title is more appropriate).

<sup>161</sup> Frazer quoted in Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, trans. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1950), 55.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.* A subject worthy of an adaptation by the filmmaker of *On Top of the Whale*.

<sup>163</sup> Nigel Andrews, “Dracula in Delft,” *American Film* 4, no. 1 (1978): 33.

<sup>164</sup> Quoted in Jan-Christopher Horak, “W. H. or the Mysteries of Walking in Ice,” in *The Films of Werner Herzog: Between Mirage and History*, ed. Timothy Corrigan (New York: Methuen, 1986), 26.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> André Bazin, *What is Cinema?* vol. I, 9.

<sup>167</sup> Until 1951 the film base was made of cellulose nitrate, which is explosive and chemically unstable and even under the best storage conditions does not last more than fifty years. More than half the films made in the United States prior to that date have thus been destroyed. Only seventy-five of Méliès' over five hundred films still exist. In 1941, in Sweden, the negative of all the films produced by the film production company Svenska—which produced all the films of Mauritz Stiller and Victor Sjöström—from 1907 till then were burned in an explosion: "The negatives of 95 percent of all films produced in Sweden in the preceding thirty-four years were destroyed in a few minutes" (Robert C. Allen & Douglas Gomery, *Film History: Theory and Practice* [New York: Newbery Award Records, 1985], 32). An effort has been made to transfer as much as possible of the nitrate stock to acetate stock, the latter, used in films made past 1951, being stable. But as of 1985, the Library of Congress still had 80 million feet of nitrate film. This is not all: most color films made past 1950 (the year Eastman Kodak introduced its multi-layer film that replaced the much more stable Technicolor system) are subject to color fading. Nestor Almendros: "In ten years, the films I've made I'm sure will have vanished. The museums of the future will have lots of well preserved black and white films and nothing of our time" ("Colour Problem," *Sight & Sound* 30, no. 1 [Winter 1980–81]: 12–13). As an indication to the spectator that at that point in the film he or she is watching an earlier historical period, many color films revert to black and white, most probably because black and white preceded color in film history. It would be more appropriate to use for the contemporary section(s) filters that allow the simulation of the colors that would have resulted from the gradual fading of color film (for instance, blue and green fading results in an effect of magenta or pink), reverting to the original, intenser colors for the sections that are in the past.

<sup>168</sup> Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 24.

<sup>169</sup> René Girard, "The Plague in Literature and Myth," in *To Double Business Bound: Essays on Literature, Mimesis, and Anthropology* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1978).

<sup>170</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: Birth of the Prison*, trans. A. Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1977), 196–7.

<sup>171</sup> Are there few or no mirrors or equivalents of mirrors in Herzog's films, since he stresses that one should not get rid of pain? ("I Feel that I'm Close to

the Center of Things," 41).

<sup>172</sup> Ernest R. Hilgard, *Divided Consciousness: Multiple Controls in Human Thought and Action*, 2nd ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1986). The phenomenon of the hidden observer takes the form of covert hearing in hypnotic deafness.

<sup>173</sup> Anders Stephanson, "Regarding Postmodernism—A Conversation with Fredric Jameson," *Social Text* 17 (Fall 1987): 30.

<sup>174</sup> Luke 22:41. How incisive is the laconism of this *a stone's throw*.

<sup>175</sup> Matthew 26:36–45.

<sup>176</sup> Andreas Mavromatis, *Hypnagogia*, 20.

<sup>177</sup> André Bazin, *What is Cinema?* vol. I, 107. Both Bazin and Benjamin invoke the revolver, the former to write on the screen as the center of the universe (this is not accidental, since the moment of proscribed montage, the moment when the screen-as-center-of-the-universe becomes the clearest for Bazin is when death is close by, Chaplin and the lion having both to be within the frame-as-cage), the latter, invoking the bullet and ballistics, to write about the decentering effect of place and shot changes in film.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> François Truffaut, *Hitchcock*, with the collaboration of Helen G. Scott, rev. ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984), 256 (see also 252–254: for *North by Northwest*, an exact copy was made of the United Nation's lobby; in *The Birds*, the restaurant is an exact copy of a restaurant in Bodega Bay, and the house of the farmer who is killed by the birds is an exact replica of an existing farm there).

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 200–201.

<sup>181</sup> I am disregarding the three cuts that were imposed by the necessity of changing film rolls, and that pass imperceptibly since the respective shots end and start on a black background filling the screen.

<sup>182</sup> André Bazin, *What is Cinema?* vol. I, 105 and 107.

<sup>183</sup> "But in psychoanalytic terms, the female figure ... also connotes something that the look continually circles around but disavows: her lack of a penis, implying a threat of castration and hence unpleasure. Ultimately, the meaning of woman is sexual difference, the absence of the penis as visually ascertainable, the material evidence on which is based the castration complex essential for the organisation of entrance to the symbolic order and the law of the father. Thus the woman as icon, displayed for the gaze and enjoyment of men, the active controllers of the look, always threatens to evoke the anxiety it originally signified." Did woman originally induce anxiety? Freud: "It is self-evident to a male child that a genital like his own is to be attributed to everyone he knows ... This con-

viction is energetically maintained by boys, is obstinately defended against the contradictions which soon result from observation, and is only abandoned after severe internal struggles (the castration complex).... The assumption that all human beings have the same (male) form of genital is the first of the many remarkable and momentous sexual theories of children” (Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, volume VII [1901–1905], translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson [London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953–1974], 195). And Freud elaborates on this in the footnote added in 1920: “Both male and female children form a theory that women no less than men originally had a penis, but that they have lost it by castration.” Unlike with Mulvey, to me the castration anxiety is triggered or reactivated only in peculiar situations. In cinema, it is films where the woman is possessed by a male entity (William Friedkin’s *The Exorcist*, 1973; Rupert Wainwright’s *Stigmata*, 1999) that truly produce an anxiety of castration, since with the superimposition of a male voice over a female body, the woman is viewed at some level as a man lacking a penis. In *Stigmata*, when the lips of the possessed female protagonist, who frequently talks with a male voice, and those of the male priest almost touch, the strong feel of transgression of the shot comes not only or so much from the possible breach of the priest’s vow of chastity, but from the possible violation of the “taboo” against homosexuality (in this sense this is a film for which homosexuality is both a temptation and something whose acting out is still felt as a transgression). In *The Exorcist*, during the exorcism, one of the two priests attacks the sneering creature of *jouissance* that the possessed girl who frequently talks with a male voice has become, screaming: “You son of a bitch.” At the level of the diegesis, the threat presented by the woman possessed by a male entity is double: from the entity possessing her; from the triggering of a castration anxiety by the superimposition of a male voice over the female body. The various monstrous distortions of the woman’s features are then not so much the effect of possession—many possessions happen without such radical distortions—but of the castration anxiety; that is, they are a projection of males’ anxiety onto the woman. If, contrariwise, Oshima’s film *Empire of the Senses*, which ends with the woman strangling her lover during intense love-making, and subsequently cutting his penis, does not induce castration anxiety (but only a specific fear of death by strangulation), it is because the woman at no point gives the impression of being a man ... lacking a penis.

<sup>184</sup> François Truffaut, *Hitchcock*, 244.

