

*Notes on* **The World of Jalal Toufic**

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All the books of Toufic, with a number of lectures can be found on his website: <http://www.jalaltoufic.com>. In these notes I use this list of abbreviations regarding the books of Jalal Toufic:

- DS: Distracted
- VP: Vampires
- OS: Over-Sensitivity
- FR: Forthcoming
- UL: Undying Love or Love Dies
- AS: Ashura, this blood spilled in my veins
- TT: Two or three things I am dying to tell you
- UB: Undeserving Lebanon
- GR: Graziella: The Corrected Edition
- WT: Withdrawal of tradition past a surpassing disaster
- TR: Thinking the Ruin
- SM: What is the sum of recurrently?
- PP: Portrait of a Pubescent Girl
- WY: What were you thinking?
- SD: The Subtle dancer
- DB: The Dancer's two bodies
- WI: What was I thinking?

The articles abbreviations are the following:

- AFC: The Future of the Creative Image
- AUC: Untimely Collaboration
- ADD: Dying Before Dying or Living to Tell the Tale
- ACF: The Contemporary is Still Forthcoming

### **Note to the reader**

This written piece, *The World of Jalal Toufic*, is based on the notes of a course I gave in AUB in the spring semester of 2020-2021. The semester was interrupted by Covid and hence I made some audio recordings for my students. These recordings are available by following this link [These notes consist mainly in compiling the insights of Toufic on a number of concepts, themes, etc. This organized compilation can be used to get familiar with Toufic's thought or used to read different texts pertaining to one concept. As such these notes are not a finished reconstruction of the Toufican thought system but a prelude to such a construction.](#)

## 01. Methodology: Creative and aphoristic writing

### Resurrecting Tradition

We can read Toufic work as a proposition to revive, if not resurrect, the Arab-Persian-Turkish cultures. In the translation of his book, *The Withdrawal of Tradition Past a Surpassing Disaster*, Toufic wanted to include a section translated in Ottoman. As Toufic puts it: “How felicitous to see Turkish, Arabic, and Persian, three languages that belong to three language families...again in the same text, all the more so when this happens to be one of my texts. Indeed my project for this translation was conceived in part as a contribution toward the creative resumption of an Arabo-Persian-Turkish culture.” (WY, 132) As we will see Toufic draws from these traditions to build an overall system of thought that can be characterized by the inclusion of unworldly realms in the evaluation and assessment of our world. The different realms that Toufic explores are those of the Undead, the Imaginal, Dance, Hell and Paradise, etc. These alternative realms allow Toufic to have *two perspectives* on the different topics he wants to deal with, and it is this double perspective that allows him to re-evaluate the value and meaning of the different phenomena: “Indeed it is the case that those who have access to and make use of two perspectives, for example William S. Burroughs, who was able to look out from the optic of addiction towards healthier concepts and values, and vice versa, and I, who was able to look out from the optic of death (before dying physically) towards vital values and mundane concepts, and vice versa, have proved to be those best equipped for the task of a “reevaluation of values.”” (WY, 85) It is in this sense that we need to understand prerogatives such as the building an Avant-guard Army of the Mahdi in order to revive Shi’ism and to set its genuine task as that of the exploration of the topology of the Imaginal World: “Oh Shi’ites, wake up by dying before dying (physically), be the religious avant-garde so that we, who are the Arabic philosophical and artistic avant-garde, can be your allies...While Shi’ites appear presently able neither to contribute to the colonization of the lifeless regions of the galaxy and beyond nor to cutting-edge exploration of simulation and virtual reality, they should, in a complementary manner, contribute to the exploration of ‘âlam al-khayâl, the Imaginal World...I would like to think that even during that war, one or more Lebanese Twelver Shi’ites were exploring the (subtly changing) topography of ‘âlam al-khayâl, of Hûrqalyâ, Jâbalqâ, Jâbarsâ, the Eighth Climate. To be a member of the army of the Mahdî one has first to volunteer to do so, where the Mahdî is or at least where he can be met during his Greater Occultation from this world, in ‘âlam al-khayâl—by the time al-Mahdî, the (divinely) Guided One, returns to Earth, it will be too late to volunteer to join his army.” (UB, 81-83) The overall project of Toufic is then threefold: 1) to explore the unworldly dimensions of the Undead, Dance, the Imaginal World, and Revelation; 2) to build a double perspectivism that will allow the reevaluation of all values from the vantage point of coupling the worldly and the unworldly view points; 3) to build an Army of the Mahdi whose task will be to explore the variations in the topography of the Imaginal and other unworldly realms.

### Deserving Lebanon

Another task that Toufic advocates for is that of deserving Lebanon. This is a more local or a particular aspect of his project even though a crucial one given that it is in the Lebanese Wars that the unworldly dimensions that Toufic experienced became an actual collective experience. For Toufic the problem with post-war intellectual and artistic production

concerned with the Lebanese Wars is that of deserving Lebanon, i.e. of being able to produce the proper concepts, images, etc. that will reflect the nature of the Lebanese Wars. This nature is assessed by Toufic as that of a labyrinthine space-time, hence akin to the Undead realm. Deserving Lebanon will consist then, broadly speaking, in showing how the Undead realm manifests itself in the labyrinthine space-time of the wars. We can the Lebanese Wars are then a particular case study that shows the fecundity of the perspective the Undead realm on wars: “The issue for me with regards to Lebanon was, for a long time, to merit what happened during the protracted civil-war and the Israeli invasion of 1982. I thought that thinkers, writers and artists should not leave the war and the civil-war and its aftermath to the victims and the criminals; that while it was the basic task of others to bring the criminals to justice, thinkers, writers and artists have to complement this basic task with creating concepts and artistic works that make us merit what has happened to us instead of feeling that we are victims.” (UB, 14) Hence, the task of the thinkers is to create concepts and works of art that will make them deserve the war and what happened instead of being only victims or carry the basic task of punishing the criminals. The Amnesty Law of the 28 March 1991 (Law No. 84/91) was made between the living to the expense of the dead while it must have been made between the living and the dead. Justice as such is not enough and can become a temptation not to interpret and hence not to deserve the event. The Lebanese don’t deserve the war not because they are pawns, victims, innocent, etc. but because they haven’t interpreted the closure of Beirut, martyr videotapes, and the like. This interpretative task will be the only ethical one, because only by building this understanding of what happened can one become worthy of what happened (UB, 13). We can say then that the relation to the Lebanese Wars is double, 1) the Lebanese Wars give rise to an actual labyrinthine experience, 2) this experience must be raised to a whole cultural system that will include retro-actively the experience of the Lebanese Wars. In other terms we can interpret the work of Toufic as an attempt to produce a whole system of thought that stems from the Lebanese Wars even though it can’t be reduced to these wars.

### **Writing as a collaborating with the undead**

It remains that the insight that Toufic had on the labyrinthine nature of the Lebanese Wars didn’t stem from these wars but from an experience he had during his days of study in the U.S.A where he experienced undeath after taking LSD in 1989 in Evanston (DS, 108). In an interview held with Walid Raad, Toufic mentions this experience and how for him this experience became crucial because it triggered in him the need to search and understand what happened to him. In a way Toufic worked to deserve this experience<sup>1</sup>: *Distracted* recounts this experience as it was lived, while *Vampires* tries to show the systematic dimension of the Undead Realm as such. One of the major intuitions Toufic had during this experience is that he is, and we are all, dead while alive. It is in this sense, hence due to the fact that one is dead while alive, that writing about the Undead realm is achieved via a collaboration with one’s dead double. In another interview with Walid Raad, Toufic mentions this form of collaboration with his dead amnesiac other and how it is this collaboration that allows him to write his books<sup>2</sup>. In fact, our double in the Undead Realm is subject to

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<sup>1</sup>“A conversation between Walid Raad and Jalal Toufic dedicated to Walid Raad”, at 22’:

[http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads/How\\_Would\\_You\\_Not\\_Ask.mp3](http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads/How_Would_You_Not_Ask.mp3)

<sup>2</sup>“A conversation between Walid Raad and Jalal Toufic dedicated to Walid Raad”, at 0’:

[http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads/A\\_Conversation\\_Between\\_Walid\\_Raad\\_and\\_Jalal\\_Toufic\\_Dedicated\\_to\\_Walid\\_Raad\\_June\\_11\\_2010.mp3](http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads/A_Conversation_Between_Walid_Raad_and_Jalal_Toufic_Dedicated_to_Walid_Raad_June_11_2010.mp3)

constant anxiety, word salads, glossolalia, theft of thought, where ideas associate by themselves in his mind, etc. and hence he is unable to write, focus or understand at leisure what is happening to him. This is why our dead double needs to collaborate with us to bring his experience to fruition and us with him to be able to explore the Undead Realm (WI, 110). A writer will effectuate such collaboration in his work while other more powerful spiritual masters, like Sufis, such as Ibn Arabi, or Zen Masters, can cross the imaginary threshold between death and life while remaining conscious and experience the Undead Realm as such. Such collaboration, through an intellectual or artistic activity, requires *intuition*. Intuition isn't limited to a collaboration with the dead, it spans to cover untimely collaboration with past and future thinkers where one receives from these distant realms his creative ideas or addresses them generously to future readers and viewers, like Ibn El Arabi receiving the *Bezels of Wisdom* (WI, 212-13). Creation is then due to *generosity*, to the generosity of the collaborators: when one creates it is because a stranger is receiving this creation or asking for such creation. To make oneself available for creation, for this reception of unworldly and untimely ideas, is an ethical imperative. This is why one needs to resist mundane distractions. In fact, what resists in this world is this generosity of the collaborators that push us to make ourselves available to listening, to access intuition and by that resist the agitation of the world (AFC). The writer by resisting the world is then solitary in relation to those in the world but in a community in relation to those in the other realms. It remains that, through writing, the writer is able to *accompany* those in extreme situations, be it death or war, sometimes dance, because writing allows such collaboration and not because in extreme situations we always feel solitary (OS, 172). In these extreme situations we are depersonalized and the writer addresses this dimension that we are capable of sometimes. Given that this state of depersonalization is not pleasant, real writers are *not popular* – popular writers address the sociable person in us, and sometimes our solitary yearnings but not the impersonal : “Most writers and filmmakers address the social person in us; a small number address the solitary person; but there are others still, rare, who address the one who, for whatever circumstances, is in a state of depersonalization—they accompany some-one even when he has deserted himself. Since these instances of depersonalization are rare, and since one often does not wish to be reminded of them, the latter writers and filmmakers, books and films are not popular.” (FR, 13) One writes then to his future collaborators, the homeless, lovers or undead (UL, 8), but also one writes to himself as this other projected in another realm with whom one, as a writer, collaborates (IT, 111).

In *intuition* one is then in collaboration with someone in the other realm, while *inspiration* consists in being loved by writing or thinking themselves, i.e. that the writer, like the beloved, would feel that thought or writing are seeing a hidden treasure in him and hence he needs to *create* in order to make actual what thought was feeling towards him (GR, 32). We can say that the lover inspires the beloved because the beloved feels in himself, through the eyes of the lover, a hidden treasure that needs to be created and by that he is pushed towards creation. In these times of creation, the writer enters labyrinthine time, a contracted time where one day can be worth a thousand – Toufic wrote *Vampires* in two years of such contracted time (IT, 109). Is then intuition as such inspiration? We wouldn't say so, inspiration seems to be a possible ground or a trigger for collaboration, yet collaboration can be un-inspired, can stem from extreme situations such as psychotic episodes, LSD trips, near death experiences, etc. but this doesn't mean that one will necessarily feel that he carries in himself a *hidden treasure* pushing him to create. This is why, in our reading, intuition seems to require inspiration in order for that to lead to a creative intellectual or artistic work. It

remains that sometimes inspiration might not be enough, and an additional condition is required to trigger someone into writing, or, when inspiration is available, to set the conditions where one is always writing – wouldn't the writer travel in order to write letters to his beloved, rather than write letters to his beloved because he traveled, such as Kafka?

*Creation* requires so far then the collaboration with the unworldly realms, which implies *generosity* and *intuition*, but also *inspiration* as the trigger to write in order to reveal the treasure hidden in us, which implies in some situation a lover, or the feeling that thought, writing, or language themselves are in love with us. In this theory of intellectual and artistic creation one shouldn't then be rushed because generosity doesn't demand anything. Being available to generous reception is not even waiting, because in waiting we are still hurrying the time of the arrival of what we are waiting for. Hence only the generous is available and available for generosity from where he receives without waiting. Creation, as inspired collaboration with the unworldly realms, requires then to be faster and slower than oneself: "Creation presupposes putting oneself in a corner/against a wall that has to be perforated, thus being slower than oneself. And it issues in a reception without any waiting: to receive without having to wait is to be quicker than oneself. And it requires the postponement of what has been received, of again being slower than oneself (not to mistake being slower than oneself for laziness), so that a supersaturated solution may become possible." (DS, 68-9) The inclusion of the unworldly dimension, and the position stating that one is *simultaneously* there while being here, opens up then on a theory of creation that bypasses the opposition between waiting and rushing, patience and impatience. Genuine creation is to receive from the other realms, and to make that possible one needs to make himself available and to feel the need to resist the drift of the world. The *wall* is raised when one is slower than oneself, while the crossing of the wall is when one becomes faster than oneself and receives from the other side of the wall. We can say that creation as something that defies provisions is against time itself and ruptures chronological time. The problem of creation becomes that of being in sync not with deadlines but with our double in the alter-realms. To be hurried by time, to feel that time is flying by, is to be slower than oneself, oneself being here our creative double, to face then the wall, and to feel the impossibility to break through because the wall consists exactly into this feeling that one is wasting his time and not being able to break through that wall. To perforate the wall consists in suspending the worldly rushing of time, to become available for reception, and in such slowing down one becomes actually faster than himself, himself being here the mundane rushed self. We will underline that Toufic gives us here a kind of guideline for artistic and intellectual creation, by pointing at the temporal form of creation and the barriers that stand in the face of creation. In our reading there is a passivity, a power to receive, that constitutes creation, and not, as we might usually, or mundanely think, a power to produce, creation being this power to receive form the other realms.

In the creative act of writing one forgets himself in the other realm, on the other side of the wall, and hence he needs to have activities that reconnect him to this world – such as holding a personal journal or making photos. It remains that if such worldly activities become at their turn creative, one will need to find other such activities, like teaching (GR, 39). Hence, among the *dangers of creation* is the possibility of one seeing himself lost in the other realms and losing contact with this world. A *journal* will play by that the role of connecting the writer to this world and shielding him from complete loss. Another danger is the repetition of *jouissance* where the writer ends up compulsively repeating his first book that is filled with *jouissance*. The way out of this danger is to uplift the *jouissance* compulsion into the affect of *joy*, or, given the rarity of this intensity these days, to die before dying to be able to write

again (WI, 147-8). *Paranoid* construction and *academic deductions* are two other dangers when one is collaborating with his amnesiac double: in both cases the order of the ideas is imposed and aims at avoiding the automated association of ideas in one's mind, and in both cases the collaboration is not with the one who died before dying. To avoid paranoiac constructions and academic generalities one needs to collaborate with his undead version, where "All the names of History are I", and by that access singularity through a creation (VP, 300). This means, in our reading, that only an intuition of what our amnesiac double is undergoing, and a collaboration with our double, can allow a genuine creation, while all "wordy" compilations, or paranoid convergences will not allow the creation of a singular work: the paranoid will make all the contents converge in an excessive coherent world (WY, 49), while the academic will make words relate to each other in a general deductive superficial coherence. Last the writer must *resist* the concepts that he receives from the unworldly realms and only accept them in their radical version, i.e. literarily. Similarly, the reader must resist these concepts or else he would only accept them half-heartedly, i.e. metaphorically, and misjudge their domain of validity (WI, 213). Following the form of time proper to creation, the dangers of creation come to complete these guidelines of creative writing: being aware of loss, repetitive jouissance, the paranoid academic form. After the creative act one needs then to remain connected to the worldly while at the same time available for the unworldly.

### **Aphorisms, literality and re-writing**

We have seen so far that the general project of 'Toufic aims at resurrecting the tradition, where the tradition, we would say, consists in coupling this world to the unworldly realms and establishing a retroactive impact of the unworldly on the worldly dimension. From such vantage point we have seen the *theory of creative writing* in 'Toufic that consists in showing that to create an intellectual work one needs to collaborate with his amnesiac doubles existing in the unworldly realms, and that this conception leads to a redefinition of intuition and inspiration, but also outlines a number of dangers proper to the creative act. For 'Toufic, writing divides into *aphorisms* consisting in a form that covers a discontinuous space, as he practiced it in *Distracted*, and writing through *association of ideas* that covers a continuous space, as he practiced it in *Vampires* (VP, 13). 'Toufic warns the commentators and readers of his work not to *paraphrase* his thought because an aphorism is like a *willed sentence*, a mantra or a magical incantation, and hence it can't be *said in other words*, including saying it in a translation (WI, 94). For example, Pierre Abi Saab, in a sloppy reading of 'Toufic's *Toufican Ruins?* (Al-Akhbar, 23 July 2010), omits the question mark in his commentary and by that threatens the buildings in question to turn into ruins by turning the question into an affirmation (WI, 87). We consider that one needs to read the 'Toufican aphorisms carefully, for the two reasons aforementioned: first an aphorism can't be expressed in other-words, and second because words have an effect on the real. These peculiar features of the aphorism can be attributed to *literality*. Indeed, when one is in contact with the other realm, what seems to be a metaphor in our world is in fact the actual description of what is happening in the other realm. This is why one needs *courage* to accept the literal meaning of some sentences, because by that he will assume what he already knows, i.e., in the case of death that he is already dead while alive, and that sentences that he is able to hear literally are describing his state in the undead realm (VP, 181). As 'Toufic puts in in a note: "All figurative expressions prove to be literal in one realm or another (death, dance, etc.). It is crucial though, as long as one is aware that they are borrowings from the literal sense, to liberate them as figurative expressions."

(WI, note 179) The literal meaning is the *esoteric* meaning as such (WI, 101). In psychotic episodes one gets in touch with the literal dimension of meaning and things, like Nietzsche when on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January said that he attended his funeral twice. Nietzsche himself didn't understand the whole extent of his cry "Every name in history is I", not seeing that literarily when someone goes psychotic, or dies before dying, he becomes all the names of history (WY, 71). Or, when Toufic titles one of his books, *Two or Three Thinks I am Dying to Tell You*, we should not understand "dying to tell you" in the figurative way, "I am eager to tell you", but rather in the literal way, 'if I don't tell you that I wouldn't be able to stop dying' (TI, 98), or that 'I need to die before dying' in order for me to be able to tell you these two or three things (WI, 149). We can see now that if we say the sentence in other words, let's say, "two or three things I am eager to tell you", or if a translation captures the metaphorical meaning in different words, such as "deux ou trois choses que j'ai très envie de te dire", the literal meaning will be missed and hence we will be dealing with a different realm – in that case we would have moved from the undead realm into the worldly realm of desire and hence we change the level of reality in question.

The literal acceptance of meaning, i.e. the intuition that the sentences are referring to actual events happening in some unworldly realm, opens on a plane in some alternative dimension, where one can *re-write* history and the course of the events by building a web between different literal meanings. We can read such a re-writing in the text on the crucifixion, *The Crucified* (WI, 58), where Toufic shows that it is Nietzsche who was crucified in place of Jesus in Palestine, while Jesus was crucified and cut into pieces in place of Hallaj. Literality functions then by what we can call *gate words*, or gate sentences, that allow to jump from one sphere into the other: for example, the verse, "No, they (the Jews: here the Muslims) did not kill him (Christ: here Hallāj) and they did not crucify him; rather they were deluded (shubbiha lahum: by a sosia?)" (Qur'an 4:156 in WI, 68), connects both Hallaj to Jesus given that Hallaj uttered that verse before himself being crucified. Another relation between the wordily stories and histories and the other realms is the effect of actual worldly events on how we should understand a literary work. For example, if there are one thousand nights and one thousand stories in the *One thousand and One Nights* it is because, prior to encountering Shahrazad, Shahryar had slew a thousand women. Hence each story told to Shahrazad was actually brought to her by one of these dead women. The worldly events can hence inform the text while in reverse the text can inform us about worldly events.

We can see here how the two realms, that of storytelling and of the actual world, interact and are set on the same plane, or at least are being able to affect each other: the thousand deaths and the thousand stories communicating together by a kind of *necessary correlation*. Such correlation makes sense if we consider that the whole reading and writing operation is taken in the Imaginal Realm where everything is willed and necessary: "One manner of being worthy of one's misfortunes and of events in general, deserving them, is to touch base with if not be in constant simultaneous perception of the Imaginal World, where they are not accidental, and where, taking the guise of subtle bodies illuminated not by an external light but by their intrinsic light, they appear in their perfection and brilliance." (WI, 196) An exemplification of such practice would be the re-writing of *Vertigo* and *Rear Window* into one script, where the two movies start to interact, the dreams in one movie having their images in the other and vice versa – here the content but also the main character, played by James Stewart as both Scottie and Jefferies allow this relation (TI, 38). On this plane of correlations any two elements from the actual world can establish a relationship provided that such relationship is happening in the other realm. This gives the impression of an

*atomization* of facts, events, gestures, etc. Such atomization can be seen for example in the isolation and correlation of pure qualities and powers independently of the causal and actual states of the worlds: a man holding a knife could seem on the level of the unconscious as someone who has just murdered a woman, while actually he is just going to the kitchen (WI, 130). Toufic made a video work showing such correlations titled *Guilt and Innocence in 39 Steps* (2013). Here it is in the realm of the pure affect that powers and qualities *compose* together into a web that impact a person's unconscious – one feels guilty because of a gesture he made as a gesture or start feeling the correlation between different sporadic pure events or entities. These different re-compositions, be it by the literal sense of words, via the dream like work, the pure qualities, or the Imaginal necessary relation between realms, can also be seen as a counter-strategy and a critique “to the obscene promiscuity established, through zapping, between different TV programs on various channels”. (UB, 45)

We can say, interpreting Toufic, that the actual world and the undead world are projected on the Imaginal Plane, and on that plane all correlations become necessary, acquire an *intrinsic light* that illuminates and bring about the real/esoteric meaning, of what is unfolding as a metaphorical apparent meaning or sequence of events. In fact, we do not have access to the real-esoteric meaning because we use a metaphorical language, and such a language disguises the world into an apparent world, a world cut from its esoteric dimension, cut from the unworldly realm, and establishing a division cut between a *being in itself* and a *being for another*, the *original* and the *copy*, the *esoteric* and *exoteric*, the *apparent* and the *real*, etc. Only on the Imaginal Plane these oppositions vanish by creating a unified realm where all images and meanings enter into an actual and literal interactions that form a unified plane. A web of indexical, literal facts is waved on the Imaginal Plane, and to perform such task one needs *courage*, the courage to go beyond common sense, to follow his intuition and the rigor of the concept even if it seems *counterintuitive* (WI, 213).

### **The tasks of the writer**

Given this basic ontology where the actual world, or what we are calling here the worldly, is surrounded and doubled by many unworldly realms (Undeath, the Imaginal, Dance, etc.), it follows that the task of the writer will be to accompany those exploring one of these realms, to make oneself available to help others deserve what happened to them by giving speech to what they want to tell us, and last to re-inject a time for annunciation. Writing as *accompanying* someone exploring a realm would be like a writer sitting in a place watching dancers and, through his writing, underlining and describing the realm that the dancer is exploring (SD, 3). Writing as *exploring* another realm would, for example, consist in receiving from the undead and describing their realm, or to receive from distant creatures in another branch of the multiverse and to describe their world (WI, 143). Writing as *helping* to endure the event is due to the fact that the event interrupts the inner monologue and makes one solitary. This is why the writer must respect such solitude and help, with his writing, to forecast the event before it happens in the world by making those to whom it will happen prepared. By that the writer make those to whom the event happens *deserving* of the event, i.e. they are able to have a concept or an image of what happened even when they have lost their capacity to even have an inner monologue (UB, 14). The miraculous event, i.e. the coming of the Messiah, can't be forced, on the other hand one can force the annunciator of such event, i.e. the Angel, and by that he forces an event, given that events are Angels. Writing, in the age of generalized arrival, can force then the occurrence of the event, or the *annunciation*, by opening on other realms – the undeath realm being for example the event par excellence (VP, 205).

