

- *In your case [Palestine] is, as it were, an undercurrent, but the main thrust is Lebanon.*
- *No ... it depends ... There's for example the first work I did, the one titled "The Dead Weight of a Quarrel Hangs," a video work: it is about a woman who takes objects from the house.*
- *Yes, this work.*
- *There is, for example, a very pronounced narrative of somebody who travels from Birzeit to Amman to Beirut.*
- *Yes, but this is one work.*
- *Yes ... But, for example, I have a very clear sense of why I became interested in trauma and it has nothing to do with the civil war in Lebanon—absolutely nothing. It has to do with [the following]: Once I asked my sister and brother about a specific family subject and they told me stories, and it was as if I were not there. Yet, I was there and we made decisions together on a specific subject. Nonetheless, it is as if you were not there. I mean your memory of these things is different completely, rather than just in a slight manner: you believe, you're convinced of the exact opposite ... and the character that you were is your brother actually: I was not there, my brother was there—but that's my memory. And I couldn't fathom how it was that children ages 10, 9 or 12 could make such a decision, or that your memory ... you have images, an odor, colors, but they are not yours, they are completely someone else's. This had a bigger impact on me than the war.*
- *OK!*
- *Now, when I thought about it further, I could see that it was related to when my family left Palestine; why it was that we did not know that my mother was from that country; why it was that my grandmother and grandfather, who were living in Lebanon, suddenly, in 1975, left, and why we didn't know the reason they left. I was raised in the company of my grandmother and grandfather and aunt; they suddenly*

*left, and we didn't know where they were. They went to Jordan; but we were unaware why they would leave to Jordan, and whether this other event was related to ... At that time, in Christian East Beirut, the Lebanese Forces would conscript the young men. These questions were occurring in the same period they were conscripting us and sending us to the mountain; you would go there to fight in order to regain your village where Druze were living at that point—actually they've always lived there. But because you were of that area, they would take you up there. In this manner there was a buildup of various matters. Now, you can't say that you can separate this event from the war and Palestine—you can't; it's as if they were all one knot. But at 12 or 13, there was no way to split them: there is this thread and this thread and this thread. I had no clue. And they only came back when I saw pictures of these objects that used to be in our house and that all of a sudden now had become in my mother's house. I would look at family pictures ... and I would ask myself: This object that I remember and that was in our house, where is it now? God! And I was reading Proust at the time. Imagine: you're reading Proust and ...*

- *Around what age?*
- *When we met, 1990 or 1991. But then it became important to know those details. And the only thing I actually found out was ... What did I find out then? I found out a lot and I noted everything.*

English translation of the Arabic segment of "How Would You Not Ask?: An Interview by Walid Raad of Jalal Toufic," June 10, 2010. The translation from Arabic is italicized.