<sup>185</sup> Hitchcock on the conception of the famous *North by Northwest* scene in which the protagonist is lured into flat, deserted farm country and chased by a crop-duster: “I found I was faced with the old cliché situation: the man who is put on the spot, probably to be shot. Now, how is this usually done? A dark night at a narrow intersection of the city. The waiting victim standing in a pool of light under the street lamp. The cobbles are ‘washed with the recent rains.’ A close-up of a black cat slinking along against the wall of a house. A shot of a window, with a furtive face pulling back the curtain to look out. The slow approach of a black limousine, et cetera, et cetera. Now what was the antithesis of a scene like that? No darkness, no pool of light, no mysterious figures in windows.... just bright sunshine and a blank, open countryside with barely a house or tree in which any lurking menace could hide” (Truffaut, *Hitchcock*, 256). One can paraphrase Hitchcock in relation to the necklace: all time-travel films show you a vehicle of some sort, sometimes with an array of blinking computers, as the device through which the protagonist travels back to the past; I thought that the blinking bright light that would make time travel possible would not be that of computer consoles on some vehicle, but that of jewelry.

<sup>186</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 106.

<sup>187</sup> One’s love for a truthful person may induce one to time travel in the multiverse, but for a different reason: to achieve, through the ordeal of indefinite recurrence, the will, willing the eternal recurrence of one’s love.

<sup>188</sup> It is all too natural that there be remakes of this film under the sign of the repetition compulsion.

<sup>189</sup> Nicholas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Wolf Man’s Magic Word*, trans. Nicholas Rand, fwd. Jacques Derrida (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

<sup>190</sup> *American Heritage Dictionary*.

<sup>191</sup> From Friedrich Nietzsche’s 5 January 1889 letter to Jacob Burckhardt, in *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, trans. Christopher Middleton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 347.

<sup>192</sup> Sigmund Freud, *Totem and Taboo*, 60.

<sup>193</sup> In *The Spider’s Stratagem*, in her flashback, facing the camera away from Athos who is looking out of the window with his back to her, Draifa addresses his son standing in Tara thirty six years later.

<sup>194</sup> By maintaining the singular name of the dead, I imply that I will be using it to resurrect him, to call him back to life (from *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*:

“Arise ... thou shalt not perish. Thou hast been called by name. Thou hast been resurrected”). The section “*Every Name in History is I*” in my book *Forthcoming* is dedicated to the memory of William Burroughs; Derrida’s *Aporias* is in memory of Koitchi Toyosaki. Did I try to resurrect William Burroughs? Did Derrida try to resurrect Koitchi Toyosaki? If not, the *in memoriam* should be addressed to *everyone and no one*.

<sup>195</sup> This moment is reminiscent of the scene in Raoul Ruiz’s *Life Is a Dream* (1986) when the protagonist seated in a movie theater suspects that the screams he is hearing are not coming from the projected film, but from elsewhere. For confirmation, he walks to the door at the side of the screen and opens it. He discovers that there is indeed someone being tortured in a room behind the screen! Taking the lead of Serge Daney, Gilles Deleuze defines the contemporary, third period of art as mannerist, one where the background of the image is another image. In such a historical and aesthetic period, reality can enter precisely by the back door—as a depth behind the screen.

<sup>196</sup> *Al-‘amaliyyāt al-istishbādīyya: wathā’iq wa šuwar: al-muqāwama al-waṭaniyya 1982–1985* (The martyring operations: documents and images; the Lebanese national resistance, 1982–1985)(Al-Marqaz al-‘Arabī lil-Ma’lūmāt, Beirut, 1985).

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 123. I consider Sanā’ Muḥaydlī, who introduced the new genre of videotaped testimonies of soon-to-be martyrs and a new kind of utterance, “I am the martyr (name of speaker),” as the first Lebanese video artist. “Prior to her martyrdom, Sanā’ worked in a video store in al-Muṣayṭbī area in West Beirut. During this time, she recorded 36 videotapes of the martyr Wajdi as-Šāyigh, who performed his operation against enemy forces in an area close to that where Sanā’ did her martyring operation. It is in that store that Sanā’ videotaped her testimony using a VHS camera” (Ibid., 122).

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., 180.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 206.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>204</sup> Someone who has access to better libraries than the mediocre ones currently present in Lebanon should research the locutions of the kamikazes.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>206</sup> In a way, it is true that those who like Sanā’ Yūsif Muḥaydlī are famous enough to maintain, at least for the living, a distinguishable identity are not really

dead since the dead no longer have a distinct identity.

<sup>207</sup> According to Lebanese theater director Roger ‘Assāf, theater, as opposed to technology, can and should provide us with “a living person before other living persons” (*un homme vivant en face d’autres hommes vivants*). Given that technology is heading in the direction of providing man with an indefinite life span, it is not life that has to be stressed against technology, but mortality. It is not as a simple living being but as a mortal that a human can, for a while at least, resist technology. Theater should provide us with humans *dead set* on being mortal.

<sup>208</sup> According to Derrida: “All writing ... in order to be what it is, must be able to function in the radical absence of every empirically determined addressee in general [I disagree with Derrida on this point: there can be no writing that is not an untimely collaboration with a determined albeit unknown addressee]. And this absence is not a continuous modification of presence; it is a break in presence, ‘death,’ or the possibility of the ‘death’ of the addressee, inscribed in the structure of the mark (and it is at this point, I note in passing, that the value or effect of transcendentalism is linked necessarily to the possibility of writing and of ‘death’ analyzed in this way).... What holds for the addressee holds also, for the same reasons, for the sender or the producer ... To write is to produce a mark that will constitute a kind of machine that is in turn productive, that my future disappearance in principle will not prevent from functioning ... When I say ‘my future disappearance,’ I do so to make this proposition more immediately acceptable. I must be able simply to say my disappearance, my nonpresence in general ...” (Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982], 315–316). Even if it be true that a condition of possibility of writing is that it be able to function in the radical absence, ‘death,’ or the possibility of the ‘death’ of every empirically determined addressor in general, I cannot write: “I am dead.”

<sup>209</sup> *Al-‘amaliyyāt al-istishbādīyya*, 191.

<sup>210</sup> What I am most apprehensive about is not failing to recognize the dead, for instance because he was disfigured by a fire or because he’s become reduced to a skeleton (First Clown: “... Here’s a skull now. This skull has lain in the earth three and twenty years.” Hamlet: “Whose was it?” First Clown: “A whoreson mad fellow’s it was. Whose do you think it was?” Hamlet: “Nay, I know not.” First Clown: “A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! A poured / a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir, / was Yorick’s skull, the King’s jester.” Hamlet: “This?” First Clown: “E’en that.” Hamlet: “Let me see. [*He takes the skull*] / Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio: a fellow / of infinite jest, of most

excellent fancy: he hath / borne me on his back a thousand times; and now, how / abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rims at / it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know / not how off” [*Hamlet* 5.1]); but that the one I recognize as him or her be instead actually another, an imposture, a double.

<sup>211</sup> Would a human ever wonder “Am I dead?” were humans not already dead at some level before they organically cease to live? If one’s first impression in death is of uncanniness, of an eerie familiarity, it is that we are already dead, that we have been there.

<sup>212</sup> “Am I dead?” is more assertive, indicates more certitude than “I must be dead!”

<sup>213</sup> *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 347.