## Labyrinthine Logics

With literality we have seen that the different meanings start to interact together like atomic facts weaving the Imaginal Plane or allowing the exploration of an alternative realm. We have seen that in literality words are describing what is actually happening in some realm and by that they shed away their metaphorical use. The literal use can point to the exploration of another realm but also it disrupts the basic divide between the referent and the signified by bringing them on the same plane. In this sense the actual world itself opens up in a web of signifying interactions where the referent, or the presence of some object, and the signified, or the essence of an object, are able to mutually determine one another. In this case the dimension of the physical objects (presence) will start interacting with that of the signification of these objects (essence). In *Distracted*, Toufic develops a number of such interactions. Toufic considers that *Distracted* is a book that deals with the living Jalal, we would say the Jalal occupying the actual world, while *Vampire* explores the undead realm and is in communication with the dead Jalal<sup>3</sup>.

### *Effect of Presence on Essence*

In this case we have a causal relation where the presence of things will affect their meaning, or the referents and objects in the world generate meaning:

“On the subway train, a father is teaching his child: “Parallel lines meet at infinity.” Two parallel tracks converge. The child: “Is this infinity?” (DS, 9)

“It is to protect the “guest” from losing his identity in the anonymous hotel room that he’s made to sign his name in the register. In Jim Jarmush’s *Stranger Than Paradise*, the three protagonists, two men and a woman, park at a motel. The two men go inside and register for a two-bed room. As planned she sneaks into the room a little later. But, not having signed the register, she becomes absent: the two men go on several outings without taking her along.” (DS, 10)

“A bookstore. The board has the inscription, “Old and New Books.” Yet how old is the board itself.” (DS, 13)

### *Effect of Essence on Presence*

In this case we have a causal relation where the essences of things will affect the way we experience these things, the referents and objects are then affected by the way we understand them or represent them:

“Never buy a city map, for without it there is no city, just streets that intersect, and others, obstinate, that don’t—becoming dead ends.” (DS, 9)

### *Circularity between Presence and Essence*

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[http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads/A\\_Conversation\\_Between\\_Walid\\_Raad\\_and\\_Jalal\\_Toufic\\_Dedicated\\_to\\_Walid\\_Raad\\_June\\_11\\_2010.mp3](http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads/A_Conversation_Between_Walid_Raad_and_Jalal_Toufic_Dedicated_to_Walid_Raad_June_11_2010.mp3)

In this case essence and presence seem to stand in a circle where one determines the other and vice-versa:

“A sculpture of a girl putting on one of her stockings: is she sculpting herself? A Renoir painting of a vase full of flowers: how pale are the flowers compared to the vase!” (DS, 20) Here we can think of Escher’s hand drawing itself. The image, or representational dimension seem to affect the material dimension and vice-versa.

“The price of one of Christo’s wrapped objects at Gallery Zabriski is \$330,000. The artist may have subverted such a price by putting something worth more than \$330,000 in the wrap; the buyer can subvert it by giving the latter as a gift to someone and watching her unwrap it to see her present.” (DS, 20) Here the material might cost more than the art work, and hence should one decompose the art work into its material components to make money with the art work?

“Her eyes make me forget everything else, so what is it, then, that each time makes me forget to see their color?” (DS, 24)

“I wrote several lines. A blank page replaced by a blank mind.” (DS, 25)

#### *Conjunction between Essence and Presence*

In this case we can’t distinguish anymore essence and presence, the presence or perceived experience standing as the meaning of this experience. The circularity here is that what we see, presence, seems to provide the meaning of what we see provided a pivotal point that allows the indistinguishability of essence and presence:

“A lake’s water after the rower has passed, the reflections closing again not merely because he has moved on, but because he did not fully exist as he passed through the lake.” (DS, 12)

“Her lips and my distraction often interrupted by her tongue.” (DS, 25)

“A car cemetery and, much farther, human cemeteries. It is right the two should be separated. None of those lengthy phrases that join a crushed car and a killed human being. One thing following the other not causally, but because the tracks happened to pass here and not there.” (DS, 12)

#### *Disjunction between Essence and Presence*

In this case the thought or essence of something is disjoined or contradicted by presence:

“The tourist is not someone who does not find the places he is searching for. He is someone who on asking, “Where is the place — —?” always gets for answer: “But you’re in it!” (DS, 9)

“Don’t get lost in the myriad paths my sauntering produced in my small room.” (DS, 10)

*Over determination of Presences – two or more Essences for one Presence*

In this case one presence has many essential determinations that loop or contradict each other:

“I’m amazed to hear of people committing suicide by drowning in the Seine: but for the Seine, I may have attempted suicide.” (DS, 12) Here we can consider that the Seine is what kills and what we die for.

*Over determination of Essences – two or more Presences for one Essence*

In this case one essence is presented in many presences

“On the beat: one hand stopping the other one midway in its movement to slap the body. Do we have two hands so that one hand can prevent the other from often slapping the rest of the body?” (DS, 23)

*Presentation of Essences*

In this case essences acquire a physical presence and are treated physically:

“The director was such a perfectionist that having a close-up of a person’s palm, he redistributed its lines with make-up so that a palmister watching the film would be able to predict what will happen to that character.” (DS, 14)

“Words?! Yes, I will leave some behind only if they take as little space as the ashes of that half of my body that will be burnt, and as little time to read as the duration needed to bury the other half.” (DS, 17)

*Essentialization of Presences*

In this case presences acquire a meaningful dimension as such and are treated as essences:

“The difficulty of becoming part of the composition of remembered things is not the ostensible immateriality of the past. It rather consists in that the time needed for remembered things to compose the past is simultaneously the span it takes the one remembering to decompose. Nostalgia is this missed meeting.” (DS, 14)

“Quicker than the possible.” (DS, 22) Here, Speed is measured in relation to the representational realm not physically which makes it faster.

## 02. Genealogy: The Revelation

### Iblis immeasurable love for God

When God asked the angels to prostrate for Adam Iblis refused: “So, when I have made him [Ādam] and have breathed into him of My Spirit, do ye [angels] fall down, prostrating yourselves unto him. So, the angels fell prostrate, all of them together save Iblis. He refused to be among the prostrate” (Qur’ān 15:29–33 in WY, 44). Referring to Hallaj, Toufic maintains that Iblis didn’t prostrate for Adam because of his devotion and love for God proving by that that he is the real monotheist, the one that only prostrate for God. God casted Iblis away from him throwing Iblis into Hell because to be casted away from his beloved was Hell itself for Iblis. “Hell is paved with good intentions”, applies to Iblis because it is out of good intentions, his immeasurable love for God, that he ended up in his suffering. The suffering of Iblis was such that, to *distract* himself from Hell and to try to forget God he created the different forms of *base distraction* (UL, 30). The first thing Iblis created was *Time*, the Time that passes by because Time heals and makes things pass by allowing one to forget. Iblis then created Time to forget and hence the cause of Time is *forgetfulness* and not forgetfulness is caused by Time (UL, 31). *Pride* was the first of the debased states that allows to alleviate suffering, in pride one feels distant from his beloved and hence eases his suffering from the separation. In fact, if Iblis was proud as such he wouldn’t have accepted to be with the debased humans that endure Hell, hence his pride is nothing but a way to forget (UL, 31). After that Iblis created the other debased states, indifference, sadness, incontinence, and the seven sins (lust, gluttony, avarice, anger, sloth, doubt, murder, usury, flattery), to conclude with theft, betrayal, and fraud (UL, 31). Hence all the vices and sins are not what we find in Hell but rather what allows us to forget Hell. Our world is then the creation of Iblis conceived as a means to forget Hell, and hence our world is the world where one forgets God and the suffering from the separation with God. It is in this regards that we are forgetful creatures: “And verily We made a covenant of old with -Adam, but he forgot, and We found no constancy in him” (Qur’an - 20:115 in UL, 32), because we are in part the creation of Iblis. What we need then to remember is that this world is made for forgetfulness rather than to remember the events happening in the world. Iblis is not as such the creator of the world, but rather the *demiurge*, the one who mixes the world created by God with its fallen counterpart, and introducing by that *jouissance*, *undeath*, and the *labyrinth* (WI, 140). All sins are then committed to forget, and in order for man to rise in spirituality he needs remembrance. The base states become temptations to the one who wants to remember (UL, 32). These are the temptations of Iblis (sins, vices, *jouissance*, *undeath* and the *labyrinth*) while the temptation of Iblis himself would be to forget his suffering, to forget Hell, and hence Iblis needs to embrace Hell if he ought to get closer to God (UL, 33). Iblis doesn’t experience *jouissance* or the other sins because he is an Angel, yet he tempts Man into these temptations, and he *enjoys* the *jouissance* of those he tempts (WI, 149).

### The Fall

The question recoils: why didn’t Iblis prostrate to Adam? Of course, out of the love of God, but then why did the Angels prostrate to Adam? It is because their knowledge is that of God (UL, 24), and God knows “what is in the hearts and minds”, i.e. the virtual (VP, 214), hence the Angels knew about the virtuality in Adam. In fact, Iblis is supremely moral and by that

only believes in the present and the actual disbelieving by that any form of virtuality. The twist is that Iblis incited Adam, the non-mortal Man, as the Hebrew expresses it A-Dam, to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil without specifying that if he does that he must eat first from the tree of life. Not having specified the order between life and the knowledge of good and evil, Iblis introduced in Adam a form of death that is foreign to life and by that Adam became dead, virtually a cadaver, even though he was still alive (VP, 214). Iblis hence disbelieved, out of pure moralism, in virtuality he himself introduced in Adam. And this is why, when God ordered all the Angels to fall in front of the virtual cadaver of Adam and prostrate to him, Iblis refused to prostrate not believing that Adam could be dead while alive. The other version of the banishment of Iblis is then his intransigent moralism causing him to understand God's words as orders rather than ethical rules – indeed it is because Adam now is dead that he weighs infinitely, he is a being of gravity that is endlessly falling, and Angels must kneel to him as if addressing the virtual lying cadaver in him (VP, 210). Hence the temptation itself was the introduction of a form of death foreign to life and God (the Living) through Adam in the world (VP, 211-15). Adam when eating from the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, before that of life, became by that *dead while alive*, i.e. a *mortal* (WI, 113). As the scripture says: “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”. (Genesis 2:16–17, King James Version, in WI, 113). In a talk<sup>4</sup>, Toufic insists that the scripture says “you die”, and not “you will die”, meaning that you will be immediately dead even though you will stay alive and die later on – Adam lived after that 930 years before physically dying. Being dead while alive, Adam now partakes in *labyrinthine* space where he is lost to himself and to others (WI, 113), he starts to *dream* (VP, 227), acquires a *proper name* – Adam rather than the generic A-Dam meaning Man (FR, 181) –, is informed of the generic names of animals and plants (VP, 213), and is now susceptible of *violent death* (VP, 213). The Fall from Eden is the becoming mortal of Man; in this fall Man became a virtual cadaver. When angels kneel, they kneel to this cadaver in man (as if in a matted image they address the cadaver lying on the ground). But, when Man kneels he kneels either for the one that reminds him of the original Fall (God) or for the one that can kill him and thus precipitate him in endless Fall (Caesar) – “Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's” i.e. the kneeling. In resurrection no one kneels because the cadaver has been abolished (VP, 210).

### **Babel or the first labyrinthine ruin**

God collaborated with Iblis in the episode of the fall but also in that of Babel: “The LORD said, ‘Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.’ So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. That is why it was called Babel—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth” (Genesis 11:5–9 in WI, 114). By that humans were scattered in the world by God and in the labyrinth of undeath by Iblis. The danger presented by Babel was not its being too high but that it would lapse into a ruin and hence become the first worldly labyrinth when deserted by the people. The *diaspora* is this worldly scattering of men on the whole surface of the earth, and the mixture of their languages. The Jews and the descendant of Adam feel *nostalgia* for Babel, because once in a labyrinth one feels that he was there before. All mortals as being

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<sup>4</sup> Towards the end of the talk Toufic comments on this episode of the Bible, 1'03'45  
[https://soundcloud.com/e\\_flux/jalal-toufic-at-e-flux-what-was-i-thinking](https://soundcloud.com/e_flux/jalal-toufic-at-e-flux-what-was-i-thinking)

dead while alive are captive of labyrinthine Babylon and long to it because they felt that they were already there. Hence the *diaspora* of the Jews is coextensive to their *captivity* in the Tower of the Devil (WI, 117) and must be distinguished from the *exile* from Jerusalem to the worldly Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar and their physical dispersal later on. The labyrinth of Iblis is one where one is not only lost to others but also to himself, and not only not understanding others but also not understanding oneself. With Babel such scattering, loss, and inability to understand were made actual, hence what was only an apparent ruin and an esoteric labyrinth tuned into an actual ruin and an exoteric labyrinth (WI, 115).

### **Christ**

The *Anti-Christ* is Christ himself when he went to Hell to prove to Iblis that it is possible to endure the separation from God without the need to alleviate such suffering by the debased actions. It remains that Christ couldn't endure Hell, "You will not leave me in hell" (Acts 2:27, in UL, 34), and he failed in his mission. After his failure he resurrected as *Jesus of Nazareth*, and after his death went back to God through the *ascension*. In that sense one must tell Jesus of Nazareth to go to Hell if one wants to save the world and turn it into the Kingdom of God (WY, 45). Hence God sacrificed his son not for the humans but for the love of Iblis, for bringing back Iblis from his forgetfulness induced by the debased works in order to cure him from Hell. This is how we must understand Jesus saying "love thy enemy" the enemy being Iblis himself, because only in this love one could save him and hence save the earth and humanity from debasement: "and the enemy who sows them is the devil" (Matthew 13:39); "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies ... If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?" (Matthew 5:43-46 in GR, 32).

### **Jesus the Son of God**

The one announcing the coming of someone, like the Baptiste, is born in abeyance and lives in suspension after the announcement, in a prison for example, which is what happened to the Baptiste (WI, 187). Mary is virgin because she gave birth to an un-manifested being, Jesus, which by that remains the site of the possible. These lines, "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear ..." (Matthew 13:13 in VP, 289) refer to the ontological state of Jesus rather than an address to the people. Indeed, it is important to underline that Jesus is the site of the possible because he is the incarnated God, and God is actual Possibility itself (UB, 34). In which sense should we understand that Jesus is the incarnation of Possibility, or the incarnation of the un-manifested? In our reading, we would say that it is so because, as Toufic says, Jesus is the Promise, or of what will happen. When Jesus healed a man from muteness he told him not to tell anyone, maybe the mute promised him, him who is the Promise. It is difficult for the Promise to talk given that promising consists in *giving one's word*. This is why Jesus speaks by the *Holy Spirit*, i.e. another speaks for him (GR, 46).

Another trait that makes Jesus similar to God is that he is faceless: God is faceless because he is all action and void of passion and thus he doesn't need to express himself passively while Jesus is faceless because he is exempt of resentment and hence lacks the intensive polarity necessary to compose a face (IT, 14-15). Another trait making Jesus the Son of God is that while God is The Living (VP, 214), Jesus is The Life: "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25 in AS, 62). Given that Jesus is The Life, it follows that he is not a mortal, i.e. dead while alive, and this is why Jesus is nameless, one having a proper name, like Adam,

only because he is a mortal and hence subject to over-turns in the undead realm which implies that he can only be resurrected if he is called by his name (IT, 15). On the other hand, Jesus, The Life and Resurrection, being nameless resurrects not by turning to the one calling him but rather by irrupting frontally – as shown in the icons depicting Jesus where he is rarely seen in profile, he was only seen in profile when he was part of this world and turned his left cheek out of his lack of resentment (IT, 14-15). Being the Life and Resurrection, Jesus is outside of the labyrinth of death but also, he doesn't suffer infantile amnesia that represses childhood sexuality: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3, in WY, 56). By having access to his childlike memory Jesus, and the resurrected in general, stop interpreting their adult lives because they didn't undergo infantile amnesia (in a Freudian sense) – interpretation is one of the traits of those who are dead while alive, hence of the labyrinth (WY, 57).

Another trait making Jesus the Son of God is that "God cannot be tempted by Evil" (James, 1:1), and in the Islamic tradition Mohamad says: "When any of Adam's descendants is born, Satan strikes him at both sides with his two fingers, except Jesus, the son of Mary, whom Satan tried to strike thus but failed, for he struck the placenta-cover instead" ("The Beginning of Creation," *Sahih al-Bukhari* in UB, 68). It follows that when Iblis tried to tempt Jesus he wasn't tempted because he is exempt of *jouissance*, a careful reading of the replies addressed to the devil showing that Jesus is referring to episodes where the sons of Adam were indeed prone to temptation – such as the manna episode where man doesn't feed only on bread and the *jouissance* related to see rotten bread (WI, 152).

God has aura, and no one can get close to God even if God is the closest to us, not even the Prophet who can only get near him from a distance as far as the Lote-Tree (WY, 29). Similarly, Jesus has aura he is untouchable: the woman didn't touch him as the disciples believed but his cloth, and Thomas didn't "touch and believed" but rather "he has seen and believed". When Jesus heals by touch we have then a double miracle, the healing as such and the touching (WY, 32).

<b>Jesus son of God</b>	<b>God</b>
Un-manifested and hence site of the possible as being the Promise	Actual possibility allowing all beings as self-disclosures
As the Promise Jesus talks by the Holy Spirit	God creates by talking
Jesus is faceless because he is exempt of resentment	God is faceless because he is all activity and doesn't express himself passively – no one sees his face
The Life because he is not dead while alive, coupled to the labyrinth	The Living absolutely
Nameless not having a proper name because not dead while alive	The names of Gods are actions
Frontal even in his resurrection because he doesn't turn not having a name	He is everywhere
Innocent like a child and doesn't suffer infantile amnesia, sexual repression or psychic interpretations	He is Goodness and knows what is hidden in our souls
Exempt of temptation and <i>jouissance</i>	Temptation is to forget God, God can't be tempted and is in constant beatitude
Has Aura because no one can touch him	Has Aura because he is the closest and yet more distant to all creatures

### **The Crucifixion**

Jesus didn't bleed from the nails perforating his hands during the *crucifixion* but through *stigmata* given that his aura doesn't allow anything to touch him (WI, 173). Being The Life he couldn't have been killed by the crucifixion given that he is not a mortal, and hence he must have died, as the incarnated God, out of pity, i.e. from internal reasons, to redeem humanity – here Toufic reinterprets the Nietzschean “God died out of pity for man” (WI, 173). This is why for Jesus to die he needed to accomplish the miracle of dying, and he accomplished it when he cried “God why have you forsaken me?... And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit” (Matthew 27:46–50; cf. Mark 15:34–37 in WI, 45). The death of Jesus was itself a light death given that “from the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over all the land” (Matthew 27:45, in VP 225) and 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 in VP, 225). These are minor effects affecting Nature when it comes to the death of a god if not God. Following his death, it is not Lazarus that buried him because Jesus said “let the dead bury their own dead” (Matthew 8:22 in WI, 47) while Lazarus was a resurrected man, hence just Alive (WY, 51).

Jesus was worthy of everything that happened to him including the crucifixion because one is godlike when he deserves all what happen to him because he becomes “his hearing through which he hears, his sight through which he sees, his hand through which he grasps, and his foot through which he walks” (a hadîth qudsî in UB, 21). This means that by being the Son of God, or by achieving fana' (obliteration), one is all, like God who is self-disclosed in all creatures addressing himself through everything that happens to them (WI, 170). Only when Man is seen as a self-disclosure of God, or achieves fana', he is worthy of the attention of god (WI, 174), like Jesus or Hallaj. This affinity between Jesus, the Son of God, and Hallaj, the Haq' (the one who achieved fana'), is pushed further by Toufic who considers, following the Quranic reading of the crucifixion, that actually Jesus was replaced by another, Nietzsche who signed “the crucified”, while he was cut into pieces in Hallaj because he carried all our sins and the one who sins must cut off the sinning organ. It remains that by suffering the laceration of Hallaj, Jesus was able to cast away the “I” standing between him and god, which lead him to absolute monotheism and Islam (WI, 36-8). Hence Nietzsche died as Jesus in the year 30, and as Nietzsche in the year 1900 – Nietzsche affirmed that he died twice – while Jesus died as Hallaj in Iraq. (WI, 161) Another version of the substitution of Jesus by another is that the one who was crucified is Lazarus, the “only Christian”, as we will see in what follows.

### **The resurrection of Lazarus**

To resurrect someone, from the undead realm has its problems. First, the dead are usually subject to over-turn, hence when called their turn is over-turned by an over-turn and they can't hence answer the call. This is what makes the friends and family despair from resurrecting their dead beloved. It remains that when Jesus called Lazarus the latter was able to miraculously turn, his turn not being over-turned (WI, 54). Other dangers are that the one who comes back from the dead could be another, or a double of the living one. But also, that he could come back as only Alive, like an animal void of Spirit. For that the Holy Spirit needs to be re-infused into him. But this doesn't make him yet a full human being because he might still be lacking a World, and he then needs God, the creator of Worlds, to equip him with one. Only then the resurrection is complete (WY, 53-5). The miraculous in the resurrection of Lazarus doesn't pertain only to the fact that he was brought back from the dead, but also that he was the only one to be resurrected, he as a singular person, and not all the other dead. Indeed, in the dead realm one assumes all the names of history and hence, when called, can't recognize his personal name in order to turn and come back to life. Only Jesus, The Life, can perform such a feat, and when he resurrects someone he brings him back not anymore as a mortal but as fully Alive, i.e. living without being coupled anymore to the undead realm (WI, 57).

Being fully Alive, Lazarus showed a number of peculiarities. First after his resurrection no one called him again, this is due to the fact that the resurrected, being fully Alive, faces himself naturally in the mirror, like an animal, and doesn't need to call himself to turn to face himself or others. The resurrected always appear when needed and appears frontally to us (WY, 52). This is why after the resurrection Lazarus became nameless, his name not being needed to call him nor to resurrect him again, him who is now fully Alive (WI, 54). Another peculiarity is that after his resurrection Lazarus was treated like an animal, not being judged for eating during the Sabbath for example, because now he was only Alive and not a mortal, hence not knowing Evil. For that the Law didn't apply on him anymore (WY, 51-3). Lazarus wasn't then resurrected for the glory of the Law, his "strange actions" are against the Law, but rather for the glory of God. Lazarus was resurrected for the Glory of God, and by that he became the imitation of Jesus, being now only Alive and not dead while alive. In that sense Lazarus is the only Christian, the true disciple of Jesus, an *ontological disciple*, because, after his resurrection, he had a similar constitution to that of Jesus – the disciples are only the followers of the Holy Spirit (WY, 59-60). This is why, Toufic can conjuncture another version of the crucifixion where it is Lazarus that was crucified in the place of Jesus following Nietzsche's intuition that the crucified was the only Christian (WY, 60). What brought Lazarus closer to Jesus as an imitation of Jesus was the fact that after the resurrection he stopped dreaming, being not anymore, a mortal coupled with the labyrinth of death. He also recovered his childhood memories, including the sexual games he used to have with his sisters, making him like a child but also to the likeness of Jesus (WY, 56). In that sense Jesus is the "Life and Resurrection", while Lazarus is the "Resurrection and Life". Indeed, it is only because Jesus was pondering how would the resurrection be to the Glory of God that he arrived late to the sides of Lazarus, hence on time for resurrecting him because now he was dead. It remains that Jesus didn't make him endure anything more painful than he was enduring because Lazarus, before the resurrection, was a mortal and hence already enduring death while alive. In that Jesus was an *idiot*, i.e. someone who tries to find the deeper question related to a situation. And the answer was that by being resurrected Lazarus would be cured of death, which is to the glory of God (WI, 42).