<sup>214</sup> It was the thinker of aristocratic values, the one who wrote against the mixing of races, who in his dying before dying exclaimed: “Every name in history is I.” Whatever the immigration laws of one’s country, one is, as a mortal, inhabited by the other(s). There is consequently a fundamental despair of every xenophobe since as a mortal, and therefore as someone who “has” an unconscious and dreams, he or she is both inhabited by all the races and unsettled in the labyrinthine realms of undeath and the unconscious, where one cannot have the homely border of the homogeneous space of geography. The attack on the foreigner takes place not only in xenophobic laws, but also in the attempt to reduce humans to living beings, rather than mortals. While a lot of attention is directed to countering the increasingly xenophobic laws aiming at closing Europe and the USA ever more tightly against immigration, not enough attention is paid to the research being done to make of humans immortal beings.

<sup>215</sup> Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, volume XVII (1917–1919), translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953–1974), 242; Cf. Leo Tolstoy, *The Cossacks*, *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*, *Happy Ever After*, trans. with an introduction by Rosemary Edmonds (New York: Penguin Books, 1960), 137: “The example of a syllogism which he had learned in Kiezewetter’s *Logic*: ‘Caius is a man, men are mortal, therefore Caius is mortal,’ had seemed to him all his life to be true as applied to Caius but certainly not as regards himself. That Caius—man in the abstract—was mortal, was perfectly correct; but he was not Caius, nor man in the abstract: he had always been a creature quite, quite different from all others.”

<sup>216</sup> *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*,

volume XIV (1914–1916), 289. And if in his unconscious he does not believe that he *will* die, this is partly because he is already dead there.

<sup>217</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 297. Magritte’s painting *Reproduction Prohibited* (1937) shows a man in front of a mirror in which we can see a similar figure but with its back to him and us. We can view the reproduction mentioned and proscribed in the title as referring to the figure, since, subject to over-turns, a characteristic of mortals, he cannot be represented, reproduced by someone else.

<sup>218</sup> See *Discourse* 20, no. 3 (Fall 1998): 165–169; reprinted in *Forthcoming* (Atelos, 2000). While both young and old people are already undead even as they live, old people feel such conjunction more starkly and this shows in their additional solitude. The latter is not simply the solitude of someone who has lost conjointly many of his old friends to death (in this period of life *old friend* means old in age and not just known for a long time) and the easiness (if he or she ever had it in the first place) of meeting people and forming friendships, but largely that of one who increasingly presages the radical aloneness in the labyrinthine realm of undeath. Given that very old filmmakers feel distanced from the world by the approach of death, their films manifest an increasing indifference toward the audience, who are part of the world, and an abatement in effects of and occasions for identification.

<sup>219</sup> The non-concurrence also takes the form of the non-coincidence of the body with itself in out-of-the-body experiences and/or of the body with the voice (for instance a man’s voice for a woman’s body—cinema has given disconcerting examples of this: *Rashomon*, Friedkin’s *The Exorcist*).

<sup>220</sup> While proper names are substitutable in death, this is not necessarily the case with epithets—in this respect, it is symptomatic that Sanā’ Muḥaydlī’s testimony ends with: “My will is that you call me *the bride of the south*.” In which case while in death, I, Jalal Toufic, can exclaim, “I am the martyr Sanā’ Yūsif Muḥaydlī,” I cannot say: “I am *the bride of the south*.” In case epithets too are substitutable in death, then the Christian messiah’s dying for us is multiple through his various names: the Son of Man, the Son of God ...

<sup>221</sup> In Tony Chakar and Rabiḥ Mroue’s *Come in Sir, We Will Wait for You Outside*, 1998, a “moving” shot of a woman crying and wiping her eyes is “deconstructed”: we are told that the strong emotional charge conveyed by that shot required first the selection of the appropriate woman, then changing the speed of the wiping of the eyes to slow motion, then the removal of the natural sounds,

then the addition of music and a poem; and in an episode of the TV program *Image* (*Šūra*, directed by Mirna Shbaro) Mroue presents and attributes to himself as photographer photographs taken by others. At one level, in *Three Posters* Mroue is continuing these two strategies: “deconstructing” the heroic testimonies by revealing the possible unsaid in them—uncharacteristically we are frankly told by the fictional Raḥḥāl that his father went along with his joining of the communist party and even encouraged him to do so only because he thought that that was his son’s only way to get a scholarship to study in the former Soviet Union, etc.; attributing to himself fictional events: having been ambushed in Haṣḥbayya along with the other members of his communist cell by combatants from the Amal militia, etc.

<sup>222</sup> More risky than “I am comrade Khalil Aḥmad Raḥḥāl” but still less risky than “I am the martyr comrade Khalil Aḥmad Raḥḥāl” is the false information Mroue attributes to himself in *Three Posters* (see previous footnote) and giving to the fictional characters of *Extension 19* (*Muqassam 19*), 1997, his actors’ real-life names.

<sup>223</sup> “Picasso Speaks,” *The Arts* (1923).

<sup>224</sup> The freezing of the dead manifests the usual physical restlessness of objects and living humans and animals (only a perfect crystal at the absolute zero of temperature would have zero entropy), but also makes possible an obvious unnatural auto-movement of objects.

<sup>225</sup> Nancy Burson, Richard Carling and David Kramlich, *Composites: Computer-generated Portraits* (New York: Beech Tree Books, 1986).

<sup>226</sup> *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 347.

<sup>227</sup> In the case of the dead before dying Nietzsche, one of these subunits into which he dissociates and that are themselves still composites is Nietzsche, as the *every name in history is I* in his “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” implies. One can thus unfold the statement: “I am Prado, I am also Prado’s father, I venture to say that I am also Lesseps ... I am also Chambige ... I am also Nietzsche ... every name in history is I.” This implied “I am also Nietzsche” in an enumeration of the other names Nietzsche has become is most uncanny.

<sup>228</sup> *Alone with the Alone* is the English title of Henry Corbin’s book on the Sufism of Ibn ‘Arabī; in Corbin’s title the second *Alone* refers to God.

<sup>229</sup> Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, 233.

<sup>230</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Rites and Symbols of Initiation: The Mysteries of Birth and Rebirth*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Harper Torchbooks, 1975), 90.

<sup>231</sup> Gerald S. Wilkinson, “Food Sharing in Vampire Bats,” *Scientific American* (February 1990): 76.

<sup>232</sup> Le Fanu, *In a Glass Darkly*, 459.

<sup>233</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Psycho-Analytic Notes upon an Autobiographical Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides),” in *Collected Papers: Authorized Translation under the Supervision of Joan Rivière*, vol. 3 (New York: Basic Books, 1959), 396.

<sup>234</sup> Michel de Certeau, *Heterologies: Discourse on the Other*, trans. Brian Massumi, foreword by Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 35.

<sup>235</sup> *American Heritage Dictionary*.

<sup>236</sup> But do the dead suffer from any anxiety at all? If anxiety is induced in consciousness from the unconscious, then when one dies, i.e., when consciousness totally disappears, there would be no anxiety, only the unconscious like an indefinite lapse.

<sup>237</sup> Not only is there nothing free about *free association*, often the one who tries to resist it is struck with thought-blocking.

<sup>238</sup> Dziga Vertov, *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*, 20.