### **The Resurrection of Jesus**

Lazarus went to the tomb of Jesus after three days, there was a foul smell, but he believed in the miracle because he himself was miraculous, and those who believe can move mountains. Hence two angels appeared, the stone was moved, and he called Jesus by his name leading to his resurrection, the first miracle performed by a man: “For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either” (1 Corinthians 15:16, in WI, 51). This is why Lazarus’ death was “for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it”, i.e. resurrected. Jesus told Lazarus not to tell anyone of the fact that he resurrected him. The next day Magdalena went and discovered the empty tomb, and Lazarus ran with the others to check, because he doubted that he might have hallucinated his resurrection of the Son of God. When Lazarus saw the bandages, he knew that he resurrected him. When Jesus appeared to the disciples, Thomas, which wasn’t there, doubted his resurrection because either the alive Lazarus cannot perform properly the resurrection and he might have brought back the Antichrist, or in his Glory Jesus would be like God and he would have destroyed those looking at him (WI, 50-3).

### **The General Resurrection**

What is the promise that Jesus brings with him? It is the advent of the world of righteousness, i.e. a world where man would not taste Evil anymore because he will be cured of his sickness into death, of his mortality. Jesus will bring then an *ontological righteousness*, by resurrecting the living and the dead into being only alive and not anymore dead while alive (WI, 125). By that we can say that Jesus, or the Messiah, will *resurrect the living* as well as the dead because the real problem of the resurrection is to cure man from the undead realm, to bring him out of the labyrinth and not only to bring him back from his state of physical death. If the one performing the general resurrection is not Jesus, i.e. the Life, he would call ‘Adam’ and all humans will be resurrected, given that ‘Adam’ meant man in general before the fall, and hence the resurrected will need to acquire a proper name. (WI, 56) Proper names were introduced only when Adam introduced death, and the general resurrection will occur when a living mortal will resurrect one mortal, then all mortals will be resurrected given that in the death realm each assumes all the names of history. (WI, 55) In the general resurrection even the mortal character of works which didn’t fall apart in two days will be resurrected. (WI, 202) After Jesus, who is The Resurrection, we started to believe in the resurrection and hence our death became lighter (VP, 225).

### **The Messiah, the Redeemer, the Overman and the Mahdi**

The messianic consists in understanding the prescriptions of the scriptures ethically, and not morally, in order to get over the fallen world. This means that the scriptures’ prescriptions describe how the coming world will function rather than how we should morally behave by obeying orders – “you shall not kill” would mean that there will be a world where murder is impossible. For example, in the new world the failure of Iblis to prostrate to Adam will be corrected because either Adam wouldn’t be a mortal anymore, and hence not anymore a virtual cadaver, and by that Iblis wouldn’t need to prostrate anymore, or because through faith the Angel will counter the infinite fall in Adam (VP, 214). In the new world the Messiah after going through the *ordeal of countless recurrences* will become the Redeemer that will turn what can’t be *deserved* not only as unworthy of memory but also as not belonging to the past – in the new world what can’t eternally recur will simply stop to exist (UB, 18). The Redeemer is either 1) the Anti-Christ who went to hell to prove to Satan that one can endure

the separation from God without the need for debasement, 2) the Overman who experiences countless repetitions and wills the eternal recurrence of some events opening by that the epoch of the Will. Only the Redeemer-Messiah can alter the world in such a way (WI, 188). The Aliyah, or the ascent of the Jews to Palestine will not force the coming of the Redeemer because the captivity in Babylon and the subsequent diaspora is not the exoteric one, but the esoteric one, the one where Babylon names the labyrinth of the undead. Only the liberation from such labyrinth will allow the exoteric assembly of the people in Jerusalem – Moses only freed the Jews exoterically from the Pharaoh, while the Messiah will free them esoterically from the Labyrinth (WI, 119). To achieve the feat of an ethical world and of true liberation the world wouldn't need to be destroyed and built anew, but rather it will need to be displaced for just a bit but such a change will require the Messiah (UB, 20).

It remains that prior to the coming back of the Messiah, or his resurrection, there is a danger to resurrect his double, or Al-Dajjal the Liar (WT, 30). This would happen if upon the coming of the Messiah the world would still be filled with injustice, then the one affirming the return of all will be considered the Liar because we would will the return of Evil (UB, 19). In that sense a memorial for a surpassing disaster, such as the Shoah or Karbala, are not erected to remember the event but rather to call for the advent of the Messiah that will not only make such event fall in oblivion but that will also eradicate it from the past (UB, 19). When it is said that Jesus will “bring the sword” by that it is meant that Jesus and Mahdi will join in an army to destroy Al-Dajjal (UB, 83).

We need to understand that the *waiting for the Messiah* is coextensive to his advent in so far as the waiting is the practice coextensive to the presence of the Messiah in Hell as the Anti-Christ trying to save the word from debasement – here waiting would be like *zazen* for Buddhist enlightenment the enlightenment being coextensive to the practice and not something that is reached after the practice (WY, 43). If we all wait genuinely, like the lover waits for his beloved, then this would be the time in which the Messiah would come (UL, 5). It remains that we wait because we don't know how to wait for him, and this is why the wait extends for millennia, and the Messiah waits for us. Bad waiting is when we ought to wait and we don't and when we ought to stop and continue to wait (UB, 38).

The *coming of the Mahdi* occur in the time of the Great Occultation. We are now in the epoch of the *Great Occultation* that followed the *Lesser Occultation*, as shown when the Al-Samarri stopped appointing a spokesman for the Imam – during the Lesser Occultation Al-Samarri was still receiving letters from the last Imam. In that Al-Samarri performed the paradigmatic promise, that of the wait for the Messiah, and for that his promise was followed by silence (GR, 48). Similarly, a surpassing disaster will announce the coming of the Redeemer because the tradition will be completely withdrawn, the name of God and the Holy Word not even appearing in the exoteric meaning anymore, which announces the Great Occultation (WT, 50). Only when the occultation of the Spirit will be complete the Mahdi or the Redeemer will come in a generation that is “either wholly sinful or wholly righteous” (UB, 83). A generation from which even the memory of the Mahdi or the Redeemer is lost will be a generation of a fully withdrawn tradition, and hence a generation wholly sinful, in such generation the Mahdi would come un-awaited, or to hast the coming of the Mahdi one needs to reverse morality to spread sin. When the Mahdi will come the only nine righteous men will be hiding in the Cave as prophesied in the Qur'an (UB, 88). In such a world the one believing in the Messiah will pray from a state of after death, madness, or from his dream, because the world would be wholly sinful and his prayer alone would be able to bring the Messiah (GR, 55).

In such a wait that lasts for centuries one needs to build a memory for the future. Each memory is torture because it envelops its condition of possibility that allowed humans to build a memory, i.e. torture. In Ashura we build a historical memory through torture, a memory for the future and the coming of the Mahdi. The introduction of Ashura came in a period where the belief in the coming of the Mahdi was shattered and needed to be reinforced. Hence it is not guilt that trigger Ashura but the building of a memory for millennia to come (UL, 38).

### **The redeemed world**

The Messiah will end the waiting and open the world of *contemporaneity*, where we wouldn't even need any more to wait for the light reach us in order to see (WY, 33). When the Mahdi and the Christ were here in their first coming, they weren't contemporary of those who persecuted them, only in the second coming, the *Time of the Sword*, will they be contemporaries to all (WI, 185). The Messiah Sbbatai Zevi and Roemer – the scientist who measured the finite speed of light – are related given that the Messiah will end the delay, even the physical delay, in relation to the events, making us contemporary of what is happening. In that sense the Messiah or Mehdi are *forthcoming* because in this universe where the speed of light is finite we won't be able to see him in a contemporaneous way, hence he wouldn't be fully the Messiah. The Messiah is also forthcoming because as the one opening the possibility of infinite recurrence such possibility is still not possible because it implies to travel to different branches of the multiverse to be effective (WY, 35). While the Mehdi is being born, we will see two suns, one as it is and another as it was 8.32 minutes ago (WY, 39).

In the redeemed world we will only find what is willed to *eternally return* (WY, 33). Recurrence and repetition are the only conditions of possibility of the apparition of something new, the Will (WI, 181). The Will liberates because it creates a world where one doesn't need to forgive Evil given that evil becomes impossible. In such a world what can't recur becomes inexistent. This will makes revenge and forgiveness obsolete because it doesn't even will some past event to disappear, like the Shoah, but rather only wills what can return making by that what can't return an impossibility: “by making possible a universe where only what can be willed to eternally recur can exist, he is going to accomplish the impossible whereby the unforgivable, what cannot be willed to recur eternally, would no longer have ever existed, with the consequence that there is then nothing to forgive.” (WY, 42) Only the Anti-Christ can redeem the Shoah and similar events by turning it into an impossible existent, something that cannot happen, and hence that is impossible to happen, and hence that never happened. It remains that the denial of the Shoah by someone other than the Anti-Christ will be akin to the denial of the Revisionists (UB, 18). The Overman by willing the eternal return will reevaluate all values which will lead not only to a break in chronological time, but the revocation of chronology as such (WY, 86). In the messianic time reality itself will exhibit the interpretation of the messianic text and by that interpretation wouldn't be needed anymore, any interpretation leading to exiting the messianic times (WI, 187).

We have then two sides for the redeemed world: the physical side of contemporaneity and the ethical side of the eternal return.

### **Christianity**

#### *On Burials*

From that perspective we can understand a number of Christian dogmas. In that sense, “Let the dead bury the dead” (Matthew 8:21–22) means that the dead, i.e. man as a mortal and dead while alive before the resurrection and Jesus, must bury those who are biologically dead (IT, 83). Similarly, “may you bury me one day” means that you have to die before dying in order for you to be able to bury me given that only the dead can bury the dead – like when Dracula dies before dying to be able to bury his beloved, Elisabeth, showing by that that he is genuinely Christian (GR, 26). The condition of possibility of burial is then to have died before dying, this is how the dead would be able to bury the dead, Juliette reared that possibility but missed it by committing suicide, which is lamentable, as titled in *The most excellent and lamentable tragedy of Romeo and Juliette* (GR, 31). Given that every Christian has eternal life since the advent of Jesus, it follows that all Christians are buried alive given that, as believers in Jesus they have eternal life (IT, 84).

#### *On sin and jouissance*

In sin one feels that he has to cut the sinning organ, but in such cutting the organ doing the cutting feels jouissance and hence need to be cut, unless you “do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing” (Matthew 6:3 in UB, 46).

#### *On the Eucharist*

When a vampire drinks from the wine of the church he tastes blood for the first time. Purity is when there is no mixture of the flows, when wine turns into blood but without mixture, or semen passes through without urine. Anorexics mix the flows, breathing, erecting, defecating. To be pure at the Eucharist is then to drink wine but to taste blood without mixture. Jesus refused to turn stones into bread saying that man doesn’t only feed on bread, but when dividing the bread, he said that it was his body, but not a bodily bread, and by that refused the cannibalistic jouissance. The bread of the Eucharist doesn’t link then to hunger or jouissance (UB, 66).

### **Abraham, Sodom and Gomorrah**

In the reading of Ibn Arabi of the dream of Abraham, Abraham didn’t interpret the dream where he saw himself sacrificing his son, while dreams, which belong to the World of Imagination, must be interpreted (UB, 84). The dream of Abraham killing Ishmael might be the wish of Sarah that wanted Ishmael, the son of Hagar, to be dead, and hence his dream is her wish fulfilled. But, the actual substitution in the bible was that of Isaak to Ishmael, a substitution that played back when Jacob substituted himself to Esau by being covered like a mouton. The whole sequence is dreamlike. Hence, in Islam, God will not test one by asking him to slew his son, contrary to the Christian (Kierkegaard) and Jew (Derrida) reading. Abraham awakened from life, he died before dying, in order to understand the dreamlike life we are living and not slew his son (SM, 32-5).

In the episode of Sodom and Gomorrah Abraham proved again his lack of interpretative skills by conceding to the inhabitants of Sodom. He didn’t understand that God wanted to destroy Sodom out of mercy because when a place is fully sinful, this is when the Mahdī will come: “according to a Twelver Shi’ite tradition, the Mahdī is going to “fill the earth with justice and equity, as it had formerly been filled with injustice and oppression”] are the birth pangs of the coming of the messiah)” (GR, 55). By believing that the fate of Sodom depended on others, on his own prayers, and by defending in this way Sodom, Abraham

delayed the arrival of the Messiah (GR, 53). Abraham thus was able to convince God not to destroy Sodom if it had in its walls ten righteous people. It remains that only Lot, his wife and two daughters left from Sodom, and the Angels warned them not to look back. These two pieces of information point towards the fact that God swept away Lot and his family with the unrighteous inhabitants of Sodom, because “don’t look back”, when understood ethically and not morally, means that in the realm of the undead one can’t turn anymore because his turn will be overturned. -- We can see how Toufic intersects the different texts of the scripture with his fundamental intuition that we are mortals, hence dead while alive, in order to re-read the Bible.

### **Joseph and the dream life**

Chahine’s *The Immigrant* is thoughtless because it doesn’t take into consideration that Joseph was a dreamer. When Joseph told his father Jacob the dream he had about being surrounded by the Sun and the Moon and the stars, his brothers out of jealousy got rid of him by throwing him in the pit, and then faked his death by bringing home a shirt stained with blood. Jacob didn’t ask or refer to the dream and started to mourn. Later Joseph interpreted the dream of the pharaoh and became the overseer, providing food for the dead and the living, painted food, through the ritual of the Opening of the Mouth, being able to feed thousands of dead. When Jacob and his sons travelled to Egypt the dream came true. It remains that the mother of Joseph, Rachel, was replaced by Leah, and if Jacob considered that this was Joseph’s mother it is because he was still sleeping – we have here a parapraxis. Joseph was a dreamer and realized that dreams are dreams within a dream because his brothers killed him, and by that he died before dying. In dying before dying one becomes a lucid dreamer. The life of Joseph is like a dream, such as in the scene where the women cut their hands when watching him move like an angel. After that the women forgot what happened, as when the guard forgot to tell the Pharaoh that Joseph reads dreams, all of these being tokens of a dream life (FR, 145-7). -- In these different reading of the scriptures from the Old Testament we see how Toufic detects clues to explain the behavior of the prophets, the main clue being that they must have died before dying to have access to the undead realm or the World of Imagination. Other clues point to the fact that sometimes in the text we pass from life to death imperceptibly, like in the episode of Lot.

### **The Prophet**

On the authority of Abū Hurayra the Prophet said that, “Whoever sees me in a dream then surely he has seen me for Satan cannot impersonate me,” it follows that if Ali dreamt of the Prophet while he was hiding in the cave it means that the prophet was in two places at once (OS, 161). Given that no one can impersonate the Prophet in dreams it follows that no actor can play his role. The Prophet can’t be interpreted as an image in a dream given that he is himself (FR, 142). The Prophet is a witness, a Shahid, because he died before dying in the night of the Isra’ wal Mi’raj (AS, 58). The Prophet knew that the idols didn’t have life in them, and he proceeded to a twilight of the idols (PP, 29).

### **Sainthood**

To be Ma’sum, one needs then to be omniscient, like God, and foresee all the gestures and words and their possible implications in montages and cast away all what can breach the religious law. Or, one needs to be omnipotent and make it impossible for anyone to interpret or use his words and gestures in a way that can give them another meaning, like in the I’jaz

of the Qur'an. Or, if one is resurrected by the Life, he won't be dead anymore and hence doesn't have an unconscious and can't reedit his gestures and utterances (WI, 132).

## **Hell, and Paradise**

### *Jouissance and Joy*

People don't go to paradise not because they are morally faulty but because they are ethically unfit for paradise and won't be able to stand it. We are on earth because we can't stand paradise, and artists try to make us stand it once again (IT, 89). Paradise is a state of joy that is willed to recur eternally, hence such joy's lament is not impaired, knowing that we lament what is too big for us. Hell, contra to Paradise, is a state of jouissance (WI, 153). When one experiments what induces jouissance he wishes it an endless number of times, hence a thousand and one night. Hell is not a punishment for jouissance but the correct set for it in its eternal duration (WI, 155). In that sense one must be worthy of Hell, must be able to will and endure eternally the compulsion for jouissance, but most aren't able to do so and soon come back to Earth (WI, 154).

### *Prayer*

Anyone who can pray can't find himself in hell because God hears all prayers. Prayer in hell is countered by theft of thought and mind inserts consisting of blasphemous thoughts (UB, 11). It follows that Hell on Earth will be only reached when one can't pray anymore – situations such as Sabra and Shatila would have been Hell on earth if no one was able to pray there anymore (UB, 12). Prayer allows the injection of time and the possibility of the new in a situation void of time. In this sense a Muslim doesn't repeat his prayer five times a day but with each prayer injects time to exist repetition (UB, 13). Prayer is the capacity to listen, to listen to God in us (VP, 201).

## **Angels**

Angels are eternal, always present. It is for this reason that angels cannot be announced but are the annunciators of the event. The one that announces the arrival does not arrive, he is already there, or else he will have to be announced in his turn ad infinitum. It is for this reason that angels are the best at describing things – because they don't affect the course of the events. The presence of the angels is so discreet that it is Mary that seems to be the intruder between the angels of the annunciation. Angels announce the impossible event, because only the impossible event can remain an event when announced – the virgin will have a child (VP, 203). The angel appears to those who wait for the angel, given that waiting for the angel turns one into the puppet of God (UB, 61). It remains that the apparition of the angel is not sufficient to cause the belief in angels or in God – Jesus didn't believe that the angels will help him if he jumps from the temple because he was tempted by a fallen angel – Satan (VP, 208). The Angel is either overwhelming or discreet, the Guardian Angel or the Angel of Death, the former shielding from the latter (WY, 28). As long as one can pray, he can have a Guardian Angel (UB, 11).

The Angel not only announces the impossible event, his presence signals that what is experienced as jouissance can be experienced as joy, and hence can be redeemed. As long as the angel is here you can redeem yourself however abject is your indulgence in jouissance, hence "it's not too late" (WI, 155). When the angel disappears, it means that we moved from the bad to evil. If encountering evil one doesn't leave with the angel sooner or later he will have to let leave something from him in exorcism. Only few wait for angels, but angels wait

for humans when humans are exposed to evil and they, the angels, don't leave (UB, 62). The function of the angel is to make us deserve the event, and when the angel can't make us deserve the event, he doesn't occur to us anymore (UB, 13). One's angel shows one's his extimate on the horizon, i.e. what is most intimate in him outside (WY, 65).

The encounter with the angel is in solitude because the angel (event) suspends the interior monologue having by that an affinity with death (UB, 13). This is due to the fact that angels don't have an interior monologue – as attested by the expression “un ange passe” when everyone is silent (OS, 168). Angels, as beings of light, can't be captured by a photographic plate but they generate the light in the plate (TI, 61). They on the other hand startle pictures and statues into life (WI, 174). Only the portrait and statues with absolute-life-likeness would startle into life when an angel passes next to them (PP, 30). Angels only appear as wholes, in one time and fully. This is because they have aura. This is why one can't make close ups of angels, each part of the angel being the whole angel (WI, 172). Angels do not understand proper names but only generic names, such as Father of Many for Abraham (VP, 369 – note 298).

### 03. Typology: The living and the dead

To understand how a being is made, what he is in his being, i.e. what kind of reality he is, we need to scrutinize the relation between life and death that structures him. Indeed, the ontological structure must be expressed as a ratio or relation between life and death because all beings are the creatures of God which is The Living. It is this structural ratio that will determine the capacities and relation of the created being to the different realms.

#### **The Living**

God is the absolutely living, his generic acts by which he creates and animates everything are the angels, hence the living words of God, and his singular act aimed at saving humanity, his son or the incarnated word.

##### *The Absolutely Living – God*

God is full identity, and claims “I am who I am” (IT, 28). All beings are the self-disclosures of God, it follows that God only addresses himself (WI, 170). By that God is not identical to himself, where the I is said of something else, but is identity itself, where the I refers to itself – “I am I”. All beings identifying to God and being his self-disclosures, he hears all and is close to all and yet is very far, which gives him Aura (WY, 29). God hears all, and hears all prayers because to pray is to listen to the I in us (VP, 201). God being pure identity is actual Possibility (UB, 34). Indeed, God makes all creatures possible by simply uttering their names. God was inspired by the immeasurable love of Iblis to reveal the hidden treasures in him. By being inspired and Actual Possibility, God is the creator of creatures but he also creates worlds out of the Universe that he gives to these creatures (WY, 55).

##### *The Living Word – Angels*

Angels sing the generic names of God, his self-disclosures (VP, 369 – note 298). Angels are then pure eternal beings of light, generic beings, that name the creative acts of God. By that they say “I am Adam”, “I am Father of Many”, or “I am Bird”. Hence, they are the attributes of God and can startle things into life (VP, 30). Angels are in full actuality, God’s actions being always in act. The Fallen Angel, Iblis, didn’t fall to Adam’s virtual cadaver because he was highly moral and only believed in the actual, i.e. in the nature of God. His extreme devotion and love towards God inspired God to create.

##### *The Life – Jesus*

Jesus is the un-manifested being, he is the Promise and by that a possibility, the possible future salvation of the world (VP, 289). Being the Promise, Jesus can’t speak and he speaks by the Holy Spirit, given that when one promises he gives his world (GR, 46). Being The Life, Jesus doesn’t have a proper name and is often called by the generic name Christ (IT, 15). This makes Jesus faceless, not tempted by jouissance, never turning but always facing us, void of resentment, etc. because Jesus doesn’t taste death nor is dead while alive enduring the loss in the labyrinth. He is the one that came to save us from the labyrinth.

#### **The Alive**

##### *The Resurrected*

Like Lazarus, who was resurrected by the Life, the alive is cured from the sickness into death. By that Lazarus was like an animal, lost his ethical behavior, spirit and name. He

needed then to be equipped by the Holy Spirit to have a spirit, and God re-created a world for him (WY, 53-5). During the General Resurrection all humans will be cured from the labyrinth of death.

### *Animals*

Animals don't have proper names but only generic names because they were forbidden to eat from the tree of knowledge and hence didn't die before dying. This is why animals always face straight and never turn. They stare in the open and when looking at a mirror they see their back because they see the whole image (FR, 180). Not having proper names, animals don't have faces. Their expression is not theirs but results from hazardous encounters and hence they only inspire pity or sympathy. Animals have then only heads without faces (TT, 13).

### **The Dead while Alive**

#### *The mortal*

Mortals are alive while being simultaneously dead (WY, 49). Hence the mortal has the properties of the living, i.e. he is an I and a self, while in the same time undergoing the ordeal of being dead in the labyrinth, hence having a dissociated self from the I. This state of being mortal occurred when Adam ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil before eating from the tree of life. By that Adam introduced a form of death foreign to God (WI, 237 – note 74). Adam died before dying and became dead while alive when he ate from the tree<sup>5</sup>, as attested in the Biblical verse: “And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”. (Genesis 2:16–17, King James Version, in WI, 113). With the introduction of the *ungodly death* the generic A-Dam becomes a *proper name*, Adam (WI, 54). The proper name is the corollary of the condition of being dead while alive because proper names are required for the resurrection of the dead and his liberation from the labyrinth (WI, 53). The proper name is hence required to be called, especially when one is giving his back all the times to others, like in the undead realm – in paradise proper names are not required because no one gives his back to others (TT, 126 – note 8). To have a name means to call oneself, like in the French *Il s'appelle*, or *Je m'appelle*. Hence one has a proper name to call himself, literarily. This calling is required for the resurrection and for one who calls himself implicitly to see himself in the mirror (VP, 372 – note 302). The child addresses with a voiceless interpellation his *image in the mirror* and rehearses by that his turning when called. For the child to see himself in the mirror he has to call him-self (FR, 178). We can speculate that such turn is played by the child who turns upon voicelessly calling himself and then sees an image, that seemed to call him, to which he attributes the called name. Such supposition is due to the fact that Echo, who is unable to initiate speech or call Narcissus, repeats his name when he turned and saw himself in the mirror. Would that be like the child tuning, seeing himself in the mirror and then uttering his name, calling him-self? (FR, 177) Mortals by that acquire a mirror image but also *a face*, they are able to face someone and have a face. The face as such is constituted by the call but itself calls to be saved (TT, 13). We can speculate that mortals want to be saved from the labyrinth, and that's why their face expresses that they want to be saved. It follows that the face gazes, projects forward because

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<sup>5</sup> Launch of *What was I thinking* in E-Flux, with Walid Raad, towards the end:  
[https://soundcloud.com/e\\_flux/jalal-toufic-at-e-flux-what-was-i-thinking](https://soundcloud.com/e_flux/jalal-toufic-at-e-flux-what-was-i-thinking)

it faces, leading to the *directional organization of space*. Time, on the other hand, is organized in a *linear time* because when one was a proper name he can now call himself and be re-called, acquiring a memory (FR, 179). We can speculate that the I (God) self-disclose itself now in a proper name, which is itself due to the fall, and by that the mortal is able still to say I as alive, but an I that is a proper name as dead while alive. The identity of the mortal leads then to the organization of a world. The name also allows the body parts to be united in an *organism*, each organ now belonging to the one having a proper name. When a man dies, and if it is prohibited to utter his name, it follows that his organs are just body parts, partial objects that don't belong to him (WI, 194). Given that animals don't have names, we can speculate that this kind of organism is different from the animal organic organization of organs that doesn't require a proper name. Here the organism is built by referring each part to the one bearing a proper name. Another consequence of being dead while alive is the capacity to dream. *Dreaming* is due to the existence of mortals in the undead realm, given that in dreams every name in the dream is that of the dreamer (WI, 267 – note 240). Dreaming is then for man a kind of little death (SM, 51). One feels like sleeping because an undead comes to tell him something from the undead realm (OS, 41). Another consequence is that now *shedding blood* becomes possible, like in the first murder committed by Cain (VP, 213). Will murder be only now possible because the victims call for their murderers from the undead realm? In fact, there is a circularity in murder where in the undeath realm we have a state of generalized vengeance and substitution in which the killer and the victim exchange their places given that in death “every name of history is I”. In life murder will have this circular form, the one killing always thinking or justifying his act by some vengeance or previous murder. But in life it seems that singular individuals are murdered and not the anonymous others of undeath. It remains that one only has a proper name in the first place because of the substitution occurring in the undeath realm. Hence generalized murder and killing a singular person have the same condition of possibility, that of being dead while alive, being part of the undead world imposing the need of a proper name and the circularity of vengeance (FR, 16). Man hence kneels, he *kneels* either for the one that reminds him of the original Fall (God) or for the one that can kill him and thus precipitate him in endless Fall (Cesar) – “Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's” (Mattheu, 22:21), i.e. the kneeling (VP, 210).

#### *The Dead Frozen Double*

The double is my frozen self in the realm of the undead. The double is only my double, and hence he is more myself than myself given that I am a composite while he is just me, the Same. This makes the double unrecognizable even yet he is only me, me being doubled while him being absolutely simple. I include all the others in the realm of undeath, while the double only includes me. When I encounter the double, given that he is only me and hence cut from everyone else, I feel alone with the alone. If I don't see my frozen double next to me it is because I swish pan out of fear of fear, but the double is there (VP, 172-4). The double is the one who experience my death when I die and by that he is the spectator of my death and the one that steals my death (VP, 184). The living swish pans out of fear of fear when he is about to see the frozen double, hence it is the frozen double that is the cause of the blurriness of some images (VP, 172). Fear creates then a mask on the face of the mortal and allows him to shield himself from the horrifying sight (VP, 124). The mortals defense mechanism against the frozen double is anxiety, the fear for life, their fear of a state void of any affects, like the one being undergone by the frozen double (WI, 22).

### *The amnesiac version of oneself*

When one didn't become yet the frozen double, the double is his amnesiac version in the undeath realm that collaborates with him in his creative endeavors, while the living helps this amnesiac version of oneself against the double. The help is carried out by writing allowing the amnesiac double to express himself given that the amnesiac version in the undeath realm is only resisting the sensations and thoughts imposed on him by the frozen double (VP, 62). Both the I and the amnesiac version of the I resist thought imposition, the first against deductive objective chains of thoughts as those of the generalities of the academic, and the other as imposed on him by the double (VP, 300).

## **The Unliving**

### *The Cadaver*

Physical death as such is the non-event, while dying and moving in the undeath realm is the event par excellence. It remains that physical death is observed by the other mortals and can be understood through this ontological structure. The dead is the one that can't be called because his turns are overturned. We close the eyes of the dead because we don't want to see what he is witnessing in undeath and because we don't believe that he is really dead (VP, 219). Mortals observe a minute of silence to silence the voices in their heads and those of the voices-over in the head of the dead (VP, 156). Death releases the spiritual dimension in us, that virtuality that we contain as being in the undead world. This is why nature is convoluted when highly spiritual individuals die, like saints or Jesus, leading to cataclysms and stigmata (FR, 227). We can speculate that the cadaver is different from a rock and a dead animal because these can still say "I am Rock" or "I am Meat". It remains that the cadaver can't say "I" because his I is that of another, it was the I of the one that owned the organism, the I coupled to the proper name. The cadaver not having an I is ungodly and must be hidden, must be made actually un-manifest by being buried. The cadaver is by that the opposite of The Life given that The Life is the un-manifest being that will become manifest in actuality, while the cadaver is a manifest being that needs to be made un-manifested in actuality.

### *The Mourner*

Those close to the dead mourns him but if they can't achieve a successful mourning they become like the dead, they are now unliving. The success of mourning depending on assigning a finality to death, today's medical take on death as resulting from sickness makes it such that death has lost its meaning (VP, 156). The mourners look in the abyss given that the cadaver is taken into an endless fall (VP, 258). The mourners adopt hieratic attitudes like the rigid posture of the cadaver and look idiotic. The cadaver is idiotic and laughable (VP, 259). Would the cadaver be idiotic because it imposes on us a question – are we dead? (WI, 39) The mourner feels guilty because the dead's unconscious can be penetrated by others and hence the dead perceives the bad thoughts we have and had towards him (VP, 158). The mourners try to resurrect the dead by screaming their names. After the mourning period the dead is referred to as an object and not anymore as one who is being called. We can speculate that the mourner as unliving is one that is lost to himself, his I only refer now to his lost self, the self before the death of the beloved and he can't have a life anymore. He is still a mortal but a mortal whose proper name was neutralized. The unliving is different from

the one who died before dying because he didn't experience his own death but only lost his self or life after the death of another.

### **The Dead**

One cannot assume his own death. When we die it is another that acknowledges that we are dead. Or, it is only as another that we observe our own death, like when Nietzsche said, "I, as Prado, am dead". In the realm of the undead on the other hand, as Nietzsche said when he died before dying, "Every name of history is I". Hence one assumes all the names of history when he dies, and by that he is everyone. But, in the realm of undeath he is also no one given that he, like the vampire, can't assume his proper name or see his reflection in the mirror – the dead sees his back in the mirror (VP, 169). Given that the dead assumes all the names of history it follows that now he can't address anyone else because everyone is a projection of the dead self – writing a letter to another standing to writing a letter to oneself. As dead and being all the others, it follows that no one can represent me or speak in my place given that he is already myself. The difference between the dead and God is that everything is a self-disclosure of God and hence God addresses himself in everything, while the dead is confused with everyone else and hence can't address anyone (WI, 170). Assuming all the names of history and being unable to distinguish his proper name, the dead cannot turn anymore when he is called (TT, 97). The living has a proper name and can compose with others, while the dead are absolutely alone but have all the names of history (WI, 114). We can interpret the peculiar trait of death where one is unable to say "I am dead" either physically, being dead I am unable to speak, or literally where death is always said by another – the difficulty here is that the I can't refer anymore to Me, being dead making me assume all the names of history. The consequence of such impossibility is that the I as such is immortal, given that the I remains but not as referring to this or that self. God is the I, "I am who I am", while we are disclosures of God being able to say "I am Adam", meaning Adam is a disclosure of God. In death the dead can't relate then anymore the I to his past self, and by that he can assume all the proper names of history. The other consequence of that is that the dead can't turn anymore when called by his name given that he doesn't recognize such a name. When one dies he is unable to turn anymore because his turn is overturned by an overturn. This is why he always faces straight and ends up being disoriented moving in a labyrinth. The dead ends up being abandoned by those who loved him because after calling his name and him not turning they conclude that he is another. To get out or not to get in the labyrinth one must be connected to at least one human being that will be able to resurrect him by calling him (FR, 186). The story of Loth shows that, when the Angel told him "Don't turn back" it meant that he was already dead (VP, 199). Being lost in the labyrinth, not capable of answering his name, the dead is like a homeless, he is nowhere, without a territory, while his body is in the grave, as indicated by the "Here Lies" (VP, 44). The dead is homeless, or more specifically wordless, because it is God that creates a world for the living. We can speculate that the dead is wordless because he has lost the relation between the I and the self, and by that the self-disclosures of God – what makes a world being the variation of the same law or being. Would it be that because God is self-disclosed in all creatures that they have an inner monologue with themselves? I being Me, I enter in conversation with myself. In death this relation between the I and Me, God and the Creature, is broken given that Iblis introduced a form of death foreign to God. With that the dead hears voices-over and not anymore, an inner monologue. Would this be the reason why the dead sees the reflection of his back in the mirror, being all the others without a proper

name? (VP, 191) Hence the I is now dissociated from the Self, bringing the self to a silence-over, an absolute silence. Such silence freezes the dead, brings him to a dead stop (WI, 101). On the other hand, given that the dead assumes all the names of history he will also hear voices-over in their heads, the voices of all the “other” dead being themselves (UL, 15). Being all the names of history make the dead confuse the living with the dead and have a tendency to bury the living while they are still alive (IT, 88). Contrariwise the dead himself need to know that he is dead by either looking at his dead body or recalling how he ended up in the undeath realm (OS, 170). Other peculiarities of the dead are how the labyrinthine structure affects their ethical behavior. Being all the names of history, the dead witnesses an intermingling of identities (FR, 18). This leads to an indistinguishability between fidelity and infidelity, a woman marrying the brother of her husband because they are indistinguishable (FR, 28). This indistinguishability of identities leads also, for the hasty among the dead, to generalized vengeance, leading to guilt given the play of substitution in the labyrinth: taking vengeance on an enemy turning into harming a friend (FR, 18).

## **The Undead**

### *The Living Dead*

The undead main figure is the Vampire. We can speculate that the vampire is different from the dead given that he abdicates God while still alive by radicalizing the Christian precepts. Indeed, Dracula becomes undead when he decides to bury his beloved Elisabeta, given that in Christianity only “the dead must bury the dead” (GR, 26). Dracula died before dying to achieve such burial out of love, and by that he became undead. By willing his death and tasting death before dying the undead doesn’t become all the names of history, he preserves his proper name, Count Dracula, but the I is dissociated from the self, i.e. Dracula can’t be anymore a self-Disclosure of God – Dracula can’t say then “I am” (VP, 21). By that Dracula is frozen, as seen in his coffin, undergoes silence-over, but doesn’t hear the voices-over that assail the dead. He is also imageless, doesn’t have a reflection in the mirror because he can’t say that his self is I. On the other hand, the dead sees his back in the mirror being “all the names of history” (VP, 191). The undead having abdicated Life, the unity of the I and the Self, is hence mourning himself and for that reason they wouldn’t call their own name, leading to the absence of their reflection in the mirror and the impossibility of them having an image (UB, 59). We can speculate that the dissociation of the undead from God makes him lose his I and by that the undead becomes secretive, a being of shadows, i.e., a being that remains hidden even when manifest, as attested in the absent reflections in the mirrors. If light can destroy the Vampire, it is not because of its power of making manifest, the vampire being able to remain hidden when manifested, but because light itself is the secretive, what remains hidden while manifesting itself (VP, 110). We can speculate that by losing his I the undead can’t appear to himself and becomes the shadow of himself. Also, while Jesus is the Life and the Light because he is pure possibility that brings into manifestation while remaining un-manifested, the undead is an actual un-manifestation, darkness as such, un-revelation. As a being of shadows, the shadows of the Vampire materialize, receive something of his body, which makes him look taller. Even the chairs in the Vampire’s castle are tall making those who sit on them look as if they are standing (VP, 249). In a way we can say that there is an indiscernibility between the Vampire and his shadow, the imaginal line distinguishing bodies and shadows being blurred, as we can see in Murnau’s *Nosferatu*.

Having dissociated the self from the I, the undead is in the labyrinth. By that the vampire can move through quantum tunneling making leaps in space, like when we see the vampire on one side of the spider web and then, jump cut, on the other side (VP, 134). Quantum tunneling gives the impression that the vampire can double himself in space, movement being the capacity to duplicate oneself (VP, 23). This coupling of the labyrinth to normal space allows the vampire to cross fragmented spaces in one continuum, like, when he is speaking, he begins the sentence in a space and finishes it in another totally different space (VP, 22). Hence the undead is everywhere and nowhere, here and there, in our space, and hence moving while remaining still. This gives the impression that the undead is a somnambulist, when he moves he seems to be still, and when still he seems to move (VP, 22). Another treatment of this coupling is the proliferation of mice on the ship of the vampire, the mouse standing for the muscles that move everywhere while the Vampire remains frozen still in his coffin (VP, 22). Or, while being frozen the Vampire sets objects in movement, like his automobile ship, or the furniture of his house, which induces a state of hypnosis in his guests and victims, forcing them to seek a solid object, like the wall, in order not to feel lost and dissociated from their own self (VP, 338 – note 32). Hence the vampire occupies our real space in a labyrinthine way crossing all barriers and yet some objects arrest him in an inexplicable way. These objects are such as veils, where the person seems to be imprisoned behind the veil (VP, 24). The Vampire is blind and yet his ubiquity makes it such that he has an extend visual spectrum, he is able to see the pores and microbes on the skin (VP, 56). This is why we can speculate that sometimes he could be arrested by what seems to us an inexplicable obstacle. Similarly, being here and there the vampire feels overexposed images, the light of the two places cumulating in one image (VP, 58). We can speculate that this might be an additional reason why Vampires fear light, their image being overexposed and burned down. Being lost because they are dissociated, the vampires are lost and strangers in strange land, they speak with cryptic language and a heavy accent (VP, 46). Given that the Vampire transforms this world into a labyrinth, those who encounter the Vampire are always alone and lost. A community can win over a vampire by intersecting their fragmented stories and by that building a map. This piecing together is a form of telepathy. Mina, in Coppola's *Dracula*, is a telepath and can assemble the pieces, and then trace the map and narrative, that will allow a communal encounter with the vampire (TR, 33).

*The Dead Living, or the one who Died Before Dying*

Another form of undeath is the dead living, or the one who died before dying. (VP, 136) In this category we have the mad, those who underwent a near death experience, a psychotic episode and the like. We can say that the difference with the living dead is that the dead living doesn't will his death, or his death occurs to him leading to another form of dissociation of the I and the self. In such limit experiences one asks himself, "Am I dead?", or says, "I must be dead" (WI, 160). The problem is to know how such a question or sentence is possible. The one who dies before dying doesn't ask, "Am I dreaming?" or "Am I in a movie?", but rather asks the question: "Am I dead?"<sup>6</sup> He asks this specific question because he sees specific things, such as frozen people, people looking like props, and the like (WI, 162). Mortals are sick into death, but they don't know that they are dead while alive. Only the one who dies before dying knows that, and by that his death becomes willed and

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<sup>6</sup> "A conversation between Walid Raad and Jalal Toufic, dedicated to Walid Raad", towards the end: [http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads/How\\_Would\\_You\\_Not\\_Ask.mp3](http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads/How_Would_You_Not_Ask.mp3)

not accidental – in death many discover accidentally that they were already dead, only the one who lives that event knows that in a necessary way. Only by dying before dying can one give himself his own death, experience his dead counterpart, and by that avoids premature death because he knew before dying that he was dead (WI, 167). The dead-living by dying before dying becomes a lucid dreamer. As the Prophet says, “Men are asleep; they awaken at their death”. This means that when one dies before dying he awakens and he sees that men are actually sleeping while being awake (FR, 152). Why men are asleep? Because they don’t realize that life as such is impossible and not only in difficult situation, and by not registering the impossibility of life, i.e. that life is also death, they prove that they are dreaming because only in dreams one doesn’t register negations, as Freud has shown (UB, 33). By awakening and knowing his dual nature the dead living acquires piercing sight because he died before dying and by that becomes a *shahid*, meaning a witness and the one who died. This state of piercing sight gives the dead living an intense life as it is attest by the Quran and the Bible (AS, 62): “Call not those who are slain in the way of –Allah ‘dead.’ Nay, they are living ...” (Qur’an 3:169) “though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand” (Matthew 13:13). Because of such intense life we feel that the dead living will come back after his physical death, as is the case with the Prophet, Ali, or Hallaj (AS, 63). Having died before dying, being then in the impossibility of assuming fully the position of the I, the dead living is in the labyrinth, lost, in exile, endures depersonalization and never feels at home (WY, 48).

#### *Witnessing one Own Death*

In limit cases or peculiar circumstances, one witnesses his own death. In Hitchcock’s *Vertigo* Judy witnesses her own death when seeing a double of herself being murdered. By that her death is stolen from her. Judy dies again at the end of the movie to reclaim her death. In the undead realm, or esoterically, there is always someone who robs us from our death, while exoterically, in this world, no one can rob me from my death. When one sees his own death, like in *Vertigo*, he acquires vertiginous eyes, is able to see what is happening in his back, and is difficult to look at because such a person time travels, is before and after her death. This is exemplified in *La Jetée* by Marker where a man witnesses himself being killed as an adult while he was a child (VP, 150). In the *Matrix*, Neo becomes the One when he sees himself on the other side of death, because on the other side of death I is another (VP, 223). We can say that we have here another variation of dying before dying, one where one doesn’t experience death as such but only sees himself dead as another. By that the experience is not complete but one feels a dissociation of the self and the I acquiring capacities proper to the labyrinthine.

#### *The Ghost or the One who is Unable to Die*

The Ghost is the one who is unable to die because of some unfinished business in the world of the living. In Hamlet, the King can’t leave the world because he was murdered by his brother. By that the Ghost is dying to tell us something because if he doesn’t, he won’t be able to die (IT, 98). The Ghost is fictional in the sense that its place of apparition is most of the time in fiction (VP, 74).

#### *The Specter*

A ghost that appear but not because of some unfinished business. It is what persists of the consciousness of the dead person that tries to reach the unconscious of the living (UL, 12).

*The Revenant*

When the living buries the dead, the dead becomes a revenant because in the Christian era only the dead must bury the dead: “But Jesus told him, ‘Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead’” (Matthew 8:22; cf. Luke 9:60 in GR, 27). The revenant comes then to haunt the living and is himself haunted by others, being undead in the labyrinthine realm. In, *Beirut Phantom* by Salhab, Khalil is a revenant and this is revealed by the fact that at the end of the movie he was mistaken to be another, i.e. he was haunted by another like revenants are (TR, 39). We can speculate that hasty burials that don’t implicate the deep suffering and dying before dying of the beloved who bury their dead implies that the buried will come back.

*The Reincarnated*

Animals have different defense mechanisms when their surroundings become unbearable, such as catatonia, simulating death, hibernation, etc. It remains that the only way out for those enduring the labyrinth would be to go back into life, hence to reincarnate (VP, 179). Eurydice not being able to bear the undead realm reincarnated in life (UL, 19). One will stop needing to reincarnate when he will be exempt of debt or unfinished business (VP, 283).

*The Zombie*

Zombies are dead cadaver raised from the grave. They can be raised back from the grave after three days of their burials. To become a zombie, one doesn’t only need to be buried while in a state of stupor, or seemingly dead, but he needs to have tasted the labyrinth of undeath (VP, 350 – note 136). The zombie is what befalls on those who cast away the ghosts, those who do not carry out the unfinished business that they should carry out and start acting insouciantly amid chaos, like the mother of Hamlet, that now has “eyes without feelings, feeling without sight” (VP, 104). The zombie then is mindless, a living body without a mind (VP, 251). In post war Lebanon many are like zombies because they’ve cast away the ghosts and they immersed from a devitalizing war where one feels now that everything that happens to him is not his, just occurring at the surface (UB, 42).

<b>The Living</b>		
I am I – Full Identity Hears all prayers and creates by speech	Absolutely and eternally living All is his self-disclosure	God
I am the Word – Generic Identity Hears prayers and announces the event of creation	Startle into life Omnipresent	Angels
I am the incarnated Word – Singular Act Speaks by the Holy Spirit	Life itself Un-manifested being, the Possible	Jesus
<b>The Alive</b>		
I am (Lazarus) Speaks by the Holy Spirit	Resurrected life exempts from death Akin to an animal, frontal and faceless	Lazarus
I am Bird Pray but don’t speak	Purely alive Frontal and faceless, poor in world	Animals
<b>Dead while Alive</b>		
I am Adam / I am A-Dam Prays, speaks and receives	Mortal where life is coupled with death Has a face, turns, a name, violent death	Mortals Humans
I am Me Mute	Dead frozen double in undeath Gives me a mask, virtual cadaver, affectless	Frozen Double

I am Him Every name of history, collaborates, speaks to me	Amnesiac double living in undeath His turns are overturned, confused names	Amnesiac Double
<b>The Unliving</b>		
(I) the cadaver Lost his name	Physically dead Endless fall and closed eyes	Cadaver
I am not myself Neutralized name and life	Unliving Abyssal gaze, hieratic, guilt, resurrection	Mourner
<b>The Dead</b>		
I am every name in history Confusion of names, voices over, dead silence	Dead in the undeath realm Overturn, imageless, lost, frozen	The dead
<b>The Undead</b>		
(I) am Dracula Proper name without an I	Living dead where life is undeath Frontal, imageless, frozen, extended sight	Living Dead
I am Jalal Toufic Depersonalization of the proper name with an I	Dead living who died before dying Piercing sight, shahid, lucid dreamer	Dead Living
I am the dead one Witnessing I as another	Mortal that sees his body dying Vertiginous eyes, time travel, claiming death	Witnessing his death
I am dying to tell you Accomplishes his death in speech	Ghost you can't die before telling us Spectral, fictional	Ghost
I am the consciousness of the dead Speaks consciously to the unconscious	Specter as the conscious residue Spectral apparition	Specter
I am dead for others and another for others Speaks as another	Revenant came back from a supposed death Haunts and is haunted, confused as other	Revenant
I am another self Speaks as me and my past dead double	Reincarnated after being dead Unbearding death, unfinished business	Reincarnated
I am only myself Egotistical speech	Zombies are alive but like dead They don't carry the unfinished business	Zombie

### Worldly characters

Worldly characters are defined in relation to their awareness of their situation in the world as encompassing unworldly realms.

#### *In relation to the mind*

The basic intellectual capacities will be defined in relation to the awareness of the undead realm. Mental capacities in humans must be then understood as the exercise of an unworldly sight, the capacity to see the unworldly:

*The Idiot*: death is the realm of fellowship and the Idiot is the one that is attached to the body, like when one transgresses the limits of the coffin (VP, 259). The idiot is the one that always tries to cope with a question that is deeper than the given situation (WI, 39).