<sup>239</sup> The more wide-ranging the perception, the more universal the interaction, yet total observation results in freezing (Henri Bergson is right in writing that “the photograph, if photograph there be, is already taken, already developed in the very heart of things and at all the points of space” [*Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 1988), 38]).

<sup>240</sup> The guard must be intermittent in his observation, otherwise he would immobilize the ones he is guarding: the quantum Zeno effect, our contemporary version of Medusa’s gaze.

<sup>241</sup> Rimbaud to his mother, who asked him what *A Season in Hell* “*voulait dire*” (meant): “It says what it says, literally and in every sense” (“*Ça dit ce que ça dit, littéralement et dans tous les sens*”).

<sup>242</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea*, trans. Robert Baldick (Penguin Books, 1965), 58–62.

<sup>243</sup> Werner Herzog, *Of Walking in Ice*, trans. Martje Herzog & Alan Greenberg (New York: Tanam Press, 1980), 5. Eisner died on November 25, 1983. Monday, 12/14/1992: Will I ever read the last entry of *Of Walking in Ice* without crying?

<sup>244</sup> It would be felicitous for a movie theater to have the following double feature program: Dreyer’s *Ordet* and that other great film of resurrection,

Bergman's *Persona*. Near the beginning of *Persona*, there is the following series of shots: a close shot of a woman's motionless hand with the sound of dripping water; a close shot of the motionless old woman; a medium shot of a motionless child supine on a bed and covered to the chin with a white sheet; then five shots of dead people; then a high-angle close-up of the old woman over which we hear the insistent ringing of a phone. Suddenly she opens her eyes. The next shot is a wide shot of the previously seen child turning in his bed then placing glasses over his eyes and beginning to read. How is it that only very few spectators are jolted by the child's movement? How is it that so many don't notice that it signals a resurrection?

<sup>245</sup> Carl Theodor Dreyer, *Dreyer in Double Reflection*, edited and with accompanying commentary and essays by Donald Skoller (New York: Dutton, 1973), 163 (my italics).

<sup>246</sup> If I feel on the death of the other that I can no longer meet him or her, it is not because he or she no longer exists, but because death is a labyrinth, where we are lost to each other.

<sup>247</sup> Georges Bataille, "Hegel, Death and Sacrifice," trans. Jonathan Strauss, in *On Bataille*, ed. Allen Stoekl, *Yale French Studies* 78 (1990): 19–20.

<sup>248</sup> Constantin Stanislavski, *An Actor Prepares*, 54.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>250</sup> Robert G. Jahn & Brenda J. Dunne, "Consciousness, Quantum Mechanics, and Random Physical Processes," in *Bergson and Modern Thought: Towards a Unified Science*, ed. Andrew C. Papanicolaou & Pete A. Y. Gunter (Chu, Switzerland: Hardwood Academic Publishers, 1987), 295.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, 286–289, for instance figure 14.

<sup>252</sup> T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land and Other Poems* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1934), 43.

<sup>253</sup> Hilgard, *Divided Consciousness*, 258.

<sup>254</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller, with analysis of the text and foreword by J. N. Findlay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 19.

<sup>255</sup> Philip K. Dick, *Eye in the Sky* (New York: Collier Books, 1957), 195–197.

<sup>256</sup> This position induced by the 180° over-turn is in no way to be mistaken with that of the jealous person looking at us, the spectators, in Munch's *Jealousy*, away from what the woman and the man are doing *behind his back*. Notwithstanding that jealousy and anxiety have an affinity, given that they are the two paradigmatic reactions to what seems to be excessive intermingling, they are,

nonetheless, not to be confused. While Munch's *Jealousy* and *The Scream* deploy the same spatial arrangement of the three figures, in *The Scream* the turn to the frontal position in relation to the viewer of the painting is, unlike in *Jealousy*, discrete rather than gradual; and the figure is not looking at the spectator of the painting (since the figure is deserted by the world and the spectator is part of the world)—unless the spectator be an angel ("... Here. I'm waiting. / Even if the lights go out; even if someone / tells me 'That's all'; even if emptiness / floats toward me in a gray draft from the stage; / even if not one of my silent ancestors / stays seated with me, not one woman, not / the boy with the immovable brown eye— / I'll sit here anyway ... / ... am I not right / to feel as if I ... must / wait before the puppet stage, or, rather, / gaze at it so intensely that at last, / to balance my gaze, an angel has to come ..." [Rilke, "The Fourth Elegy," *Duino Elegies*]).

<sup>257</sup> Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper, 1971), 107.

<sup>258</sup> Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation)," in *Video Culture*, ed. John Hanhardt (Rochester, New York: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1986), 86.

<sup>259</sup> We have an implicit gratitude to those we recognize (the French *reconnaissance* felicitously means both gratitude and recognition), including ourselves.

<sup>260</sup> Pencil on paper, 23 x 30.7 cm, Oslo, Oslo Community Art Collection, Munch Museum.

<sup>261</sup> Crayon on plate, 75 x 57 cm, Munch Museum.

<sup>262</sup> Whether the oil, pastel and casein on cardboard, 91 x 73.5 cm, Oslo, National Gallery; or the tempera on plate, 83.5 x 66 cm, Munch Museum.

<sup>263</sup> Oil on canvas, 93 x 72 cm, Munch Museum.

<sup>264</sup> Pastel and oil on canvas, Oslo, private collection, formerly Collection Arthur von Franquet, Braunschweig.

<sup>265</sup> Oil on canvas, 67 x 100 cm, Rasmus Meyers Samlinger.

<sup>266</sup> Lithograph, 46.5 x 56.5 cm, Oslo Kommunes Kunstsamlinger.

<sup>267</sup> Oil on canvas, 89 x 82 cm, Munch Museum.

<sup>268</sup> Oil on canvas, 78 x 114 cm, Munch Museum.

<sup>269</sup> "Now that you have finished the video you came to Beirut to make, why don't you leave?" He, observant of the traffic lights, wanted to stay in Beirut at least until the occasion presented itself when he would exceptionally pass the red one; this happened on January 3, 2000, during a shootout between army and police forces and a gunman who had fired rocket-propelled grenades at the Russian Embassy at Corniche Mazra'a in Beirut in solidarity with Muslim rebels

in Chechnya and then held a woman hostage.

<sup>270</sup> “Theo Angelopoulos in Conversation with Gideon Bachmann,” *Film Comment* (July–August, 1998).

<sup>271</sup> Is it the flower that the resurrected woman of Blanchot’s *Death Sentence* hallucinates? Is it the flower resurrected in both Cocteau’s *The Testament of Orpheus* and Godard’s *King Lear*?

<sup>272</sup> Daniel Paul Schreber, *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, trans. and ed. Ida Macalpine and Richard A. Hunter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 49, footnote 6, and 357–358.

<sup>273</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (London: The Athlone Press, 1990), 90.

<sup>274</sup> Cf. Qur’ān 15:65: “Therefore go forth with your followers in a part of the night and yourself follow their rear, and let not any one of you turn round, and go forth whither you are commanded.”

<sup>275</sup> As a consequence, they continued to walk in the same direction despite their turn. The labyrinthine, which is linked to the over-turn, is foreshadowed in Lot’s Biblical story: “Then they [the angels] struck the men who were at the door of the house, young and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door” (Genesis 19:11).