*The Stupid*: he is the one that can't cope with an emergency (WI, 39). It is because he is only attached to life, his anxiety of undeath being unconscious and paralyzing.

*The Head Person:* is the one who is oblivious of how the spirit affects nature, like the son in *Mother and Son* by Sokurov (FR, 227).

*The Detached:* the one that knows that the double could be thinking in one's mind allows him to detach from the stream of consciousness (VP, 35).

#### *In relation to Time*

Time was created by Iblis to distract himself. Being part of the present and not in some distracted place will require to be able to shed away the realms of distraction. Maintaining a present will be the task of focus and speech in this world:

*Being in the moment:* the one that is able to endure the subsistence of the moment, like when hearing a sound, and that knows that one always leaves the moment in a lapse, like in Bokanowski's *Angel* where the character is hearing the notes of music (OS, 157).

*Being in the present:* Organized matter can't recreate the present because it contains its own memory, as we can see in the disintegration of ornamentation. Only the voice that disappears when uttered can generate a present, like in *India Song* where the voice doesn't become older while buildings do (TR, 36).

*The Revolutionary:* he is the one aware of some worldly impossibility while the politicians make the people dream by making them oblivious to such impossibility. It is this awareness of an impossibility in the present that awakens the people. By that the revolutionary makes his people contemporary of their present time because a change already happened and they were lagging behind (UB, 34).

*The Pubescent Girl:* the portrait allows the pubescent girl to resist the pubescent amnesia when she becomes a woman and that woman steals her memories. The portrait is then a rite of non-passage that distinguishes the before and after (PP, 23).

#### *In relation to death*

Mortals are ontologically related to death; this is what constitute their being. In the world their relation to death can be as follow:

*The Suicidal:* when one commits suicide as a simple physical act one feels that he is being murdered by another, while suicide could be a destiny only if a subtle other body is considered to be doing the killing. In destinal suicide the double would be the one as himself trying to prevent the suicide (WI, 74).

*The Martyr:* the genuine martyr is the one who dies before dying and by that achieves piercing sight. It remains that there are other worldly figures of martyrdom:

*Posthumous Martyr:* is the one that becomes a martyr after he dies and only wonders if there is life after death, such as Hariri or Karami (AS, 63).

*Suicidal Martyr:* to give one's life to a cause without dying before dying is akin to suicide or some ransoming operation, such as those of the Hezbollah or Sheikh Ahmad Yasin. One can't give his life unless he is the Life or if he has created that life (AS, 61).

*Living Martyr:* Riad el Turk is a living martyr, one that endured years of torture and imprisonment in the Syrian jails and was able to forget about his previous life, suspend his daydreaming because they would connect him to the world, and made drawings on the floor that he constantly repeated each time one opened the door. Others, like Marwan Hamade only survive an assassination attempt and hence are mistakenly called living martyrs (UB, 23).

*Flight for life:* As long one has not achieved piercing sight, he has eyes but doesn't see, and hence he can't give his life nor die for a cause, thus he must flee for his life, like the followers of Mohamad did when they emigrated.

Moses did not confront Pharaoh but flee for his life (AS, 62).

*The Evil-Doer:* he is blinded in life and wishes to die in order to recover sight (AS, 57).

*The Nihilist:* the followers of Jesus who didn't achieve fana' or understand how Jesus deserved what happened to him turn into nihilists praising a tired life and to get done with life (UB, 21).

#### *Traits in relation to desire*

These deal with libidinal desires that are configured by the undead realm. Indeed, one is seduced by a person that is haunted by another, is fetishistic when he sees the body as a trace and residue of the self, is a pervert when he sees the singular living beings as replaceable others, is in love when he replaces the I with another proper name, is betrayed and ashamed when his self is turned into replaceable others like in the realm of undeath:

*The seducer:* is the one that have a double personality, like Madeleine in *Vertigo* who is haunted by Carlotta and is impersonated by Judy. When Judy is fetishized to look like Madeleine, Scottie is not seduced anymore. Given that Madeleine is played by another, Scottie is falling in love with her and Judy knows that he is, while she also knows that the real Madeleine knows nothing about that. This combination of awareness and ignorance makes one seductive (OS, 13).

*The fetishist:* he collects items related to the life of the beloved and these items lose their aura when the beloved dies, such as fluids, hair, etc. (TT, 79) What the fetishist looks for is for the whole body that will be left as a stain to be collected (TT, 62).

The pervert: is the one who thinks that his object of love is replaceable while he also thinks that he might never find it again (WI, 158). The City of the Fellowship of Strangers would be similar to the City of the Dead given that in death we are familiar strangers. In this city we can have a number of intense relations between strangers (TT, 59).

*The Adult:* is the one who makes another person, a person also other than his mother, mind his business, like in *Vertigo* where Madeleine's husband organizes the libidinal desire for Scottie (TT, 80).

The Lover: the lover is the one who gives what he doesn't have (UL, 26). The love of the beloved points to a hidden treasure in her lover and forces him to create in a cruel manner (UL, 31). The lovers are alone they are in their time and space and they are secluded from the world (UL, 4). They are secluded from the world because alone they can restart the human race, their story having for background the destruction of cities, like in *Hiroshima mon amour* (UL,3). The lovers burry the world and can only see each other (FR, 167). "Love me as I am" means to love me even if "death do us apart", hence to love against death where one becomes another (UL, 5/14). Lovers travel to be lost but lost together, as if they are together in the realm of death where everyone is lost (UL, 8). Betrothal is when one writes letters to his beloved and by that makes him his collaborator in the realm of undeath (UL, 8). In marriage, one is asked to follow his beloved in death, hence the beloved must resurrect his lover (UL, 8). Only because we think that the beloved is irreplaceable, we believe that we must resurrect him (WI, 158). This is why one can't love two persons of the same name, given that this will make him confuse the names upon the

resurrection (GR, 18). When lovers say “tu’burni”, “will you burry me”, it is because there is the promise of the resurrection (GR, 26). One cannot love the dead but he can go to Hades and bring back the beloved and then love the beloved again, like Orpheus did (UL, 14). Love can bypass death but might not resist impulses, like when the vampire falls in love yet he needs to go out to search for blood (UB, 55).

The unfaithful: betrayal is when one opens his unconscious to the death realm and the interchangeability of bodies and intermingling of names and hence in betrayal one is “dead to his lover”. One can’t be proud of that because in death there is no pride (UL, 11). For spiritual persons betrayal is followed by self-debasement, like in the case of Iblis (UL, 22).

Unrequited Love: given that in love one gives what he doesn’t have, the exemplary love would be to love the one that loves us but that we don’t love. In that case this love would be the hidden treasure that our lover felt we had (WY, 22).

### **Altered States of Consciousness**

Psychological traits are due to the relation of the self to the unconscious, i.e. the undead realm. Different characters will be defined as to how the unconscious disrupts their behavior:

*Having personality:* one has a personality when he is caught in unfinished business in the world. This blocks him from becoming other or reaching back to his Buddha nature, the way he was before he got entangled in the worldly affairs (VP, 282).

*The Paranoid:* is the one that has a world that is excessively coherent that ends in the end of the world or a global disaster (WY, 49).

*The Schizophrenic:* is the one that shows that other worlds are possible (VP, 288).

*The Traumatized:* post-traumatic amnesia makes it such that one can only access the catastrophic event through the distortions of the dream (VP, 229).

*The Amnesiac:* the one who undergoes lapses in memory and forgetfulness (VP, 280).

*The Mad:* is the one that lost the world but gains the multiverse (WY, 55).

*The Hypnotized:* Hypnosis is death feigning – to pretend that one is dead (VP, 292). The hypnotized has such a delay as to register the perceived image that he actually deals with it as a memory rather than as a perception (OS, 155).

*The Hallucinated:* the one that sees the disclosure of one of his elder’s secrets that appear as a hallucination (IT, 72).

*The Somnambulist:* he is doubled, part of him observing his motor movements the other one doing them (VP, 22). The somnambulist is the one who mixes the realms of wake and dreams (VP, 137).

*The Hypnagogic:* is the one in a state of consciousness between wake and sleep (VP, 342).

*The Dissociated:* when one stops believing what he is seeing or considers that he is in another place than where he is (VP, 64).

*The Disoriented:* in disorientation you don’t know who you are or where you are but you see the room (VP, 186).

*Outer Body Experience:* one that sees his body as another (IT, 75).

*The Possessed:* to be inhabited by another that control our gestures and speech (IT, 88).

## Supernatural Characters

Some characters have the capacity to travel between the realms at will. We can say that the advent of the Will is when we will be able at will to travel like that and cross the different imaginal lines:

*The Visionary*: he sees things themselves and hence what he sees doesn't require to be assigned to a POV. In the vision the image stands for the thing, the 3D object (OS, 155). The visionary sees a purely optical world to which he doesn't react (WI, 32).

*The Telepath*: is the one who is able to communicate across the labyrinth, like Mina in Coppola's *Dracula* (VP, 79). The telepath can sense things considered irrelevant due to his large correlation length (VP, 57).

*The Clairvoyant*: the one who sees the linear past and future, like Dany in the *Shining* (TR, 31).

*The Magician*: the one who saw in a vision during his initiation his body being dismembered that now allows him to heal (VP, 174).

*Realistic Magic*: the one who create an image that can affect the model. The image captures a specter of the real body, one of its layers (IT, 26).

*The Dancer*: he is the one that can go from one realm to another by using a subtle body in his dance (SD, 28).

*The Master*: the one who receives from the other realms, like Ibn Arabi receiving the *Bezels of Wisdom* from an Angel (WI, 211).

*The Predestined*: the one that endorses a problem that precedes one's life and requires a collaboration with other realms through the creation of a subtle body. One's destiny is announced to him through an oracle (WI, 72).

*The Auratic*: is what is infinitely approachable and yet never reachable. Many characters and situation can have aura in that sense (WY, 27).

*The Spiritualist*: the one who goes on a trip, the spiritual being the trip itself, and sees that he was already in the place he is (WY, 66).

*The Sufi*: the one who is able to cross between realms without undergoing a lapse of consciousness (VP, 18). He aims at uniting again with God because for him this separation is hell, like Hallaj (GR, 32).

*The Saint*: the one who is able through his omniscience and omnipotence to prevent any evil effects related to his gestures and speech (WI, 132).

## 04. Topology: Closures and permutations

The parameters of spaces will consist of their permutation ratio, their boundaries and directions, and what is being repeated in these spaces.

### Paradise – Joy

The original state of being is the Garden of Eden. Paradise is a state of constant joy and few are able to endure that (TT, 89). We can say that paradise as a constant state doesn't know any permutations or repetitions. Pradjanov's *The color of the Pomegranate*, or Bokanowski's *The Angel*, approximate the experience of paradise. (TT, 89) Joy hits directly the soul. (SM, 28) Only joy allows the suspension of repetition where the object of desire is always considered as not being the right one, "that's not it". (WI, 154) The joyous is what detached instantly as an image and cast a shadow on those living it because they know that this moment will be lost in this world. This is how relations lose their innocence because they apprehend the moment of loss of this joyous moment. (UL, 6) Lament says "what is happening to me is too big for me", and this is joy in its purest sense – Turks and Kurds express their lament in the elegiac music which is pure joy. (WY, 87) Joy is an intensity that can counter the compulsion to jouissance, but to be able to produce such intensity one must have died before dying. (WI, 148) We can add that love is a paradisiac feeling where Adam used to plant his seed in Eve like one extending his hand to reach a fruit, as Saint-Augustin says. But after the fall, Adam lost his original nature and his body stopped obeying him leading to uncontrolled erections and compulsive sexuality coupled with jouissance. Sexual love became by that coupled with jouissance and lust.

### Hell – Jouissance

When God casted away Iblis he suffered Hell from the separation from his beloved. In order for Iblis to distract himself he created Time, forgetfulness, pride, and all the debased states. (UL, 31) Hell is a state of constant jouissance and few are able to endure such repetition. (WI, 155) We can say that the scenes of jouissance trigger the compulsion to repeat, and such repetition are enacted in Hell. Iblis being an angel can't feel jouissance but he enjoys the jouissance of others, i.e. the jouissance of others is felt as joy in him. (WI, 149) Art related to hell will try to convey jouissance, compulsive repetitive actions of intensity, like in the movie *Exorcist*, Barker's play *Judith the parting of the body*, Rice's novel *Blood of Mugwump*. Jouissance hits the nervous system directly and an art that achieves that provides jouissance, like the paintings of Bacon (SM, 29), or the movies of Gaspard Noé, *Enter the Void* and *Irreversible* (WI, 148) Conflict zones are Hell because they induce jouissance, like in the Lebanese wars. (UB, 45) In the bible it is said that when an organ cuts another sinning organ and it takes jouissance it must itself be cut, this is why the left hand shouldn't know what the right hand is doing: "If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand [the one with which you gouged out and threw away your right eye] causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell" (Matthew 5:29-30 in UB, 46) When one witnesses jouissance, like Shahryar did when he saw his wife betraying him, he witnesses a scene of lascivious automatisms, which induced in him paralysis. Witnessing jouissance induces compulsive repetitions where a one-night stands as a thousand nights, which led Shahryar to slew a thousand women. Eyes can't endure the sight of jouissance and hence they are either

gouged, in a Christian gesture, or the sight is covered by a Freudian screen memory, the traumatic sight being replaced by protective images that yet still bear repetitions. (SM, 22) It remains that in love one must follow the one who provoke in us the desire for jouissance, such Oedipus who must have killed his non-biological father and slept with Merope, his non-biological mother, for whom he had a genuine sexual desire. Because he didn't do so he was punished by sleeping with his biological mother and killing his biological father. (WI, 82) We can speculate that love and jouissance-Hell are related given that Hell itself was created out of the immeasurable love of Iblis to God, or that after the Fall love became coupled with jouissance when humans tasted evil. With jouissance one feels that he is never reaching his object of desire and needs to replace it anew, claiming, "this is not it". On the other hand, when one indulges in the object cause of desire he ends up losing himself and claims, "this is not me". (WI, 154) We can say then that jouissance is what paves the way to loss, the loss of the object and oneself, and opens on the labyrinth.

### **The Bardo State**

In the bardo state elements transform in one another, like earth becoming water. It is the realm of real desire and not desire as confused with pleasure. The bardo state appears at the moment of death. (UB, 28) The fruit of oneself are discovered in the Imaginal World or in the Bardo (Barzakh) state where the esoteric become exoteric. (WY, 65) In the Bardo state the final condition of life is the initial condition of death, it is the realm of becoming where opposites mutate in one another, the state of the in-between. (FR, 271) Sometimes Toufic refers to the Bardo state as being the Labyrinth itself, we think that they must be distinguished.

### **The Labyrinth**

The maze is a worldly configuration while the labyrinth is an unworldly configurations. We mortal can experience the labyrinth because we are already dead. (WI, 97) Indeed when Iblis tempted Adam, he tempted him to join the Labyrinth and since then Adam is in the Labyrinth. We can say that the general labyrinthine structure relies on the dissociation of the I and the self, (WI, 115) which leads to a profound modification of the spatio-temporal coordinates. Continuous space and chronological time are disturbed leading to different effects depending on the level of the dissociation between the I and the self. It remains that we can describe in these general terms the properties of the labyrinth.

#### *Entering and exiting the labyrinth*

The fall in the Labyrinth happened because Adam ate from the fruit of Knowledge before eating from the fruit of Life introducing by that another form of death in the world. Would that be the reason why one always enters the labyrinth in a lapse of consciousness? Another explanation as to why we lapse in consciousness when entering the labyrinth given by Toufic is that the labyrinth has a fractal dimension between one and two, and hence moving in the labyrinth makes us change the dimension of space and doesn't consist of a change or passage in the three-dimensional space itself. (VP-27) We can speculate that the form of death introduced by Adam is a fractional death, a death that is coupled to life rather than being the end of life, or physical death. Lapses of consciousness are the like of one going into the dreaming state without knowing how or remembering how he got there. Are dreams fractal realities or fractional realities – i.e. situations between reality and inexistence? While in mazes the threshold is easy to detect, in the labyrinth we never know when we crossed the

threshold, like in death, madness or dreams. When such a lapse has occurred, one is warned by preventive calls but these calls only indicate that one has already crossed the threshold. (WI, 98) Indeed wondering if one is mad, dead or asleep means that one is already mad, dead or asleep. Toufic insists that when in some experiences one asks, “am I dead?”, he can only ask such a question because in fact he is already dead and living a moment where his dead double is sending him messages, or he is seeing something in this world akin to the dead realm. (WI, 168) In that situation one is entranced. One can't locate the entry of the labyrinth because he is entranced, and en-trance means entry. (WY, 47) En-trance of the labyrinth is when one is lost to all, like in the saying “death do us apart”, because in the realm of the undead each is lost to himself and to others, hence set apart. (WI, 107) One is not lost because he is hiding inside the labyrinth but because of the fractal nature of the labyrinth where when one is there he is never in but remains on the border, and hence can never be found, and in that sense, he is lost. (VP, 27) One enters the labyrinth in trance, and can seem to be outside in another trance, and yet still feels that he is inside the labyrinth existing there as another version of oneself. (WI, 102) We can speculate that this feeling of having versions of one self in the labyrinth is due to the fractal nature of the labyrinth where all the parts of the fractal labyrinth are the same and similar to the whole, which makes one exist in different versions of oneself. The confusion method by Milton Erickson is such that the subject would then accept any command to get out of the confusion: in Coppola's Dracula the coach confuses the passenger until he demands to enter of his own free will to the castle not knowing anymore where he is – spatial confusion and temporal lapses mark the entrance in the labyrinth. (TR, 31) Spatial confusion would be then the preamble to the entrance in the labyrinth, like when one is lost in a forest or a desert where all the parts look the same. The entrance is then like a gateless gate and feels like a glass wall. (FR, 37) The problem is to know where the real point of passage is. Is it at the entrance of the Vampire Castle or before, when we are driven towards the castle? There is always an apparent threshold and then the real threshold – such as in the difference between occupied and pre-occupied. The point of no return is when we jump into the other world. These points are like the points of passage between the awakened state and the dream state, the world and the Vampire castle. (VP, 16) The Threshold can be detected by: 1) The body: the body of the novice hears voices, feels a strange presence. Only the Sufi can cross the threshold without a lapse. 2) Others: they tell me that they can't follow me anymore. To enter the realm alone is to be dead. 3) The bridge: shows the point of crossing. (VP, 18) When one crosses the point of no return: 1) he feels an urge to check who he is, 2) he experiences a lapse of consciousness, 3) he trips on even ground, 4) turns to see the people on the other side but his turn is overturned given that the threshold to the realm of over-turns is a point of no return. (FR, 15) There is an apparent threshold where omens and warnings occur, then when one crosses the real threshold he feels that he has always been in the labyrinth. The real threshold is a one-way threshold given that it couples two forms of time – chronological and non-linear time –, knowing that two-way thresholds only operate in linear time. One knows that he has crossed the imaginary line when one wears his skis in the opposite direction, or sees a head over-turned on the shoulders, or hears metaphors and paraprases, etc. These signs overshadow the being in the labyrinth and keep occurring even when one is already in, making him think that he is still outside. When one starts to notice the warnings, this means that he is already in the labyrinth. (TR, 32)

There is no exit from the labyrinth. The impossible exit is portrayed by the frozen character in the labyrinth – like in the *Shining* by Kubrick, the loss of consciousness when one is about

to leave – like in *Nosferatu* by Murnau; the trance where one doesn't know if he is in or out the labyrinth. (VP, 79) One hence remains physically stuck in the Labyrinth as in the *Shining*, or loses consciousness when attempting to leave, as in Murnau's *Nosferatu*, or thinks he has left while actually a double has left, like in Herzog's *Nosferatu*. (TR, 33) One can only exit the labyrinth if he is saved by some messianic figure. (WI, 103) To come back into the world one needs a kind of resurrection in order to regain his natural body. (WI, 106) One can leave the labyrinth if he encounters a sign that suspends interpretation, the interpretations connecting the signs of the labyrinth in order to know if one is in a labyrinth. (WI, 99)

### *Spatial Properties of Labyrinth*

The labyrinth has a fractal nature. In fractal theory objects whose parts are similar to the totality don't require the same amount of parts when scaled up: a Sierpinski gasket triangle only require 3 triangles to achieve the scaling up of one of its elementary triangles while a normal triangle would have required 4 triangles to achieve a scaling up by 2. The consequence of that similarity would be that in a labyrinth any two points are connected in a jump: you can go from any point to the other. (VP, 25) The undead can catch his victim while walking nonchalantly because of the labyrinthine structure, one being caught while still running away, yet the circularity of time can allow the victim to still flee the vampire while caught, evading by that the effect of the circularity of space. (TR, 33) In the labyrinth space is ether-less, hence one can't measure the distance of the sounds, only touch can assure the proximity of things. (UL, 15) Would the absence of ether also be due to the self-similarity of the labyrinth where the distant is close and the part is a whole? In a labyrinth the inside and outside are reversible, this is why in the *Shining* the kitchen door and room 237 open by themselves. (TR, 31) In the labyrinth there is no left or right. In the labyrinth it will be soothing to be able to turn the other cheek to be slapped, because there one can't distinguish right from left, and hence turning the other cheek in this world wouldn't be an exorbitant price to pay in order to avoid the death realm. (WI, 109) One is in a labyrinth when he doesn't know which way to turn, and when submitted to overturns one knows then that he is in a labyrinth. (TI, 97) A painter painting a model where the figure, the painter and the model are all shown from the back is showing a labyrinthine circle. (TR, 31) One can't overview the labyrinth and models of the labyrinth are already in the labyrinth and subject to permutations. (WI, 109) -- We can speculate that only a fractal structure will have such properties given that self-similarity will abolish distances, make the left akin to the right, make one lost because he is neither in nor out, and abolish turns given the destruction of the directions of space and time.

### *Temporal Properties of the Labyrinth*

Temporal jumps are possible in the labyrinth where one can go to the time implicated in a sentence, like when Dracula passes the spider web because Harker is speaking to him in the past tense, hence referring to a time where the spider haven't built his web. (VP, 134) The Labyrinth is also temporal, hence when arriving to a new place one feels he knows that place or is able to direct oneself in it. (TI, 97) In lapsed time the familiar becomes unfamiliar (the epileptic not recognizing his room) but the unfamiliar becomes familiar in experiences of déjà-vu. (VP, 32) A place of exile is one where, once one is there, one doesn't feel he has always been there, such as being in the country where we are born. In Heaven or Hell, one feels that he has always been there, when he is there. In the Labyrinth one feels that he is not there and yet always been there. (WY, 48) In the labyrinth one has no memory or an

erroneous one given that memory is supported by spatial mapping. (TR, 32) Amnesia is not the consequence of a trauma but of the absence of continuous space that is ruptured by a lapse, or a leap. (VP, 25) Amnesia is a lapse, a change in place and focus – like the schizophrenic that looks at his watch, sips a coffee, and notices that an hour passed. (VP, 28) We can hence speculate that another consequence of the fractal nature of the labyrinth is that it renders one amnesiac, one being unable to anchor his memories anymore due to self-similarities and to the destruction of continuous space. This makes all parts of the labyrinth experienced as already seen, giving the feeling of familiarity, but also allows one to go back in time, to segments similar to the one he is in. -- We can think here of Arbid's *Seule avec la guerre* (2000) and the militiaman who thinks he is always and still part of the war, going back to the places where he committed massacres or murdered his girlfriend. The characters in Salhab seem to be haunted by their past as if they are still there. We can argue that these characters are still stuck in the labyrinth, in that place where they are lost because they can never be found. In that place the familiar becomes unfamiliar, Beirut becoming strange, while the unfamiliar becomes familiar and the place in which one dwells, like the militiaman that intuit that he is now an evil person and living in evil because of his experience of the war. Of course, one doesn't know when he crossed the line and tasted blood, as the militiaman says in Arbid's documentary, but when one has crossed the line there is no way back.

*General behavioral traits pertaining to labyrinthine structures*

Those caught in the labyrinth haunt the labyrinth because they are here and not here. (VP, 78) One is lost in the labyrinth and lost to himself, not knowing who he is or where he is. (TR, 32) Those lost can only communicate by telepathy because the message send will always be lost in the labyrinth. Telepathy is a form of communication that crosses labyrinthine space between the emitter and the receiver. (VP, 79) Lapses of consciousness open on infinite interpretation, each sign leading to another. To get out of the labyrinth one should find something that can't be interpreted and to stop proceeding to further interpretations. (WI, 102) We can say that in paranoid states we dive into interpretation and the more we interpret the more the labyrinth expands – is she cheating on me? In the labyrinth, due to the dissociation of the I and self, the shifter “I” points to another, and some undergoing a psychotic episode don't use “I”, but their full name to remind themselves of who they are. (WI, 105) Being dissociated, one's inner monologue is replaced with extimate voices that he hears, without these voices addressing themselves to him. (WI, 108) To communicate with the outside world the dead will need to use thought broadcasting, while they also suffer from thought inserts given that they receive the thoughts of others. (WI, 110)

**The Imaginal World**

The Imaginal World is an independent World where the imaginary doubles of this world exist. Imagination subdivides into *Related Imagination* (Khayal Mutassil) and *Independent Imagination* (Khayal Munfassil), as exemplified in *Solaris* where the wife is dependent on her husband's imagination, but the house is an emanation of the independent imagination. *Sayat Nova* by Paradjanov, Sokurov *Whispering Pages*, Bokanowski's *The Angel*, describe the Imaginal Independent World. (GR, 35) In the Imaginal World all bodies are spiritualized, the actual bodies being projected in subtle bodies. (FR, 225) In the Imaginal World all opposites reconcile. (FR, 133) In the Imaginal World we can encounter the worst recurrently. (SM, 27) In the Imaginal World everything is willed, and things are illuminated by their intrinsic light,

nothing becomes accidental. The Imaginal World is by that related to taste and refinement, to the sense of what is necessary. (WI, 197)

## **Dance Realm**

### *What is the dance realm?*

The dance realm is a realm of its own but that also allows the dancer to cross among different realms. In that sense dance allows the permeability of life and death, allowing the dancer to go in the undeath realm, but also allowing him to capture someone in another realm, such as in a dream or in the Imaginal World. Dance can also allow to pass into the religious. It remains that the dance realm has its own specificity which is that of a dimension with an altered space, time and movement. (SD, 7-9) By connecting different space-times and maintaining their heterogeneity dance shows its aristocratic nature. (SD, 10) -- We can say that when one dances he is *already* in the dance realm and hence when he begins to dance in this world his body mimics the *entrance* into dance, while such movement is already part of the dance realm. The dance realm has then a circular structure where one is already there if he wants to show how he got there.

### *The Subtle Body*

The actual body of the dancer project a subtle body in the realm of altered space, time and movement while he dances. Any movement that can project such a body in the dance realm can be considered a dance. By that the dancer has aura given that he is in an altered realm while remaining here. (SD, 3) The passage to the altered realm presents some dangers in relation to the actual realm. For example, the dancer can lose his materiality, such as when he loses his shadow; he can remain frozen in the diegetic silence over or be transported to exhaustion by auto movements. The actual body being the subtle body, the actual body can suffer from the consequences of the projection in the altered realm. Dance practice shows this awareness of the altered realm, for example, dance can't be done in front of mirrors because the mirrors are actual and can't capture the subtle dancer; in make-up rooms dancers surround themselves with familiar objects, images and stories because they apprehend the departure to the other realm; dancers practice in duos to accept their subtle other; feelings of jealousy towards other dancers taking possession of our own subtle body; the pirouette as a turn that overturns the overturn, producing a two faced-forward being to prevent the impossible turn-over of the dead. (SD, 8-16) Dancers dance in two different realms and to know if two dancers form a couple we need to see if they can gracefully coordinate the different branches they are actualizing in their dance. (SD, 25) When one dances he only sees other dancers while other people are frozen – “I wish you could be the only one seeing me” is the self-reflective sentence of the dancers. (SD, 27)

### *Spatiotemporal properties of the dance realm*

The dance realm has a fractional space, it is neither two nor three dimensional, but in between. Through their movements dancers generate space, which makes them graceful. The fact that through their movements they can generate space this allows the dancers to enter paintings and other two-dimensional spaces. Hence the space of the dance realm is altered in its dimensions. (SD, 23-24) Movements are also altered in the dance realm. Immobility signals the passage of one realm to the other and is coupled with silence over. Immobility is the genetic element of all movements because it signals a being in the threshold that will allow to jump into any other realm. (SD, 22) Movements are altered due to the different

passages between the realms which have different spatio-temporal properties, leading to acceleration, deceleration, and backward movements – like when one is in water, his movements are slowed down, as a physical example. (SD, 10) Excessive movements are such as moving while remaining still, auto movements, indiscernibility between the one moving and the one not moving, etc. These excessive movements are movements to the second power because they couple two realms in one aesthetical fact. (SD, 11) The subtle dancer visiting other realms can visit the past or the future leading to a recurrent time. Indeed, the dancer only visits the realms and compose his movements with the elements of these realms but doesn't modify them. This going backward in time and composition with the past event make these events seem to be recurrent, as if they are accepted as a fate and repeated in the same exact way as they happened. (SD, 13) The movies of Maya Deren or Minelli exemplify this realm.

### **The World**

All the creatures and the objects are created by God, and God bestows a world on some of these creatures: humans are rich in world, animals are poor in world while things don't have a world. It remains that Iblis mixed the world created by God with its fallen counterpart and introduced in it jouissance, undeath and the labyrinth. (WI, 140) Hence the world as we know it, the world of the Fall, is the mixture of these two realms: the Godly world and undeath. The world is characterized by linear time, directional space and humans which are mortals to death. In this world we have time, forgetfulness, and debasement as introduced by Iblis. (UL, 31) These allow to endure the separation from God but also to forget God. (WI, 140) Art works related to the world are many such as action movies and the like that reconstruct our ordered experience of the world. The repetitions in the world are repetitions of regularities, such as the laws of physics and repetitive phenomena (night and day). Permutations occur in lapses of consciousness such as when one goes from the state of wake into sleep, endures childhood amnesia, or the girl that passes from pubescence to womanhood, etc.

### **The Redeemed World**

The Messiah and Mahdi will redeem our world and save us from the labyrinth. In the redeemed world we have a literal realization of the ethical, evil and debasement become physically impossible. (WY, 42) In the redeemed world only what can eternally return will be able to be part of that world. (WY, 33) In the redeemed world the waiting will be over and physically we will be all contemporary to the Messiah, which means that the speed of light will be infinite and we will not see any more delayed perceptions. (WY, 34) In the redeemed world we will have a reevaluation of all values when the Over Man wills the return of what can only infinitely return. (WY, 86) By that the Overman will end chronological time. (WY, 86)

### **Ruins**

*How a place becomes a ruin*

Babel is the first worldly labyrinth, a ruin, that scattered all the population of the earth and mixed their languages. (WI, 117) The Tower of the Devil became the first ruin because it was the first place in which humans dwelled. For a place to possibly turn into a ruin it needs first to be inhabited and it is only when people leave their homes that these homes turn into ruins. Hence ruins are not defined by the state of the building but by the fact that some

places, or buildings, have been deserted after being inhabited. A house can be intact and yet an implicit ruin because it was deserted by its inhabitants. Hence when one occupies such a house, he will not restore it because implicit ruins have a tendency to become explicit ruins. (VP, 67) Some restore buildings and yet these buildings remain ruins, others don't leave their homes in order to avoid seeing them turn into ruins. Wars are prolonged to make the implicit ruin an explicit ruin. (TR, 35) Ruins can be produced in another way: either when one discovers that the one inhabiting it is a revenant (TR, 38), or when a specter appears in a place turning it immediately into a ruin. (UL, 13) Streets can't turn into ruins because they can't be inhabited, as we can see in war-time Beirut, hence it is the buildings which are labyrinthine and not the streets as such. (VP, 70) The ruins can still be occupied and inhabited, by refugees or new tenants, while the empty luxurious buildings are inhabitable yet they are not ruins. (TR, 35) Ruins are haunted by the living who inhabit them. (TR, 36)

#### *Spatiotemporal characteristics of the ruin*

The ruin undoes dates and site specificity and turns space into a labyrinthine space. What is hence site-specific in Beirut is the labyrinthine zone, the non-site specific. (VP, 69) The ruination of organized matter, such as buildings, statues and ornamentation make it such that these items can't be in the present anymore because they contain in their organization their memory. Hence ruins seem to be in an undefined past but can't be in the present, contrary to the voice who doesn't have a self-contained memory, appears and disappears and by that generates a present. (VP, 69) The ruin seems then to be contemporary to archeological sites, such as Baalbek, causing a difficulty to remember how things were before ruination because, when looking at ruins, memory carries us to a time older than the time of the inception of what is now a ruin. (VP, 72) The ruin belongs to an artificial past that doesn't belong to history contrary to reconstruction projects which are immediately part of a specific chronology. The destruction of ruins is sacrilegious because it shows the unawareness to the different space-times a ruin contains. 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 in an earthquake, for Beirut it is fundamentally that of its revelation, when reconstructed, as still a ruined city. (VP, 73) Ruins exist in another spatiotemporal dimensions, the labyrinthine, and seem only to be real when we see refugees inhabiting them. (TR, 37)

#### *Practices in relation to the ruins*

Given that ruins exist in an artificial past and a labyrinthine space, reconstruction projects and discourse on authenticity prepare the attack on the ruins and their physical destruction, such as in Solidere's Motto "Beirut an Ancient City for the Future". (TR, 37) The restoration of the ruins and their inclusion in chronological time doesn't erase the fact that they are still ruins. After restoration we still have flashes of the being-ruin of these building. (TR, 37) The labyrinthine nature of the ruin and its near destruction provoke the urge to document and create fictions on ruins: the documentary will preserve, while the fiction will show the labyrinthine nature. This is why documentaries on ruins need to leap into fiction to reveal the labyrinthine nature, or at least interview some psychotic individuals. (VP, 74) *India Song* and *Venetian Name in Deserted Calcutta* by Duras are movies that deal with ruins.

### **Radical Closure**

What follows is a short summary of the text, "Radical Closure", in *Over Sensitivity* with some additions from other books by Toufic.

### *What is a radical closure?*

A radical closure is what is beyond any possible border. Contrary to the off-screen in cinema that opens on a correlated space beyond what we see, or the possibility of entering other worlds, like when one enters a painting, radical closures open on a non-space. Radical closures are absolutely disconnected from their environment but open on nothingness or unworldly entities. When the radical closure is bordered by nothingness the characters have their eyes closed, like in Magritte's *I do not see the woman hidden in the forest*, *The meaning of the night* or *Les fleurs du mal*. Even if a space seems to be open it can be radically closed, like in Bunuel's *Exterminating Angel*. A radical closure can even encompass the outside, like in the fake sea and the boats in *L'Immortelle* by Robbe-Grillet. The *end of the world* would be an example of a radical closure. Nothingness is indicated for example in black holes, in the screaming mouths of Bacon's paintings. On the other hand, unworldly entities irrupt in radical closures, such as the crows in Van Gogh *Wheatfield with Crows*, or the birds flying above the coffee shop in *Birds* by Hitchcock. If the unworldly entity is familiar, like crows in a wheat field, then the familiar figure becomes unfamiliar when irrupting in a radical closure. In radical closures accidental elements are recurrent and remain accidental not adding up to the situation or the narrative, like the high heel shoe in Robbe-Grillet's *La Captive*. Radical closures can exist in the physical world, like black holes; in the human world, like in extreme situations or psychotic episodes; and in the artistic world, where works of art can constitute radical closures in which unworldly entities irrupt. (OS, 105) In radical closures characters undergo permutations by becoming all the other characters in the radical closure until one is able to open the closure. (WI, 95) In radical closures everything that is not willed eternally is subject to exhaustive variation, hence a proper name refers to two or more persons and can be replaced by the shifter "this", as in "this is the girl", like in verbatim sentences in Lynch's *Lost Highway*. (WI, 93)

### *Spatiotemporal properties of radical closures*

In radical closures we have an objective disorientation, floors and walls becoming slanted, as shown in the tilted picture of the father in *Birds*. This disorientation also mixes the horizontal and vertical, like in Bacon's *Painting 1978*. Time accelerates leading to higher entropy and the wearing down of things and people, like in the damage road of Finnley's *Invasion of the body snatchers*. To express the entry and exit of the radical closure the characters seem to awake from a hallucination. The borders seem to be seamless, but they are those of the end of the world. When some characters cross the gateless gate and are caught in a radical closure, they find pretext on why they are not moving out and try not to acknowledge that they are in a radical closure, like in *Exterminating Angel*. The knowledge that they can't get out is achieved by thought insertion and not by thinking, like in Ferrara's *Invasion of body Snatchers*. An opening of the radical closure can occur if the elements in the closure take back their first position just before the radical closure occurred. For example, it is only when the black hole produces the same exact atom by the different permutations that another electric charge appears on the other side of the event horizon – one needs then to reach back to the original state after having exhausted all the possibilities. Only if the dead man and woman reappear in the radical closure of the *Exterminating Angel* can the opening of the room be a real opening and not a further expansion, as it came out to be expanding to the church. (OS, 105) Another way out of the radical closure is when one is able to repeat verbatim the same sentence in the right conditions, such as "Dick Laurent is dead" in Lynch's *Lost Highway*.

Only such performative utterance will allow the character to stop undergoing permutations. (WI, 95) Inside the radical closure all is variation. Hence to will the recurrence of a sentence, this sentence needs to appear for someone who doesn't fully belong to the closure. Only if repeated correctly and not by changing the order of its words can one get out, contrary to Jack, in the Overlook Hotel of the *Shining*, who permuted the words of the sentence and lost himself. (WI, 95) At the end of the world we witness a flattening of the world, like when approaching a black hole. (VP, 209)

#### *Ahistorical fully-formed entities*

Ahistorical fully-formed entities appear in the radical closure without genesis, after an acceleration of entropy, or an exhaustive exploration of the possibilities in the closure. In *Solaris*, Hari irrupts on the space ship like an unworldly entity and haunts the ship. The irruption can be denoted by the passage from color to black and white, like in *Solaris*, or *Stalker*, or *Le Camion*. Also, the irrupted entity has its own light, meaning that it doesn't cast shadows on the other objects and it doesn't project shadows – like in Magritte's *Attempting the impossible*, or the birds in Kurosawa's *Dreams*. A shadow on the other hand can irrupt as an unworldly entity. Also, the irrupted figure is a-historical, it doesn't exist outside of the time of the movie, like in *Marienbad*. Hence the irrupted entity only exists in the radical closure and doesn't have any prior existence to that. Radical closures trap the unworldly entity, hence either it appears fully formed or it disappears. The unworldly entities can then appear at any time and appear repeatedly, this is why if the castle of the Vampire is a radical closure it is not enough to destroy the Vampire, one also needs to destroy the radical closure to prevent his re-irruption. Ruins irrupt all of a sudden in radical closures, as well as accelerated entropies, such as flowers fading in a time-lapse. Unworldly entities can be sounds, like screams in Ferrara's *Body Snatchers* or the barking dog in Lynch's *Lost Highway*. Van Gogh had to sever his ear because of these sounds. (OS, 105) Mallarme's "flower which is absent from any bouquet" is the one that appears in a radical closure out of nowhere. (TT, 70) These entities, be it visual or auditory, appear directly in the sensory organs and they hit by that the nervous system making the sensation unbearable, which leads sometimes to suicide, as in the case of Van Gogh in Minelli's *Lust for Life*. (FR, 115) Raad's black and white photos in *Miraculous Beginnings* are irruptions in a radical closure, photos taken by no one appearing in his art works. The same goes for the non-developed images in *Wonder Beirut*, by Hadjithomas and Joreige, that express a radical closure. (DS, 84)

#### *Oversensitivity*

When a deaf-blind person is capable of hearing music this is a case of overhearing, like in Paradjanov *Ashik Kerib* where the musician plays music to the deaf-blind, or we can add in Herzog's *Land of Silence and Darkness*. (OS, 30) The voice-over of the one who witnesses total annihilation must appear ex-nihilo, like in Lanzmann's *Schoah* where the voice of the one speaking of the concentration camp can only appear from nowhere given that the trauma was such that it made him mute – or, like a particle that crosses the event horizon provoking another particle to appear on the other side. (OS, 50) Arnulf Rainer overpaintings are such apparition ex-nihilo. (OS, 30) These apparitions from beyond the event horizon, or a traumatic experience, that crate a radical closure can be considered as unworldly irruptions. For that the artist must be indolent and over-sensitive to be capable of receiving the over-sounds and over-images, like Duchamp. (FR, 109)

### **Relative Closure**

Relative closures are such as in Hitchcock's *Rope*, where the entities and characters existed before the closure. Relative closures provoke claustrophobia and attempts to escape from the closure. In Murnau's *Nosferatu*, the quarantine is a relative closure, while the bridge leading to the castle of Dracula is a radical closure. Herzog's *Nosferatu*, on the other hand, historicizes the Vampire and by that projects him in a relative closure, the plagued city. During the war, Beirut was a relative closure and it could have evolved into a radical closure. In relative closures accidents do converge in the narrative, like when we see a knife for the first time then it is used to murder in the second time. (OS, 105) The work of Fouad el Khuri or Samer Mohdad, that remains at the level of documenting the war, is one that deals with a relative closure. (WT, 71) The plagued city, or cities under quarantine are relative closures where we have a mixing of the living and the dead. This mixture can be controlled by discipline or lead to the unleashing of the mixture in anarchy and carnivals. This mixture introduces inversions, the chaste man performing sodomy or the miser throwing his gold out of the windows. (VP, 136) In a plagued city the roles are reversed between mice and men, the city turning into a maze for men, which become subject to memory tests, while mice run free. (VP, 138) To get out of the plagued city a sacrifice is required from the one who used to mix the realms before the plague, such as the telepath or the somnambulist. (VP, 137)

### **Burying the world**

Lovers are able to bury the world, they remain alone in the world and are the only ones that can reciprocate each other's gaze. (FR, 167) The world is buried under a plateau, the background, and unanalyzable entities appear after the burial, like in the music of Ochs (FR, 173), *Triceratops*, or the paintings of Auerbach, *Head of E.O.W.V.* (FR, 165) The unanalyzable entities are older than the world, such as stars or the heads of Auerbach. (FR, 169) The repetition of the paint strokes of Auerbach and his endless painting sessions aim at burying the world and not constructing the figure. The unanalyzable older than the world figure appears only then on the background that buried the world. (FR, 171) The unplanned doesn't concern here a chance that will dictate the permutations, like in Cage, but rather the appearance of the figure itself on the plateau burying the world, an appearance that is uncontrolled by the painter or musician and denotes an obsession of the figure itself – the appearance occurs disregarding the artist given that he is himself buried under the plateau. (FR, 173)

### **After the destruction of the world**

The last man that survives the destruction of the world would feel that he is mad not knowing if what he sees is due to his madness or to destruction. His prayer to save the world will be made out of his madness. But to save the world he will need to sacrifice something real, and the only real thing remaining would be his belief to save the world. In Tarkovsky's *Sacrifice* this is what Alexander does, which turns him into a mad man. If one doesn't sacrifice such a belief he would be locked in the compulsion to repeat the moment of saving the world, such as in Gilliam's *Twelve Monkeys*. (GR, 53)

### **The withdrawal of tradition past a surpassing disaster**

*In what consists the withdrawal of Tradition*

Toufic starts by differentiating between different types of effects stemming from a disaster: the disaster destroys the buildings, bodies and records; the disaster is latent in traumatic

effects and sicknesses in the depth of the body that manifest themselves après coup; the immaterial withdrawal of literary, philosophical, and thoughtful texts as well as films, videos, music, art, painting, the holiness of spaces, buildings. A surpassing disaster is then measured by the immaterial withdrawal: “In other words, whether a disaster is a surpassing one (for a community—defined by its sensibility to the immaterial withdrawal that results from such a disaster) cannot be ascertained by the number of casualties, the intensity of psychic traumas and the extent of material damage, but by whether we encounter in its aftermath symptoms of withdrawal of tradition.” (WT, 12) The surpassing disaster cuts a community from the immaterial presence of the work of thought. The tradition is ruptured. When Umayya faced Ali in the battle of Siffin, he raised the Koran on the lances provoking the withdrawal of the immaterial Koran. This disaster led to the differentiation between the implicit and the explicit, the *zahir* and the *batin* and all the consequences that structure the Shi’i’ religion: transcendent/apparent book; *zahir/batin*; esoteric/exoteric; Mohammad/Ali; cycles of occultation; veridical/counterfeit transmission; true rule / false; trampling of the Koran / Persia. “One way of viewing the difference in Islam between the esoteric (*bātin*) and the exoteric (*zahir*) is to consider it a consequence of individual spiritual encounters and events alerting some Moslems to other meanings of what they might otherwise have taken only in a literal sense: this is what one encounters in Sufism.” (WT, 34) In 1648 the Sabbati Jews profaned the bible because of the withdrawal of tradition they endured after the 1648 forced baptisms and their persecution. The explicit apparent book didn’t contain anymore the immaterial book and the profanation expresses this consciousness of the withdrawal. The question after the Shoah is not to know why oppressed people become fascist on their turn, but why the Shoah didn’t provoke a surpassing disaster among the Jewish intellectuals. The Jews remained attached to the specialness of Jerusalem while the Qaramita let down the specialness of Mecca. Jerusalem as a holly land is not recognized as such by those who perceive the withdrawal of tradition. This is the main reason why the Diaspora is still alive – beyond the political, practical reasons. The messianic manifestation has to be done twice: once the appearance of the Holy Word but as not recognized. This appearance shows that occultation is now total. The other is the manifestation of the Holy spirit – soul – light inaugurating the period of redemption. -- We can say that what is reversed in a context of withdrawn tradition is the relation to the holy texts where one starts profaning them to reveal the withdrawal. This permutation between morality and immorality characterizes this space. The population of this place will be a community. The people from the community need to resurrect these works for these works to be again available for them. People from other communities can still have a direct access to the thought products. This leads to a number of consequences as to the way we understand a community:

The people of a community will travel to get in contact with people with another community that still have a direct contact with the withdrawn works. By that the space remains physically open even if the tradition has withdrawn.

A community is built when a group is equally affected by a surpassing disaster: “Rather than a common language and/ or racial origin and/or religion, being equally affected by the surpassing disaster delimits the community.” (WT, 13)

One knows that he belongs to a community if the pre-surpassing-disaster tradition is still available to him irrespective of resurrecting these works. An exiled knows that he is still attached to the culture and country of origin when, after a surpassing disaster, the works of thought are withdrawn to him.

We can say hence that the withdrawal of tradition consists in the withdrawal of the relation to the other realms by which the world becomes flat, or simply featuring its spatiotemporal ordering and mundane practical categories.

*Practices related to the withdrawal of tradition*

The withdrawal of tradition has effects on the way intellectuals and artists must produce thought. To be of one's time is to be present (witness) to the withdrawal of our own work by a surpassing disaster. To be behind the time is to be affected by the withdrawal of tradition (the work of others). The future of the thinkers that are of their time is the collaboration of future thinkers with their work (resurrecting the work). Translation should take into consideration that some works are produced in English for example because the author is withdrawn from Arabic. In that case the Arabic translation should also be withdrawn from Arabic culture to be a good translation. We have different attitudes as to the resurrection of the works:

*To be oblivious to the withdrawal:* Collateral damage is when one thinks that the physical survival of a work implies its immaterial survival. The thinker in that case doesn't resurrect the work and the work remains inaccessible. People like that are the like of the teachers who transmit tradition as if the work is still available. History as a discipline is also in that position, it is blind to the necessity of resurrecting the works because of the availability of the documents.