<sup>276</sup> Cf. Qur’ān 15:70: “They said: Have we not forbidden you from (other) people?” Yes they had forbidden him from people; this implies that his wife was not one. “And the people of the town came rejoicing. He said: Surely these are my guests, therefore do not disgrace me, and guard against (the punishment of) Allāh and do not put me to shame” (Qur’ān 15:67–69).

<sup>277</sup> This essay was delivered on January 27, 2000, as part of a series of lectures and readings that accompanied Musée Nicolas Sursock’s exhibition *Kahlil Gibran: Horizons of the Painter*. My friend Etel Adnan had shortly before, on 11 January 2000, also given a lecture in relation to the same exhibit, titled “Khalil Gibran and Georges Shéhadé.” Were one in a less degenerate period of Arab culture, it would be Gibran who would be asked, through a mediumistic séance rather than a media one (séances were forerunner of our media), to speak—as best he can—on or draw the two authors of *The Arab Apocalypse* and *Forthcoming*, he who was wont to draw thinkers and poets (Carl Gustav Jung, William Butler Yeats, Rabindranath Tagore, etc.).

<sup>278</sup> While the eloquence of the orator and/or demagogue is in speaking (with words and punctuating silence), the eloquence of prayer is in listening.

<sup>279</sup> Prayer is not restricted to religion: since during the filming of her *India*

*Song* Duras played back for the actors the dialogue of the voices-over, the characters on screen, who appear to be continuously listening, are praying throughout the film.

<sup>280</sup> Cf. Luke 2:10: “An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.”

<sup>281</sup> From the letter the poet wrote to Lou Andreas-Salomé the evening of February 11, 1922, just after finishing *Duino Elegies*.

<sup>282</sup> In contrast, Oedipus and his father at the crossroads are both late on time: late in relation to the oracle that foretold that the first will kill the second, on time in relation to the present of its actualization.

<sup>283</sup> This characteristic of the angel, that he does not arrive, is missed in *Wings of Desire* since Wenders follows the two angels.

<sup>284</sup> While some oracles may seem impossible, their interpretation or a concatenation of coincidences reveals that they are not really so. Therefore what the oracle announces is not an event.

<sup>285</sup> While Jesus’ raising from the dead is an event, as it was announced by him as the impossible to happen (indeed two men in clothes that gleam like lightning suddenly stand beside the women who went with spices to his tomb, and remind them: “Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again’” [Luke 24:6–7]); his intentional going to and living “in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali—to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah [“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— ... on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned” (16 Isaiah 9:1–2)]” (Matthew 4:15–16), is not one.

<sup>286</sup> Similarly, on being told by the angel, “Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son ...”, Zechariah asked the angel: “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years” (Luke 1:13–18). To the LORD’s annunciation to Abraham, “As for Sarai your wife ... I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her,” Abraham laughed and said to himself: “Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?” (Genesis 17:15–17; cf. Genesis 18:1–12 for Sarah’s similar incredulous response).

<sup>287</sup> Paul Virilio, *The Information Bomb*, trans. Chris Turner (London: Verso, 2000), 127.

288 “Unlike you I see something in all that ‘transmission’ of things. I see angels—which, incidentally, in case you didn’t know, comes from the ancient Greek word for messengers. Take a good look around. Air hostesses and pilots; radio messages; all the air crew just flown in from Tokyo and just about to leave for Rio; those dozen aircraft neatly lined up ... as they wait to take off; yellow postal vans delivering parcels, packets and telegrams; staff calls over the tannoy; all these bags passing in front of us on the conveyor; endless announcements for Mr X or Miss Y recently arrived from Stockholm or Helsinki; boarding announcements for Berlin and Rome, Sydney and Durban; passengers ... hurrying for taxis and shuttles ... Don’t you see—what we have here is angels of steel, carrying angels of flesh and blood, who in turn send angel signals across angel air waves ...” Michel Serres, *Angels: A Modern Myth*, trans. Francis Cowper, ed. Philippa Hurd (Paris: Flammarion, 1995), 8.

289 Martin Heidegger, “Only a God Can Save Us Now,” trans. D. Schendler, *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 6, no. 1 (1977).

290 We can only prepare for the coming of the messiah without forcing the end if the one who then proclaims the messianic advent does so in the name of another, and is only later revealed as himself the messiah. This is how the proclamation of the Great Resurrection (*al-qiyāma al-kubra*, aka *Qiyāmat al-qiyāma*) by the Nizārī Ḥasan ‘alā *dhikrihi’l-salām* (on his mention be peace) happened: he first proclaimed it in the name of another, the still occulted imam, then was himself revealed as the imam.

291 In Musée Nicolas Sursock’s exhibition *Kahlil Gibran: Horizons of the Painter*, where I first saw this watercolor, it seemed as out of place amidst Gibran’s other drawing and paintings as an angel in the world. Gibran certainly came a very long way between his drawings circa 1904 of angels with their conventional wings and the 1923 angel with mountainous wings.

292 When entities exist not in the world but in light, there is no alternation of day and night, for night, the absence of light, would then be the absence of entities. In eternity, even “the night is a sun” (Zarathustra, the epigraph of Bataille’s *Inner Experience*).

293 Even were advances in genetics and medicine to prolong human life indefinitely, the bodies of humans, who with their unconscious are mortal, will continue to be virtually cadaverous, with the consequence that gravity will subsist.

294 Ernie Gehr’s film *Serene Velocity* has the perfect title for a work on light, since at light’s speed, which is absolute (*velocity*), time slows down to zero (*serene*).

295 Even the cherubim who barred Adam and Eve’s way back to paradise

(“After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life” [Genesis 3:24]) did so while kneeling before them.

296 Jesus Christ said to a walking man: “Rise up!” The man’s body changed into one that was no longer virtually cadaverous. How can you reach Heaven when you are dragged down by the cadaver you contain? Crucified Jesus Christ’s ascension was first physically in place: that of his body as it became no longer a cadaver even potentially or virtually, but only a corpse. As he ascended through the angelic heavenly hierarchies, while his pierced and bloodied body confused them as to his nature, the circumstance that they did not feel constrained to fall prostrate in front of him clued them that while his body was human it was a resurrected one. In their consequent adoration, none of them knelt.

297 Cees Nooteboom, *The Following Story*, trans. Ina Rilke (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994), 9: “If one is immortal oneself, the stench emanating from mortals must be intolerable.” Gods who incarnate in humans suffer both the fall of the virtual cadaver, and the smell of putrefaction any immortal senses in the vicinity of any mortal.

298 In the Old Testament, the names that the angel of the Lord gives have meaning, are descriptions. This intimates that angels do not have a proper understanding of names, of proper names. The angels knew the names Man and Woman, but not Adam and Eve. Angels wait for us in the present not only because, eternal, they reach it before us, but also because they do not know how to interpellate us since they do not use our names as proper names but as characterizations. The New International Version for Genesis 16:11 should read: “The angel of the LORD also said to her: ‘You are now with child and you will have a son. You shall name him God Hears [*Ishmael*], for the LORD has heard of your misery’”; and for Genesis 17:5, it should be: “No longer will you be called Exalted Father [*Abram*]; your name will be Father of Many [*Abraham*] for I have made you a father of many nations.” Can we say that Islam’s God cannot be interpellated, only his names? Yes, but only if we bear in mind that *Dhul-Jalāl wa’l-Ikrām* (The Lord of Majesty and Bounty) and the other names of Islam’s God are angelic ones, i.e., they are how the angels understand names (insofar as we understand God’s names as attributes rather than as proper names, we are angelic). Should we then conclude that mortals cannot interpellate the immortal God of Islam? Why and how then do they pray? They can interpellate him by means of prayer only through Him: “I [God] am his hearing ... and his tongue through which he speaks” (*Ḥadīth qudsī*).