*Overlooking:* we overlook the ruin not because we want to forget the trauma, but because the ruined buildings were withdrawn. Amnesia is not only psychological, or caused by a lack of documents, but also concerns the withdrawal of the immaterial.

*Counterfeit of tradition:* When a tradition is not resurrected because it seems to be apparently available it becomes a counterfeit of itself which explains the hostility towards tradition by the new generations. This leads to the emergence of the double: "Following the surpassing disaster, I am confronted with the counterfeit/double in one form or another: without the seemingly absurd attempt at resurrecting what for most people is extant and available, the succeeding generations will have received counterfeit tradition; but every resurrection by anyone who is not "the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25) is ironic, insinuates a distance between the one or the thing that has been resurrected and himself/herself/itself: in so far as I am not "the resurrection and the life," I can never be sure that the one I resurrected is the one who was deceased rather than an other, his or her double." (WT, 30) Prior to the resurrection of the Messaiyah there is the danger of resurrecting his double, the Dajjal – the liar.

*To resurrect the tradition:* The remake consists in resurrecting the work and not only adapting it. Herzog *Nosferatu* is a resurrection of Murnau's *Nosferatu* after the surpassing disaster of the Nazis. Kurosawa's *Dreams* (1990) resurrects Van Gogh paintings, Chris Marker's *La Jetee* resurrects Hitchcock *Vertigo*, Godard protagonist say in the remake of *King Lear*: "I don't know if I made this clear before, but this was after Chernobyl. We are in a time now when movies and more generally art have been lost, do not exist, and must somehow be reinvented." In Tarkovsky's *Sacrifice* we see a flapping curtain, then the announcement of a nuclear disaster, then again the flapping curtain – the second image is the resurrection of the first – *resurrection is what makes what is present available to perception*. A work of art should be first resurrected for another artist to be able to

appropriate it. An artist can resurrect a work of art by resurrecting another work of art and then appropriate the first work – like in the case of Levine.

*To show the withdrawal:* A movie preserves what can disappear into the past, but also it shows the withdrawal of immateriality. The image can be apparent (saved from the past) but this appearance doesn't make it present: "With regard to the surpassing disaster, art acts like the mirror in vampire films: it reveals the withdrawal of what we think is still there." (WT, 57)

*To document for the future:* "The documentation is for the future not only in the sense that it preserves the present referent for future generations, but also in that it can function as a preservation of the referent only in the future, only when the work of resurrection has countered the withdrawal." (WT, 58)

*To fail in the resurrection:* The one resurrecting the tradition past the surpassing disaster doesn't know if he succeeded (because we are not the resurrection and life). The truly modern is the one who tried resurrecting tradition and failed – and not the one who destroyed tradition.

*To fail in documenting the material support of the traditional works:* the documents are out of focus due to the withdrawal of what is photographed. "The question revealed a misunderstanding, since in his work the out-of-focus and/or the haphazard framings were not a formal strategy but due to the withdrawal and thus unavailability to vision of the material." (WT, 65)

	<b>Closure</b>	<b>Permutation</b>	<b>Repetition</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>Paradise</b>	Boundlessness and openness on the infinite	State of constant joy exempt from permutation	Joy suspends repetition and compulsion – detached vision	Paradjanov Elegiac music
<b>Hell</b>	Infinite circular closure of obsession	Loss where the object of desire is never the one and I am never myself.	Compulsion to repeat the scene of jouissance, traumatic vision	Barker Rice Noé
<b>Bardo</b>	Intermediate space between the realms	All opposites transform into one another, inside/outside, life/death, water/earth	Repetition of desire bringing one from a state to another	Book of the Dead; Bardo Thödol
<b>Labyrinth</b>	Coextensive to the world but we enter it in a lapse	Permutation of identities where I stand for another, voices-over, theft of thought, word salads, etc.	Repetition of self-similar fractal space-times inducing loss and familiarity	Coppola Herzog Murnau
<b>Imaginal World</b>	Doubles the other realms with subtle bodies	Permutation that projects a subtle image from the real state of affair	Repetition of blocks of space-time appreciated by taste	Sokurov Bokanowski Tarkovsky
<b>Dance Realm</b>	Realm passing through the different realms while keeping them separate	Permutation that projects a subtle body form the actual body, permutation of association / dissociation	Repetition of altered space-time-movement leading to recurrent time and spaces when visited	Minelli Deren Donnen
<b>Actual World</b>	Open in extension and virtually connected to other realms	Permutations occur in lapse of consciousness, infantile amnesia, wake/sleep, etc.	Repetition of regularities, operating in space-time captured by understanding	John Ford Eisenstein Newton Einstein
<b>Redeemed World</b>	World of open simultaneity, cut from the labyrinth	Permutation as revaluation of all values only what can	Repetition of what can eternally return that	Nietzsche Messiah Mahdi

		return will be admitted in the redeemed world	ends spatial delays and chronological time	
<b>Ruins</b>	Buildings coextensive to the labyrinth	Permutation of spaces and construction/destruction	Repetition of undefined past and labyrinthine spaces	Duras
<b>Radical Closure</b>	Absolute disconnection from actual space, open on unworldly entities	Permutations where one becomes all the others in the closure, permutation of positions, variations	Repetition of accidental elements as such, of verbatim sentences, positions, irruptions	Lynch Grillet Ferrara Bunuel
<b>Relative Closure</b>	Closed spaces connected to actual space	Permutation of social roles, mixing of the living and the dead	Repetition of disciplinary analytics and carnivals	Plague War Zones
<b>Burying the World</b>	Background buries the world opening on unanalyzable entities	Permutation of chance and necessity, the burial making unplanned figures appear	Repetition of elements to build the plateau burying the world	Ochs Auerbach
<b>After the Destruction of the World</b>	Closure of the world and openness by prayer	Permutation between sanity and insanity in the last man or the one saving the world	Compulsive repetition of the moment where one is saving the world	Gilliam Tarkovsky
<b>Withdrawal of Tradition</b>	Closure of a tradition inaccessible to the community	Permutation between morality and immorality to show the withdrawal	Repetition of the opposites esoteric / exoteric; counterfeit / resurrection	Siffin Quaramita Raad

## 05. Aesthetics: Transubstantiation and Incarnation

We can say that the function of the arts in Toufic's thought will be to capture the unworldly realms. Art must then make visible the relation of our world to the other realms but also how these realms function. In that sense we can say that all art is about creating an image of reality, it is indexical, in so far as the different types of being and the different topologies that we extracted from Toufic's writings are reality itself. Art in that sense is not about creation, as inventing something, but it is more about intuition, seeing the real. The creative part of the art will reside in the inventiveness and sensibility of the artist or author that will allow him to convey, through the manipulation of worldly elements, the unworldly dimension. The indexical nature of the arts will tie them then to conceive figures as pertaining to the typological classification, while the backgrounds will pertain to the topological classification. After all God creates the creatures and their worlds, hence types of creatures and topological places in which these creatures exist – figure and background, figure as a disclosure of God (the creature) and background as what God gives to the creature.

### **Art and the exploration of the other realms of reality**

The validity of an art work that captures the alter realms will consist in creating a world that doesn't fall apart in two days. Such a work will compose a number of elements that are compossible with each other, but yet it will need to include one extimate element that communicate with other branches of the universe. The extimate element must be framed inside the created world or else it would invade it and make it fall apart. For example, in our universe, we have extimate elements which are framed, such as the black holes which are part of this universe and yet open on something absolutely unreachable from within this universe. (WI, 133) Art function can be to make us believe in this world, or to open a window on the other worlds, such as the Imaginal World, the Dance Realm, the Undead, or create a Radical Closure in which unworldly fully formed entities can irrupt. The other worlds presented in an art work are intrinsically framed while the frame of the painting or movie are only the extrinsic frames. (WI, 138) By that, art works are hallucinatory in so far that they borrow material from our world while presenting visions from another world. (WI, 134) Our world seems to be hospitable to images of other branches of the multiverse, hence one of the tasks of art is to "render visible" these invisible, yet real, branches of the universe. Other worlds might not have been hospitable to images of other universes, which could explain why there is no intelligent life elsewhere in the universe, their world having been destroyed when they produced images of other universes. In that sense art allows time travel, to travel to branches that will never be reachable given the size of the universe and the finite speed of light (WI, 135) One of the tasks of the art is then to provide modern science with the appropriate intuition given the counter intuitive nature of science today. (WI, 204)

### **Art as an intuition of a conception of reality – Islamic Art**

Another function of art would be to give the intuition of an ontological conception, such as giving an intuition to the way Islam, for example, conceives the world. In a text titled *Middle Easter Films Before Thy Gaze Returns to Thee*, in *Forthcoming*, Toufic exposes what would be a possible Islamic aesthetics. A branch of Islam, Occasionalism, advocates for renewed creation as its fundamental ontological position. In renewed creation things do not change but rather are constantly destroyed then re-created. Few are able to see renewed creation and they only do so when they achieve Kashif, others only feels it when they feel that a person is

not exactly the same, and last most only use it to resolve paradoxes (such as that of the absolute creation of the world and the causal order). Paradjanov shows the possibilities of such conceptions in *Ashik Kerib* where the horse disappears and re-appears in another place. (FR, 119) In Occasionalism then beings fall into nothingness before being recreated, and such an ontological change differs from the phenomenal change, as shown in the works of Paradjanov and Harold Edgerton. (FR, 125) Any image is then recreated by the collision of two images. Arabesques represent that state, because we are the arabesques of ourselves being a myriad of similar versions of ourselves, a number of atoms recurring all the time. Islamic mirrors have sometimes arabesques on them showing us as a multiple image. From the point of view of Occasionalism, these arabesques are not a form of abstract art because the world itself is as void of qualities and characteristics as the work itself. We have then a primary abstraction, that of Occasionalism, and a secondary one that touches the arts, where the abstraction is in the medium (flat figures, unworldly colors, etc.) and operates across mediums, like when the arabesque spreads on different materials showing that jade, ivory, metal don't have their own nature: one decorates what doesn't have a proper nature, what is poor, leading to a luxurious poverty, the world being an arabesque ornamenting Allah. If Islamic art doesn't seem crowded it is because of the return of the void and disappearance in it even if it covers the whole surface, while the picture is crowded in Escher. The Islamic void is not the same as the Chinese one, the Chi being a continuous breath that underlines the cuts, while the Nafas being the return to Nothing even in a continuous line. Persian miniature rocks show in their pictures the relation to both Chi and Nafas: these rocks are part of the Imaginal World of Ibn Arabi where opposites reconcile. (FR, 125-135)

The poetic can take the form: 1) of the literal figurative expression in altered states, like when in *Dracula* Harker sees the mountains moving as clouds – in here literally and not metaphorically the mountains move as clouds. 2) Universal extension of the metaphorical, like the recreation of the throne of Sheba in Salmon palace – where the throne was re-created in order to be transported from Ethiopia to Jerusalem. In Islam one is not himself but to the likeness of himself and he must know that he ever returns to Nothing. In here we have a metaphor of one self since each is the image of one self, as shown in the poetic cinema of Paradjanov. In such poetics we don't have the anxiety of radical closures and unworldly entities. This poetics is that of singularity. In Islam then death is an accident that is recurring and God recreates us. Thus, the only passion of a Muslim is to reach non-existence. By that all the creatures are nothing but portraits, and the face is painted as a mask because it doesn't have any existence, showing by that its return to God whose face is the only un-perishing face. The appearance / disappearance in Occasionalism and Paradjanov cinema show a velocity higher than hectic movements. (FR, 135-141) In the continued creation and destruction the only things that remain are the words of Jesus, as said in the Gospel: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Matthew 24:35 in WI, 127). Given that in Islam and Occasionalism the esoteric prayer is to go back to Nothingness/Being, the prayer in *Ashik Kerib* is explicit and implicit in the sense that it is filmed in jump cuts showing the exoteric movements while the one praying is reverting to Nothingness. (FR, 126) Prayer allows the injection of time and the possibility of the new in a situation void of time. In this sense a Muslim doesn't repeat his prayer five times a day but with each prayer injects time to exit repetition. (UB, 13) While in Konrad's *Flicker* one can be subject to a seizure, the Fana' would be to witness the return to nothing of the worldly entity and their recreation, which would stop the cycles of Karma given that by such return to nothingness the chain of causality is broken. (FR, 123) Animals are simply given to

the recreation and can't go back to nothingness, while man needs to remember the One by Dhikr, invocation, of the name of God. (FR, 124)

### **Art in order to deserve events that occurred in reality – deserving Lebanon**

What follows is a summary of the book by Toufic, *Undeserving Lebanon*.

#### *Deserving Lebanon*

One of the functions of writing is to help those to whom the event happened to deserve the event given that when one endures the event, he is most of the time dispossessed of his capacities. (UB, 14) To deserve the event one needs to be able to produce the concepts and percepts that can make justice to the event and not only justice to the victims during the events. Justice as such is then not enough given that one needs to interpret the events and provide them with the proper concepts and intuitions to deserve them. It is then not enough to only change the situation, such as bringing the war criminals to court, but it is also necessary that while we are attempting to change the situation we must interpret what happened in this situation. For example, the amnesty law tried to pacify the situation between the living and by that it neglected the relation between the living and the dead because it is oblivious to the nature of the events that occurred in Lebanon, a nature which is such that it opened Lebanon on the undead. (UB, 13-15) Only a deserved event, that of which we have created the concepts and images, can be redeemed, can eternally recur in the redeemed world. The real opposition is not then between those who are making art out of the war and those who are seeking justice, but rather those who are undeserving and those who are deserving.

#### *Facing Violence in the Lebanese Wars*

The Lebanese wars were of great violence and many in Lebanon have prayed during these wars. Their prayers made it such that Lebanon didn't turn into hell because only in hell one is unable to pray. It follows that even Sabra and Shatila was not hell on earth because many were still able to pray. In order to deserve Lebanon, one needs then:

*To Pray:* prayer injects time and allows to exit the compulsion to repeat that issue from traumatic events. In that sense Lamia Joreige video *Replay (Bis)*<sup>7</sup> (2002) addresses this issue and installs a prayer in her movie to bring in some time in the situation of violence. In *Time and the Other* (2004) Joreige show us a void time after having injected it with the previous video. Last in *Here and Perhaps Elsewhere*<sup>8</sup> (2003) she tries to show a state of suspended time, that of the suspension of the mourning of her disappeared uncle. With these videos time is injected amidst the turmoil and the compulsions to repeat. (UB, 12)

*Not to Pray:* Memorials remind us of what cannot eternally return, they remind us that evil was done on earth, like the memorial of the Shoah. The revolutionaries first destroy memorials. It remains that the esoteric destruction of memorials will consist in deserving the evil that happened, i.e. transforming it into images and concepts that can return eternally. Such re-interpretation is a slight displacement but is yet extremely difficult to achieve – for example, Hallaj in his conception and achievement of Fana', becoming one with God, was able to transfigure and deserve

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<sup>7</sup> Lamia Joreige *Replay (Bis)* <https://vimeo.com/376353055>

<sup>8</sup> Lamia Joreige *Here and Perhaps Elsewhere* <https://vimeo.com/375671093>

his laceration and crucifixion, his crucifixion became willed. Hence by creating the Imaginal Double of the war the war will be deserved given that all in the Imaginal World is deserved as Ibn Arabi has shown.

Hence the two attitudes when facing violence would be either to pray in order to inject time and attempt to escape the repetition subsequent to the trauma or elevate the violent events to their Imaginal double and by that enact a transmutation of the values of these events. The real opposition is not then between praying for Lebanon or doing art, but those who compulsively repeat and those who pray exoterically and esoterically. Another fundamental attitude when facing violence is the option between thinking and not thinking:

*To think:* the violent events can force someone into thinking and creating the concepts that will make these events deserved or transfigured.

*Not to think:* Riad El Turk<sup>9</sup> spent most of his life in the Syrian prisons and hence was forced not to think, because thinking would have connected him back to the world. In order to do that El Turk forced himself not even to day dream because this also would have connected him to the world. He was able not to think or daydream by making drawings on the floor with lentil. As El Turk says, in prison, “you don’t have the world in which you used to live...this world is gone as if you died. You entered the underworld.” (UB, 24)

Hence violence either will push one to think and transfigure the events because he is forced to think or make one stop thinking because he is forced not to think. In both cases the event is deserved because it is acknowledged in its full violence and what it provokes in thought. We can see here another consequence of the method of literality or the realism of Toufic. To make art in relation to the war one must be captured in the necessity to do so, the work of thought must be itself a way to confront the violent event or a quasi-physical consequence of these events – to make evanescent drawings to assume one’s death to the world as a strategy of survival, to pray in order to escape traumatic repetition, not to pray in order to transfigure the event or to be provoked into thought in order to face the event. The real opposition is not then between those who are able to think and those who are unable to think during the war, but between those who are genuinely hit by violence in their thoughts, which provoke them to think or not, and those who think they are thinking while they are not. In situations of violence and corruption one registers the impossibility of life and awakens. The two options here are then to awaken to the present or to the untimely, and by that to undertake a poetic revolution and/or a violent revolution – “it is not blood but red” is meant in that sense by Godard:

*To revolt:* Revolutionaries also show the impossibilities in a situation and initiate an awakening but only on the exoteric level, that of showing that a change had already occurred and that the government and the situation is lagging behind. The Revolutionaries hence try to make us present to our present, while thinkers must make us present to the untimely, the labyrinthine. (UB, 37)

*Not to revolt:* Lebanese wars show that life is impossible not only in times of affliction but as such, hence these wars must allow one to wake up and realize that undeath is coupled with life. In that sense Lebanese wars can be the occasion for one to die before dying and achieve piercing sight and acknowledges his presence in the labyrinth. (UB, 33)

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<sup>9</sup> Al Atassi documentary on his cousin, Riad El Turk <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFOdOdCVKiE>

The real opposition is not then between the artists and the revolutionaries, but between those who sleep and those who awake.

### *Memory in Post-War Lebanon*

To deserve Lebanon, we need to produce a concept of the type of memory that can be appropriate to the Lebanese situation, but also images and scenarios that can convey such conception. Toufic proposes two forms of memory proper to the Post-War situation. The amnesty law of March 1991 (Law no 84/91) only solves the practical issues among the living, such as inheritance and the like. It remains that such laws don't address the problem of the lived memories in this context. Hence Toufic conceives a number of mnemonic attitudes that can fit in the Lebanese labyrinthine space-time:

*Not to remember without forgetting:* a man not bearing the amnesty travels in the multiverse to another version of Lebanon where people didn't go through the war and hence are not remembering it without yet having forgotten it. -- We can say that many in Lebanon who saw the quick reconstruction projects without having witnessed in first-hand the war does not remember the destroyed city center and yet don't remember it not because they have forgotten about it. On the other hand, we can say that after the official end of the war and the projects of reconstructions that wiped most of the traces of war those who participated in the war do not remember because they are still in the war, and hence don't remember not because they have forgotten. Their situation is akin to psychological blindness. In Arbid's *Seule avec la guerre*, we see militiamen living again precise events in precise places to which passersby seem to be oblivious. Salhab's characters who carry within them the war and its memory seem to be in a similar disjunction, like the character in the *Mountain*.

*To remember from the first time:* in the labyrinth entering the first time allows to remember specific points in it. Indeed, given the fractal labyrinthine structure and the effects of self-similarity it induces, memory is confused and one feels that he was already here while he is here for the first time. (UB, 9) -- In Hadjithomas and Joreige *Je veux voir*, Mroué at one point loses the place of his village house amidst the ruins and we see him wondering if he wasn't here before, if this pack of rubble is not his house, before moving to another pack.

The real opposition is not then between those who remember and those who forget but between those who are amnesiac to the situation and those whose memory was disturbed by the situation.

### *The transubstantiation of jouissance in Post-War Lebanon*

We need to send poets to conflict zones to wrap jouissance in songs. Arbid's *Seule avec la guerre* (2000) shows how militiamen have jouissance after the war, a thirst for blood that give them comfort. A militiaman wearing the cross have erotic thrills when butchering – such as in Sabra and Shatila that was an orgy of jouissance where the militiamen taking vengeance for the assassination of Bashir tasted jouissance and the erotization of horror. In Cobra's book, *From Israel to Damascus*, the exoteric scandal on the Sabra and Shatila massacre occulted the esoteric scandal, that of the jouissance of the massacres. In order to transfigure such horrors, one must be pure, and must have the nature of Christ to turn wine into blood and bread into flesh. In the Eucharist one drinks wine but tastes blood and that without any mixture, achieving by that purity which allows the passage between the nature of the flows without mixtures. The anorexic on the other hand mixes the flows, he is impure, breathing,

defecating and erecting passing into one another. -- We can say then that the task of the artist, when dealing with *jouissance* in Post-War Lebanon, will be to achieve such pure transubstantiation, turning *jouissance* into a song or into joy, where the viewer will see *jouissance* but taste joy. Given that in Lebanon the spiritual side is the labyrinth of undeath the pure artist will be able to transubstantiate the world of war into the labyrinthine while keep both aspect separate, unmixed. Such pure transubstantiation can be understood also in a note where Toufic points out that the radical closure in a painting must be achieved via the relation of the elements of the painting rather than the content or what is being illustrated in the painting as such. (OS, 134) Hence it is the relation of worldly elements that will bring about the unworldly without always having the need to represent these unworldly elements – the absence of unworldly elements will allow the purity of the reversal of a realm into another. On the other hand, the impure artist will mix the realms leading to a ridiculous version of undeath-in-the-world. The two postures are then those of purity and impurity that we can illustrate as follow:

Purity:

*Labyrinthine Art*: Lebanon is a hospitable place for Vampires given its ruins, bloodshed and *jouissance*. Artist and video makers explored that possibility such as Roy Samaha in *Landscape at Noon* and Rami Sabbagh in *2 mg of Blood on White Snow* and *Imperfect unless Performed in Blood*. In the work of Sabbagh Beirut is indeed transfigured into a dark place haunted by vampires, the Ring looks like a place where car move like bats, Beirut is illuminated like a distant apparition or a vampire castle. His coupling of poetic verses written under the spell of Hallaj to the world of the undead is revealing given that, as we have seen, both the Vampire and the Mystic aim at abolishing the I, but for opposite reasons: one for the love of God while the other for the love of some creature. Other explored the labyrinthine nature of Beirut such as Walid Raad, Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige's *Ashes* (2003), *Wonder Beirut: The Story of a Pyromaniac Photographer* (1998), and *Latent Images* (1998-2005); Elias Khoury and Rabih Mroué's *Three Posters* (2000); Rabih Mroué and Lina Saneh's *Biokhraphia* (2002); Lamia Joreige's *Replay* (2000) and her video *Sleep* (2004); Ghassan Salhab's video *La rose de personne* (2000); Tony Chakar's installation *A Window to the World (An Architectural Project)* (2005); Waël Noureddine's *From Beirut with Love* (2005), etc. (UB, 57).