An echo of the Godly and angelic understanding of names can still be heard in mortals' naming. "Adam named his wife Eve [*Eve* probably means *living*], because she would become the mother of all the living" (Genesis 3:20); "Adam lay with his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth [*Seth* probably means *granted*], saying, 'God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him'" (Genesis 4:25); "Two sons were born to Eber: One was named Peleg [*Peleg* means *division*], because in his time the earth was divided; his brother was named Joktan" (Genesis 10:25); "The first to come out was red, and his whole body was like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau [*Esau* may mean *hairy*; he was also called *Edom*, which means *red*]. After this, his brother came out, with his hand grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob [*Jacob* means *he grasps the heel* (figuratively, *he deceives*)]" (Genesis 25:25–26); "Esau said, 'Isn't he rightly named Jacob? He has deceived me these two times: He took my birthright, and now he's taken my blessing!'" (Genesis 27:36).

We are to consider that each time the angel addresses someone or invokes someone by a proper name, this is happening either:

— In a dream: "The angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob.' I answered, 'Here I am.' And he said, 'Look up and see that all the male goats mating with the flock are streaked, speckled or spotted, for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you'" (Genesis 31:11–12); "But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit'" (Matthew 1:20); "When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. 'Get up,' he said, 'take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him'" (Matthew 2:13).

— Or following Adam's informing the angels of the names. What does "and when he [Adam] had informed them [the angels] of their names" mean? He taught the angels to call someone no longer He Grasps the Heel but Jacob.

— Or, in instances in the New Testament, because we are dealing with a mortal God, one who has, in the figure of the Son, a proper name and who thus understands proper names, and therefore one whose angels, relaying his messages, can utter proper names—even without themselves understanding them. "The angel answered, 'I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news'" (Luke 1:19); "But the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God'" (Luke 1:30); "But the angel said to him: 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard.

Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John'" (Luke 1:13).

<sup>299</sup> Daniel Paul Schreber, *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, 75.

<sup>300</sup> The heavenly Father sent his Son into the Garden of Eden prior to sending him to be born of Mary, giving him the same instruction he gave to Adam: not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It is partly in this sense that Jesus Christ is "the second Adam" (Paul 1 Corinthians 15:47; cf. Qur'an 3:59: "Lo! the likeness of Jesus with Allah is as the likeness of Adam"). Thus the heavenly Father's sacrifice was more radical than that of just allowing his Son to die on the cross: He allowed for the possibility of His Son's true mortality were the latter to choose, like Adam, to eat first of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But Christ resisted this temptation, eating first from the tree of life; we can glean this from John 11:25: "I am the resurrection and the life." Only then did he eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Christ is thus not really a mortal, not in the full sense of the word, not in the sense in which Adam is, and it is because of this that although he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and although he died on the cross, he "was unquestionably without sin" (Augustine). "He took upon Himself not only the nature of man, a nature capable of suffering and sickness and death, He became like a man in all save only sin" (cf. Suarez, "De Incarnatione," Praef. n. 5): these words can be true only if Christ did not take upon himself full death. For the imam to be *ma'sūm* (infallible, sinless), he must not "have" an unconscious; must not dream or else have only visionary dreams; must not commit any parapraxis; must have no subjective imagination attached to the individual alone (in the terminology of Ibn al-'Arabī, *khayāl muttasil*), but only an objective, separate imagination (*khayāl munfaṣil*); and must not die, that is, must not fall for the temptation of mortality. Considering them from this perspective and symptomatically, we can better appreciate the *Wāqifiyya* (the ones who hesitate or stop), those who deny the death of a particular imam (and consequently refuse to recognize any later imams), believing that he is concealed and will return. We see this phenomenon already with regards to the first imam, 'Alī, with the *Saba'iyya*; with regards to aṣ-Ṣādiq, with the *Ja'fariyya* or *Nāwūsīyya*; with regards to Muḥammad al-Bāqir, with the *Bāqiriyya*; with regards to Mūsā al-Kāzīm, with the *Mūsawiyya* or *Mamṭūra* ("the rained-upon," the name given to them by their enemies), the *Bajaliyya* and the *Bashiriyya*; with regards to 'Alī ar-Riḍā, with the *Mu'allifa*, etc.

<sup>301</sup> It is certainly a poor view of the richness of the Qur'an to think that it sometimes repeats the same scene and episode, that there is repetition in the

absolutely infinite. Every time a story or a line or an episode in the Qurʾān (for instance the heavenly prostration scene) is ostensibly repeated, it has to be given different *taʾwīls*, interpretations. By taking into consideration just the heavenly prostration scene (Qurʾān 2, 7, 15, 17, 18, 20, 38), there are 7 varieties of Iblīs.

<sup>302</sup> “*S’appeler* (= *être nommé*) to be called; *il s’appelle Paul*: his name is Paul, he’s called Paul” (*Le Robert & Collins Senior, Dictionnaire Français-Anglais/Anglais-Français*, 5th ed). *Je m’appelle*: I am called, but literally: I call myself. French is better than English and Arabic at conveying the relation of naming oneself to being named by others, how the latter virtually presupposes the former. And it is to the French language that we have to resort to best render what takes place in front of the mirror: a *sous-entendu* interpellation (animals are not really mortals, are not subject to over-turns and thus do not implicitly call themselves in front of the mirror and therefore have no proper names). It is thus felicitous and probably not accidental that it is a French-speaking painter, the Belgian René Magritte, who did the most fundamental painting of the back, of the relation of the back of a mortal, of someone who is subject to over-turns, to the proper name.

<sup>303</sup> “When did you first feel sure that he loved you?” “When he asked me to repeat my pronunciation of his name.” It is almost impossible not to love a woman whose manner of saying my name implies that during the wake around my corpse, and unlike the other mourners, she would not treat the corpse as just an object, but would if not resurrect me then at least counter the over-turn I undergo in death by calling me in her appealing manner. It was the first time that the vampire asked someone to re-call him, to repeat pronouncing his name. “You have to kill him: he’s not Dracul, he’s only a simulacrum of Dracul.” “I cannot kill him, I love him.” She put the stake away and called him by his name, resurrecting him. While the spiritual master treats me as already dead even while I live, calling me by my allonym, my other name, my esoteric name; my lover will treat me as alive even when I am dead, and will call me to life by my name. The correct way to call me as a living person is not the way I pronounce my name, since my image in the mirror does not respond to it when I am dead (exception: Narcissus. What Narcissus, a mortal, thus someone subject to over-turns, loved when he looked at the lake’s water was not so much his reflection there, but his pronunciation of his name during the *sous-entendu* successful interpellation of himself in the lake. He jumped in the lake not to rejoin his image in the water but out of total trust that he could resurrect himself. What he overlooked was that to resurrect someone, it is not enough to call him with the right name and manner to undo the over-turn; one must also help him succeed to overcome the indefinite

fall that his cadaver is. It seems that while Narcissus succeeded in the first, he failed in the second). The correct way to call me as a living person is rather the way my lover pronounces my name, and this even if her native language belongs to a different linguistic family (pronouncing for example the “h” in “Alḥmad” as an “h”), i.e., even if my lover seemingly can never pronounce my name “right.” When she asked him to marry her, his answer was: “It is unfitting for me to marry you since you pronounce my name in such an appealing manner!” The one who pronounces my name in the most appealing manner is the one who will resurrect me, therefore the one whom I will probably love but not marry, since the one I marry will de jure not resurrect me but rather follow me into the underworld, where we will be parted by the labyrinth there.