Impurity:

*Humoristic Labyrinthine Art*: In his play, *How Nancy Wished Everything was an April Fool's Joke*, Mroué mixes the realms of the undead and the living where the living simply plays the dead. This is shown by the fact that the text that the supposed dead are saying is projected on the floor in front of them and hence the voices-over that the dead hear are repressed from the diegetic scene to only figure as extra-diegetic prompter's text. Add to that, in the undeath realm, we have a proliferation of interruptions, while the actors in Mroué's play wait for each other in turn to speak. Add to that, the actors speak in the name of the dead as if the dead had a name, and by that they are infringing on the dead. In a way Mroué, in this play, didn't learn how to die and failed also to teach the Lebanese audience to die and be aware that it is

dead while alive. This play could have only worked if it was itself an April's Joke played on the Lebanese audience, but it wasn't. Western theater represses the non-diegetic and in this sense the play of Mroué remained an off shoot of that theater. (UB, 72) We can say that this is a *clumsy* mixture of the realms even if it is in a humoristic way. The last two plays by Rahbani, *Bikhsous el Karameh wel Shaab el aaneed*<sup>10</sup> (1993) and *Lanla Fushat Al Amal*<sup>11</sup> (1994) can be seen as mixtures of the unworldly with the Lebanese situation. In these plays the characters are demons, vampires, or perverted gangs, all mixed up in different temporalities. Lebanese language is the plane that captures all these creatures. In the discrepancy between the visual appearance of the characters and their language, we see what haunts or possess the Lebanese, as if they are not aware of who they are, having eyes but not seeing, like zombies. It remains that these creatures are played with humor and what we hear are people captured in the mundane world

*Chauvinistic*: such as the suicidal martyrs of the Hezbollah or Sheikh Ahmad Yassin who die for worldly causes brain washed with some unworldly fictious causes – such as killing yourself for God. (AS, 61) We can add in this category the Christian extreme right militiamen that find God in a moment of epiphany as in Saab *La tuense* (1988). In here the impurity consists in using the unworldly for worldly purposes. We have here a culture of death justified by the other realm but whose use is only to facilitate suicidal missions, bloodshed and the like in view of worldly goals.

*Kitschy*: mixtures of the realms where Hariri appears with the ghostly presence of this father behind him, or where Marwan Hamadé is considered a living martyr just because he survived an assassination attempt. (UB, 23) In here we have a misuse, a worldly all too worldly, of the unworldly categories and imageries. The problem here is the focus on the content rather than on the relation between the elements to produce the image.

*Trendy*: The *trendy* work of Bernard Khoury or Elie Saab are impure mixture lacking style. (UB, 57) -- We could add *Beit Beirut* by Youssef Haidar where the ruin is turned into an inhabitable space of exhibition reducing the unworldly to the worldly. By the hazards of the calendar Elie Saab was honored in Beit Beirut in the presence of Saad Hariri in 2018<sup>12</sup>. In here the unworldly is emptied from its substance and used as a decorative theme.

-- We can see here how the tradition can be mobilized to work as an aesthetical system. The two major affects being jouissance and joy, relating to Hell and Paradise, as the paradigmatic affects – an artist will occupy a degree on the scale going from joy to jouissance. The other major concept from the tradition is *transubstantiation* that will make the material extracted from our world make present unworldly realms, and by that achieve a work that is present in the same time in two places giving the *aura* that characterizes works of art – the work being very close and yet infinitely distant. The affective quality of a work of art will be then its affinity to joy or jouissance, while the intensity of the work will be its degree of purity as to the operation of transubstantiation it encompasses, while its content will deal with the

<sup>10</sup> Rahbani *Bikhsous el Karameh* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ic9ehabpEFI>

<sup>11</sup> Rahbani, *Lanla Fushat el Amal* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7j8Wzj2W35M&t=1405s>

<sup>12</sup> Clip on the exhibition of Elie Saab in Beit Beirut [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2R1x\\_M0qX0U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2R1x_M0qX0U)

figures and realms, typologies and topologies, that are being actualized in the transubstantiated worldly material. In that sense we can say that religion is an aesthetical system expressed in images and in an aesthetical way. This is why we can say that literarily a work of art can be Evil and another Paradisiac.

*The Labyrinthine nature of the Lebanese Wars*

In 1992 Beirut turned into a ruin and by that opened on a labyrinthine space-time. The site specificity of Beirut was then its labyrinthine nature, meaning something which is not site specific. On the other hand, Beirut was also the locus of a withdrawal of tradition and it witnessed situations of relative and radical closures. People living in war zones like Lebanon look as if they are matted on their surroundings, as if they appear from another dimension in their milieu. (OS, 171) Over the quarantined zones with mass graves we saw birds appear and people hallucinated seeing cadavers, such after the Quarantina massacres. These birds were unworldly ahistorical fully formed entities while the Quarantina was a radical closure. (FR, 107) -- With the corona quarantine we have seen the appearance of animals in empty streets. Add to that, if the Lebanese don't take into consideration the existence of the ghosts and carry their unfinished business the price they will pay is that they will turn into zombies with eyes that don't see and bodies that don't feel. (VP, 104) The task in Lebanese art is to teach the Lebanese to die and that they are dead while alive by revealing the dimension of undeath in the art works. (VP, 168). We can illustrate different artistic orientations pertaining to the Lebanese wars as follow:

*Art of the Labyrinth:* Tony Chakar architectural work consist in showing, through texts or walks, the labyrinthine nature of the space in Lebanon as in his walk in Beirut neighborhoods *The Sky Above Beirut* (2013) where he shows how one jumps from one political space into another in an indiscernible way, or in *A window to the world* (2005) a text where he describes a woman buying a house and how this house is threatened by possible violence. The work of Wael Nourredine *From Beirut with Love* (2005) shows Beirut as a labyrinthine continuum with quantum leaps and cuts on the image as if in lapses of consciousness, violent reversals, etc. In *July* (2006) we have an aesthetics of war with hatched shots on ruins, lapses of consciousness, reversed movements, frozen cadavers, and cuts that are all encompassed in the same space of loss. The music of the Soap Kills, *I am Lost* can be evocative of the labyrinthine after the end of the Lebanese wars<sup>13</sup>. We can also add the video by Toufic on people in the asylum, *Credits Included: A video in Red and Green*, the section of the labyrinthine speech of the mad man.

*Art of ruins:* In labyrinthine ruins the inside and outside were turned around, we could see the inside of the destroyed buildings outside while walking in a bombarded street. In these ruins only, the streets seem intact because they are not ruins. (TR, 36) We can say that Richmaoui's *Sounding the Neighbors*<sup>14</sup> goes in that direction showing the trace of staircases on the buildings outside, or about the streets in *Hors la Vie* by Baghdadi. Toufic proposes to project Krzysztof Wodiczko on the newly rebuild buildings in Beirut to show that they are haunted ruins. (TR, 33) The photography of Fouad El Khuri only documents the ruins of the destroyed city center. (WT, 71)

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<sup>13</sup> Soap Kills, *I am Lost* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eWZhYDz1c-E>

<sup>14</sup> Richmaoui on *Sounding the Neighbors* and other works <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFvicyY8I2M>

Gilbert Hage<sup>15</sup> made a series of photos titled *Toufican Ruins?*, documenting destroyed buildings. (TR, 41) The art on the ruins that show that they are still living ruins aims at resisting the movement of reconstruction that reserve the appellation ruin to the archeological site and by that prepare the destruction of the ruins. It is in this destructive sense that we need to understand Solidere's motto "Beirut, Ancient City of the Future". (TR, 37)

*Relative Closure Art*: Fouad El-Khoury work on the destroyed city center and Samer Mohdad's *Les enfants de la guerre*<sup>16</sup> document situations of relative closures. (WT, 71) The burned photographs of Hadjithomas and Joreige in *Wonder Beirut* locate the disaster and hence pertain to relative closure and disasters rather than to surpassing disasters. (WT, 73)

*Radical Closure*: Raad's black and white portrait irrupting beneath the blue/grey surfaces in *Miraculous Beginnings* or *Secrets in the Open Sea*<sup>17</sup> is a work showing a radical closure. The *Bachar Tapes*<sup>18</sup> and *Khalil Gibran* in the Sursock Museum by Raad are irruptions of unworldly a-historical fully formed entities in the radical closure of Beirut, where we can say that Bachar himself is such irruption. (WY, 152) The exhibition *Not Beirut* in San Francisco intuits that Beirut was a radical closure. (OS, 153) In *Credits Included: A Video in Red and Green* by Toufic the irruption of red when Toufic touches the plant is an unworldly fully formed entity.

*Withdrawal of Tradition Art*: after a surpassing disaster some artists will show that the tradition has withdrawn either by desecrating works of art from the tradition, or by showing that the community has eyes but doesn't see anymore – we can consider that Sadek's *Love is Blind* shows the withdrawal of tradition because the works of Mustafa Farroukh are not available anymore. Works on desecration haven't been produced yet in Lebanon. The undeveloped photos of Hadjithomas and Joreige in *Wonder Beirut* express the radical closure due to the withdrawal of tradition. (WT, 76) *Sweet Talk* by Raad presented the impossibility to relate the photos to their referent showing by that the withdrawal of the referent. (TR, 67) Another attitude will consist in preserving the formal attributes cut from their referent for future viewers that will resurrect them, such as in Raad's *Index XXVI*, or *Appendix XVIII*<sup>19</sup>. We can say that the work of Vartan Avakian *Collapsing Clouds of Gas and Dust*<sup>20</sup> that preserves genetic human debris in crystal in view of a coming disaster is one of these gestures of preservation too. Last, we will have attempts to resurrect the tradition, we can consider the work of Toufic is such an attempt that shows the vitality of this type of thought when confronted with the recent events and cultural production. We can consider the revisiting of the Arabic repertoire by Soap Kills, such as in *Ya Habibi Ta3ala Ilbakni*<sup>21</sup> an attempt to resurrect Arab music prior to the 1967 surpassing disaster.

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<sup>15</sup> Gilbert Hage web site <https://www.gilberthage.com/>

<sup>16</sup> Mohdad *Les enfants de la guerre*, [https://www.photobookselysee.ch/page/Samer-mohdad-les-enfants-la-guerre\\_991013610719702851/15](https://www.photobookselysee.ch/page/Samer-mohdad-les-enfants-la-guerre_991013610719702851/15)

<sup>17</sup> Raad, *Secrets in the Open Sea* <https://www.theatlasgroup1989.org/sos>

<sup>18</sup> Raad, *The Bachar Tapes*, <https://www.theatlasgroup1989.org/bachartapes>

<sup>19</sup> Raad, *Scratching on Things I Could Disavow* Web site, <https://www.scratchingonthings.org>

<sup>20</sup> Avakian, *Collapsing Clouds of Gas and Dust* <https://marfaprojects.com/exhibitions/vartan-avakian-2015/>

<sup>21</sup> Soap Kills, *Ya Habibi Ta3ala Ilbakni* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIZfd6kp6Sk>

*Lipogrammatic Art:* in Beirut we witnessed the destruction of signs and billboards and words had missing letters but also some words withdrew from language due to the surpassing disaster. It follows that poets should use such new language with its gaps, while calligraphers need to limit their letters to the one available. (OS, 50)

*Poetic Art:* it is to wrap what is being received from the dead with a song or lament, mingled with jouissance. (WI, 193) We can say that attempts in that direction are the likes of Baghdadi's *Hamasat* in collaboration with the poet Nadia Tuweni, and *The Sniper* by Faysal El Yassiri in collaboration with Nizar Kabbani.

*Memory Art:* war zones such Lebanon call for remembrance without having any particular memories to remember. Hence memory doesn't revolve around particular memories of war nor around re-enactments of the war but is conveyed in memories that can't be actualized. These are shown for example in tracking shots of the destroyed city center that are not anchored in someone's POV, like in *Hors la vie* by Baghdadi, *Circle of Conceit* by Schlondorff, or the tracking shots in *Beirut, jamais plus* by Saab. A sign that the war is really over is when we won't have any more of these impersonal tracking shots in Lebanese movies. (UL, 36) Another prerogative of dealing with memory related to the war would be to show the type of memory proper to the war zones, as we have seen this memory is akin to psychological blindness and to *deja vue*, as in the documentary *Seule avec la guerre* by Arbid, or the impression of *deja shown* in *Je veux voir* by Hadjithomas and Joreige. A task related to these specific types of memories would be to conceive fictional scenarios, like travelling to another branch of the multiverse to convey this experience of time and memory.

*Joy art:* we think that the apparitional paintings of Daniele Genadry can be seen as a transubstantiation of intense experiences into pure light, works that bring the inner monologue to a stop, and by that akin to the angelic.

*Jouissance art:* we can say that the documentary by Lokman Slim *Massaker* (2004) uses jouissance to captivate the audience by recording without any transformation the testimonies of the Sabra and Shatila massacre. There is a morbid pleasure taken in telling and listening to these stories. It remains that here no transubstantiation is achieved. Some of the works of Alfred Tarazi<sup>22</sup> showing blown up pictures of cadavers taken from the civil war can be interpreted in that direction such as in *A sea of Oblivion* (2010), the proliferation of the images of war and sex in *Dear Madness* (2017), or the images of gruesome stories of war in *Senseless Realm* (2015). We can also think of the paintings of Hala Mouzannar, consisting in fleshy rotting surfaces provoking jouissance. The movie by Faysal El Yassiri *The Sniper* (1980) shows the jouissance of a sniper operating in Beirut at the beginning of the war where the author attempts to transubstantiate this jouissance in the poetry of Nizar Kabbani.

*Dream Art:* Saneh's *I had a dream Mom* narrates Beirut from the point of view of the one sleeping. In such art we need to draw connections between different works, like relating Poe's *Oval Portrait* to Saneh's movie and Bacon paintings by underlining

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<sup>22</sup> Site of Alfred Tarazi <https://www.alfredtarazi.com/>

details of Saneh's narration. In that movie Saneh is addressing us as the one dreaming, so that we can comfort her that this city of the dead was only a dream or that we are part of her dream in that city and hence she can keep dreaming. (PP, 18) Dream art can't imagine jouissance because dreams are compromises and screen out the traumatic memories. (WI, 199) Dream art will have then a repetitive component but masking the real traumatic scene that triggers the hell of compulsive repetition.

*Hypnotic Art:* we can say that art works in Lebanon, such as those of Balch and Burroughs, aiming at inducing hypnosis are inexistent.

*Prayer Art:* such as in the work *Replay (Bis)* by Lamia Joreige that injects time in the situation of violence to avoid the repetition induced by traumatic events. (UB, 12)

*Mourning Art:* Lamia Joreige in *Here and Perhaps Elsewhere* (2003) tries to suspend the work of mourning after the loss of her kidnapped uncle. (UB, 13) We can add the work of her brother Khalil Joreige and his wife Hadjithomas *Lasting Images*<sup>23</sup> that also dealt with the loss of their uncle.

*Dead Art:* like in Mroué's play *How Nancy Wished it was an April Fool's Joke*, even if Toufic considers here that the treatment of the subject of the dead is not very accurate in that play. We can add the movie *Martyr* by Khaled relate the story of a young man who dies in an accident and connects the two realms by mixing cinema and theater. At some point the theatrical lighting transfuses into the cinematic world, and at other scenes from this world are transposed in the theatrical space on backgrounds of deep blacks that stand as the realm of death.

*Haunting art:* *Specimen #4-Habiter* by Hadjithomas and Joreige people seem to be dreaming in places, haunting the places in which they are. (TR, 36) In places like Beirut where there is a lot of unfinished business one should give a place for ghosts in fictions. If there aren't movies in Lebanon in that direction it is a sign of collective amnesia or that the dead themselves went amnesiac. One of the few movies was *Beirut Phantom* (1998) by Salhab and it was on a revenant, and man haunting his old life and himself haunted as mistakenly taken to be another. (TR, 39)

*Reincarnation Art:* we know that Lawrence Abu Hamdan made a video *Once Removed*<sup>24</sup> (2019) that deals with reincarnation and dealing with history from that point of view.

*Undead Art:* vampire movies must proliferate in Lebanon given its affinity to jouissance, blood and the undead. Such movies are the likes of Sabbagh *2mg of blood on white snow* and *Imperfect unless it is performed in blood*, or Samaha's *Landscape at noon*. We can also add to that the project by Raad *Scratching on things I could disavow* where he deals with undead works of art seeking their coffins and being terrorized by their reflected/painted image on the craters. In the work of Raad and Sabbagh the undead condition is expressed in opening up a plane of interaction between all the elements, the living and the dead, the facts from reality and aesthetical facts. Sabbagh achieves

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<sup>23</sup> Hadjithomas and Joreige, *Lasting Images* <http://hadjithomasjoreige.com/lasting-images-2/>

<sup>24</sup> Abu Hamdan, *Once Removed*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVycan9O1Qs>

that by turning all the figures into figures of light while Raad does it by showing that there is an equality in facts, everything being equally an indexical image. Rahbani, *Bikhsous el Karameh vel Shaab el aaneed* (1993) and *Lawla Fushat Al Amal* (1994) shows the undead realms with their demons, vampires etc. but captured in the plane of Lebanese language and insanity.

*Iconic Art:* Gilbert Hage tried to make iconic pictures in his photos *242cm2* but they were not icons per se but only photographs of icons. Indeed, the photos of Gilbert Hage do not maintain their size invariable while icons do. For that icons induce trance movements making it such that wherever one moves the size of the icon remains the same. (WI, 87) We can say that the work of Daniel Genadry on apparitions where the image is the correlate of the perceptive eye and where empty surfaces maintain their presence regardless of the distance of the viewers by glowing through can be considered attempts in achieving iconic art<sup>25</sup>, we mentioned that the dominant affect in her work being joy and hence akin to the Paradisiac.

*Islamic Art:* it will deal as we have seen with Occasionalism to reveal how all figures emerge and go back to nothingness. Very few attempts if not none were made in that direction in the Lebanese art. This will require a resurrection of the Islamic tradition.

*Magical Art:* a video by Toufic, *Saving Face*, shows the tearing of the images of the faces of politicians in view of affecting their persons given that the mutilation of images in magic realism leads to the incapacitation of the owner of the images or dissociating his person from his image. (IT, 26) On the other hand the movie *The Man with the Golden Soles* by Amiralay is oblivious to the loss of the indexical relation between the politician Hariri and his image. The real problem is then that of making an image of a politician, Hariri, who dissociated his image from his person. (IT, 28)

*Imaginal Art:* art that will show the imaginal double of evens, cities, etc. Toufic made a number of videos in that sense collected in his video *A Trilogy on Cities and their Imaginal Complement*. Some cities are close to their imaginal double, some don't have one, and to deserve a city one must create its imaginal double where all the elements of that city will be illuminated now by their intrinsic light. (WI, 198)

*Political Art:* the task of political art in Lebanon will be to create the people because the people is missing, as was seen during Hariri's assassination manifestations of 2005. (UB, 31) A people or a community will be a number of individuals united in a tradition and sensitive to the withdrawal of such a tradition. But for that the tradition must be resurrected or created, and such tradition is the condition of possibility of the people without which all democratic projects are unthinkable. (UB, 32) In that sense a thought strike like the one undertaken by Toufic during the Israeli air raids of 2006, between the 24<sup>th</sup> of July and the 15<sup>th</sup> of August is a political act. (UB, 27) Another branch of political art would be to show the exoteric awakening and its

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<sup>25</sup> Daniele Genadry Web Site, <http://www.danielegenadry.com>

possibilities or failure as in the work of Marwan Hamdan<sup>26</sup>, *On Earth as it is in Heaven*, or *Offside*.

*Messianic Art*: only when one deserves what happened to him by crating the appropriate concepts and imaginal doubles of the event, he becomes contemporary of this time. Only then one can start the wait for the Messiah because deserving what happens to us is akin to the attitude of Jesus who deserved and made necessary all what happened to him. Indeed, in deserving the event one acts like Jesus because all the accidental elements become willed as if part of a plan and by that can eternally recur in their transfigured form. (UB, 18) Ashura is a form of ritual that attempts to build a memory for the future by inflicting torture. Such memory is needed to prepare centuries of wait, the waiting for the Mahdi. We can say that the videos by Toufic, *The Lamentation Series: The Ninth Night and Day* and *Lebanese Performance Art; Circle: Ecstatic; Class: Marginalized; Excerpt 3* show the time compression involved in the ritual, while Baghdadi's *Ashura* documents the ritual.

### **The actual cut between this world and the unworldly**

The actual cut, defined as a rupture that is part of the same continuum migrated through the history of Lebanese art. Virtually present, first in the years 1965-1975, it contaminated the characters by their sectarian double as in *Bayrut Ya Bayrut* by Baghdadi. Later this cut becomes actual and ruptures the whole situation creating a divide between the pre-war era and the war era, leading to a nostalgic form of modernism attested in movies such as *Beyrouth, jamais plus* by Saab, or *Hamasat* by Baghdadi. This cut unfolds on the surface and acquires its full power during the apocalyptic days of the war where all the connections become disrupted leading to a delirious mixture as seen in Baghdadi's *Liban, terre de miel et d'envers*, or Rahbani's *Film Ameriki Tawil*. With the end of the war the actual cut dives into each individual actually dividing him into a civilian and one who carries within him the sequels of a lived war. The position of Sadek and movies by Salhab, or Arbid exemplify this cut taken in the depth of those who live in a protracted civil war. The position of Raad brings complexity to this global interiorized cut by deploying it in fabulatory delirious constructions about the war. Last, we can say that the actual cut moves even deeper and intercuts our actual world with the unworldly building between this world and other worlds a strange continuum. This would be the position of Toufic where we move imperceptibly from the unworldly realms into the world through a continuum of indexical facts. Indeed, the method of literality shows that there is a continuum existing between worldly events, such as wars, disasters, kidnappings, love, etc. and unworldly events, such as the withdrawal of tradition, the unavailability of works of art, the impossibility to take a photograph, the apparition of ghosts in different mediums, etc. It remains that now instead of having a cut between the civil/confessional determinations of modernity, or the civil/war rupture of post-modernity, we have now a cut between worldly/unworldly, knowing that these realms still hold in one continuum. We can see that the resurrection of the tradition is inscribed in the operations of the Lebanese context and it is not a simple resurrection of the Islamic or Christian traditions. Indeed, as we have seen, Islamic art would install the cut between the creature/nothingness each image emerging out of nothingness and falling back into

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<sup>26</sup> Marwan Hamdan Vimeo page, <https://vimeo.com/user13206071?fbclid=IwAR1ZzFau61csBc-WQOuKAXW-UUunyDumDPR5FJHxUskGtY7QRyg4E7my78I>

nothingness. The Toufican approach allows then to encompass the Islamic tradition as a particular case of the continuum between the real and the imaginary, or the realms. Similarly, Christian art, and the icons, is also a special case of the general Toufican method where an icon is defined as an image that physically maintains its size and induces trance movements. Hence, we can say that Toufic introduces a tradition that is transversal to the different monotheistic traditions by building a continuum across ruptures. We can speculate that this is why one of his most synthetic texts that collects most of his concepts is called *Thinking across Lapses of Consciousness If Not of Being*. (WI) To be part of the resurrected tradition one needs to be able to move across the realms which are all actual realms, at least actual as existing somewhere if not in this part of the universe. By that we can say that Toufic radicalizes the experience of the civil war and its actual cuts by expanding it to the whole system of knowledge, to the totality of space and time. We can say that with Toufic images are not anymore simply images *of* the real, like in the Platonic system, but that images as such are realities, and realities as such are images. This is why an event in the “real” is correlative to events in the “image” and vice versa. It remains that to establish such a radical indexical relation between image and reality we need to see that the real is itself “actually” connected to alternative realms and that these realms are captured by the images. As Toufic often insists, a collaboration will physically, and not metaphorically or just on the level of understanding, affect the images, like when the work of Deleuze affects physically the work of Bacon. How can we have such a physical impact? It is because prior to the work of Deleuze many facets of the paintings of Bacon were simply invisible, unavailable, and only such conceptual work will make them available. Inversely we can say that some works of art will provoke thought or make thought possible, in the same way as some events will make thought possible or impossible. We then see how Toufic points towards a realm where the old oppositions between reality and images is abolished, a plane where there is a physical interaction between the different domains, realms, the worldly and the unworldly.