304

11/20/2001

Paul Perry:

Referring to an aphorism on page 29 of my book *Over-Sensitivity* (1996), and to a discussion following one of my lectures at DasArts, you write in your 3 November 2001 entry in <http://www.alamut.com>: “It seems that Jalal has done a theoretical about-face on the issue of whether or not objects (or artworks) can ‘self-liberate.’ He now believes that only mortals (who possess both consciousness as well as a proper name thus excluding, in his view, objects or animals) have the potential to do this.” This is not an accurate rendition of what I said following the lecture. I still think that objects can *self-liberate*, but I no longer consider that an object has an allonym (which I do not take as “the name of a person, usually a historical person, assumed by a writer [*American Heritage Dictionary*], but, following its etymology [Greek *allos*, other; see allo- + Greek *onoma*, name; see n-men-], as the other name, the one we may be given after an initiation, and/or the one to which we may respond in bardo states or on the Day of Judgment), since I presently consider that, with the possible exception of those animals, such as chimpanzees and orangutans, etc., who can recognize themselves in a mirror (See Gordon Gallup, Jr., “Can Animals Empathize? Yes,” *Scientific American Presents* 9, no. 4 [Winter 1998]: 66, 68–71, 76; Daniel J. Povinelli, “Can Animals Empathize? Maybe Not,” *ibid.*: 67, 72–75, 76), only humans are mortals and therefore have proper names (See the section “Letter to Lyn Hejinian: On Names” in my book *Forthcoming*).

<sup>305</sup> *American Heritage Dictionary*.

<sup>306</sup> *The Station Hill Blanchot Reader*, 144.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid., 134.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>311</sup> The testament is to maintain the notion that the dead has a will. It is likely that the legal system exists more to grant a will to those who no longer have one than to institute laws for the living. All testaments are forged.

<sup>312</sup> In 1972, Anne Rice's 5-year-old daughter, Michelle, died of Leukemia. While writing her first vampire book, and "unaware of the significance of what she was doing, she added a beautiful little girl with golden curls (like Michelle), whom the vampires save from mortal death by making her a vampire ... The first version ended with the child, Claudia, and Louis happily joining other vampires in Paris. In the revision, 'I felt that Claudia had really been meant to die at the end of "Interview" the way Michelle had died ..."' "In cheating"—that is, in allowing Claudia to live,—Rice says she did herself psychic damage: 'I almost died myself and went kind of crazy. I saw germs on everything and washed my hands 50 times and really cracked up ... If somebody is meant to die and you don't do it, you're really risking your well-being at the end of the book,'" Susan Ferraro, "Novels You Can Sink Your Teeth Into," *The New York Times Magazine*, October 14, 1990, 74 and 76.

<sup>313</sup> *The Station Hill Blanchot Reader*, 142. Elsewhere he writes: "Today I try without success to understand why I stayed away from Paris then, when everything was calling me back ..." (138).

<sup>314</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, trans. Stephen Mitchell (New York: Random House, 1983), 14–15.

<sup>315</sup> With the successful gradual democratization of immortality and the afterlife in ancient Egypt, which changed from the prerogative of the Pharaoh, a god, to become something to which first the high functionaries, then the rich merchants, then a majority of Egyptians could lay claim, a heightened awareness of the importance of death must have spread to large strata of the population and must have led to a polarization. For those who could hope to have an afterlife, a lightening of the dying ordeal must have ensued, since what was important was what preceded death: life as the occasion to prepare all the conditions for a good afterlife (the building of the tomb, the provision for mortuary offerings, etc.); and what followed it (the opening of the mouth ceremony, the continuing preservation of the mummy, the perpetuation of the mortuary offerings, etc.). For some of those who were still excluded from laying claim to such an afterlife, the consequence was rather an exacerbation of their dying, which must have become

awesome.

<sup>316</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, 9.

<sup>317</sup> I presume that Thomas Bernhard outlived his doctor's prognostic deadline (*Wittgenstein's Nephew*) because the diagnosis on which it was based was erroneous.

<sup>318</sup> Cf. "When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?' They replied, 'Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' 'But what about you?' he asked. 'Who do you say I am?'" (Matthew 16:13–15).

<sup>319</sup> Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977), 290: "Giving in love what she does not have."

<sup>320</sup> Since the fictional vampire already undergoes dreamlike events all night long, it would be inelegant to make him sleep therefore possibly dream during the day.

<sup>321</sup> Serge Daney, *Ciné Journal, 1981–1986*, preface by Gilles Deleuze (Paris: Cahiers du Cinéma, 1986), 125.

<sup>322</sup> See Paul Virilio, *The Aesthetics of Disappearance*, trans. Philip Beitchman (New York: Semiotext[e], 1991), on petit mal and the editing it makes possible.

<sup>323</sup> Oliver Sacks, *Awakenings* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1990), 112–113. A koan in relation to Susan Morrissey's painting *Have a Ball Sw'heart*, 1987: "How to juggle one ball without letting ten fall?"

<sup>324</sup> Ibid., 21–22.

<sup>325</sup> André Bazin, *What is Cinema?* vol. I, 107.

<sup>326</sup> The first time we see Dracula walking in the streets of 1897 London in Coppola's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992), we hear the sound of a film projector and see the passersby move in a manner reminiscent of that of people in silent films (which for the most part were shot at 18 frames per second but are projected at 24 frames per second).

<sup>327</sup> *Autobiography of a Schizophrenic Girl*, with an analytical interpretation by Marguerite Sechehaye (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1979), 37.

<sup>328</sup> The prepubescent female dancer's body includes a second one: not the material body a pregnant woman gives the fertilized egg to become a fetus, but the virtual dancer she projects into the altered realm of dance.

<sup>329</sup> While there is flattening and immobilization at the black hole's event horizon, is there also a framing (another element we associate with photographs)?

<sup>330</sup> Cf. Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 103: "In the first centuries of the Sufi movement the idea was already being expressed that in the hands of the master

the *murīd* [disciple] should be as passive as a corpse in the hands of an undertaker.”

<sup>331</sup> Burhān ‘Alawiyya’s film *Kafr Qāsim* manifests this magnification effect with its shots of Palestinian fields, plains, and valleys aurally covered by the broadcast voice of ‘Abd an-Nāṣir.

<sup>332</sup> The Lebanese theatre artist Rabiḥ Mroue told me that he was intrigued by the circumstance that in none of the many dreams of falling he had did he ever hit the ground. He postulated the following hypothesis: were one to hit the ground one would actually die, in reality. Notwithstanding his arresting hypothesis, I would rather advance that if one does not hit the ground, it is that the sleeping body is cadaverous, therefore already an *infinite* fall.

<sup>333</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Notebook of Malte Laurids Brigge*, 10.

<sup>334</sup> If there’s a necessary link between the great voice and the death-size body (‘Abd an-Nāṣir, Umm Kulthūm, Rilke’s moribund Chamberlain Christoph Detlev Brigge), then Hitler was deprived of (the manifestation of) his death-size body by the circumstances of the end of the Second World War.

<sup>335</sup> Since in Christianity the Fall has been countered by the incarnation and consequent resurrection of Christ, the second Adam, I would expect such tremendous funerary processions to be more frequent in Islam and Judaism, two religions that believe in the Fall but do not believe that it has been countered by a messiah/*qā’im* (exception: the Nizāris of the Great Resurrection between 1164 and 1210).

<sup>336</sup> Gail Kligman, *The Wedding of the Dead: Ritual, Poetics, and Popular Culture in Transylvania* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).

<sup>337</sup> “The Aftereffects of Hypnosis,” in Ernest R. Hilgard, *Hypnotic Susceptibility*, with a chapter by Josephine R. Hilgard (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1965), 58.

<sup>338</sup> François duc de La Rochefoucauld, *Reflections: Or Sentences and Moral Maxims*, trans. J. W. Willis Bund and J. Hain Friswell (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1898), maxim 26.

<sup>339</sup> Daniel Paul Schreber, *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*, 126.

<sup>340</sup> In Syberberg’s cinema it is space itself that imagines and remembers by means of the frontal projection.

<sup>341</sup> There is no excuse for Wenders’ betrayal of Nicholas Ray in *Lightning Over Water*, since around the same period he made a film, *Reverse Angle*, critical of Coppola’s betrayal of him during *Hammett*.

<sup>342</sup> Franz Kafka, *The Complete Stories*, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), 254–6.

<sup>343</sup> The former unconscious remains open to chronology (for instance the

hypnotist may, when faced during ideomotor signaling with the raising of the finger that signals an unwillingness to answer, address the subject’s unconscious and suggest that it work on the issue in question till the next meeting, when it is to be ready and willing to answer), and to implication (“You will fall asleep” given in the tricky form of an implication: “You may fall asleep very soon, or in five minutes”).

<sup>344</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* and *The Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Francis Golffing (New York: Anchor Books, 1990), 12.

<sup>345</sup> The edit as lapsus (in Murnau’s film, telepathy does not apply at the level of content only [Mina is telepathic], but also at the formal level).

<sup>346</sup> Lyotard, *Heidegger and “the jews”*, 16.

<sup>347</sup> The historical figure Dracula practiced impalement; in Stoker’s novel we have an inversion and Dracula, now a vampire, has to be killed by impaling.

<sup>348</sup> From the advent of Wodiczko’s projections, one can imagine buildings being constructed from materials that absorb the light that he projects on them: *stealth buildings*.

**About the Author:**

Jalal Toufic is a writer, film theorist, and video artist. He is the author of *Distracted* (Station Hill, 1991; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Tuumba, 2003), *(Vampires): An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film* (Station Hill, 1993; 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Post-Apollo Press, 2003), *Over-Sensitivity* (Sun & Moon, 1996), *Forthcoming* (Atelos, 2000), and *Undying Love, or Love Dies* (Post-Apollo Press, 2002). His video and installation works, which include *Credits Included: A Video in Red and Green* (1995), *Radical-Closure Artist with Bandaged Sense Organ* (1997), *Overlooking the Unsightly to See* (2000), *The Sleep of Reason: This Blood Spilled in My Veins* (2002), and *‘Áshūrā’: This Blood Spilled in My Veins* (2002), have been presented at Artists Space, New York; the San Francisco Cinematheque, the Lab and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco; Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley; UCLA Film and TV Archive; Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona; Witte de With, Rotterdam; the National Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens; Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels; YYY Artists’ Outlet, Toronto; Centre international de poésie, Marseille; BüroFriedrich, Berlin; Townhouse Gallery, Cairo; Madina Theater and Théâtre de Beyrouth. He is a member of the Arab Image Foundation ([www.fai.org.lb](http://www.fai.org.lb)). He co-edited the special *Discourse* issue *Gilles Deleuze: A Reason to Believe in this World*, and edited the special *Discourse* issues *Middle Eastern Films Before Thy Gaze Returns to Thee* and the forthcoming *Mortals to Death*. Toufic has taught at the University of California at Berkeley, California Institute of the Arts, USC, San Francisco State University, and DasArts (Amsterdam), and he is currently Head of the MA program in Film/Video Studies at the Department of Visual and Performing Arts, Holy Spirit University, Lebanon.

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. Both of his books [*Distracted* and (*Vampires*)] knocked me out; totally original, totally fascinating.

Richard Foreman, Artistic Director of the Ontological-Hysteric Theater, and a MacArthur Fellow

Jalal Toufic is one of the best writers in America today... and his first 2 books, *Distracted* and (*Vampires*), are some of the best writing of the past 20 years.

John Zorn, *Film Works IV*

This complex and disruptive, stylistically heterogeneous and hermeneutically subversive text [*Over-Sensitivity*] continues the project of Toufic’s earlier book, (*Vampires*): *An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film*, in which the exigencies of avant-garde film... inform a broader reading of narrative structure, iconology, and epistemology. In this context, the author undertakes... the study of the previously neglected domain of narration from the point of view of the dead, inaugurating a major theme in which popular and traditional rituals intersect with the avant-garde.

Allen S. Weiss, *Sulfur* 42, Spring 1998

Relentlessly uncompromising and sometimes exasperating, Toufic’s radical and visionary poetics gird the reader to forge ahead into uncharted territory.... One could not find in current film theory anything as suggestive or useful as Toufic’s writing on the relationship of medieval Islamic philosophy to certain contemporary Central Asian and Middle Eastern cinematography.... Toufic’s interest in figures and movements sometimes considered heretical in the Islamic and Jewish traditions (the Nizaris, certain Shi’ites, the cabalists) opens the way to significant reevaluations of entire historical eras and relationships between languages, cultures, and peoples. In his insistence upon treating the dead as a great part of the potential force of this world, Toufic plumbs the poetics of disaster and recuperation in ways that remain both incredibly suggestive and relentlessly radical.

*Village Voice Literary Supplement*, April 2001

No brief comment can adequately describe this book [*Undying Love, or Love Dies*]; it is impossible even to categorize it. But this is true of Nietzsche’s writings, too, and it is with Nietzsche that I can most readily compare Jalal Toufic. Like Nietzsche, Toufic is a writer of philosophical aphorisms, manifestations of the intensest of experiences under pressure of incomparable intelligence. But Nietzsche was no miniaturist, and neither is Toufic. The pressure that the thinking must withstand makes the writing remarkably concise, but its power is enormous, its scope vast, its effect sweeping... There is, in my opinion, no more subtle or powerful thinker today than Jalal Toufic, and none whose ideas are, in the end, more beautiful.

Lyn Hejinian, author of *My Life* and *The Language of Inquiry*,  
Professor at the University of California at Berkeley

