

THE POLITICS OF TRANSITION:
TIME, HISTORY, AND JUSTICE IN POSTWAR LEBANON

by

SHEA C. MCMANUS

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2012

© 2012
SHEA C. MCMANUS
All Rights Reserved

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Anthropology in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Dr. Talal Asad

Date

Chair of Examining Committee

Dr. Gerald Creed

Date

Executive Officer

Dr. Vincent Crapanzano

Dr. Gary Wilder

Dr. Mandana Limbert

Dr. Miriam Ticktin

Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

ABSTRACT

THE POLITICS OF TRANSITION: TIME, HISTORY, AND JUSTICE IN POSTWAR LEBANON

by

Shea C. McManus

Supervisor: Talal Asad

In the context of postwar Lebanon, this dissertation investigates various modes by which local and global actors attempt to reckon with the past, despite the state's amnesty law, and its efforts to 'close the files' on the past. It problematizes a range of social, cultural, religious, and artistic initiatives that engage the continuing presence of the past in the present. These projects have generated a rich and variegated field of activity related to the civil war by drawing both on contested local memories and representations of past violence and on transnational techniques of truth-seeking, witnessing, memorialization, and archiving. Although diverse, they aim, among other things, to pursue truth for the missing, to confront and debate painful memories, to collect and evaluate testimonies from former fighters, and to critique the absence of an official memorial or museum on the war. Beyond that, my research also looks at the interventions of transitional justice in Lebanon. I show how international experts inject themselves into specific sites of local activity, and endeavor to cultivate distinctive sensibilities towards suffering, modes of political subjectivity, practices of speaking and remembering, and conceptions of guilt and responsibility to extend the dominion of international law, global democracy, humanitarianism, and human rights. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in the sites of their interactions, I trace the conflicts, tensions, and ambiguities that emerge when international experts and local artists,

activists, and victims groups meet to grapple with the past and imagine the future in sites of prior violence, and argue that what is involved in these encounters are different, and sometimes clashing, configurations of time.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of many people. I would first like to acknowledge my committee. Thank you to my supervisor, Talal Asad, for his insightful comments and sustained commitment to this project. Thank you also to Vincent Crapanzano, who has consistently provided me with intellectual stimulation, an open door, and unwavering support and guidance, especially when I needed it most. I would also like to thank Gary Wilder, whose eloquent critiques have challenged me to think in new ways, and who has devoted significant time and energy to this project, for which I am extremely grateful. I would also like to express my thanks to Mandana Limbert, who has provided invaluable intellectual advice and counsel at every juncture of this project, and whose input has been critical to its development, and my own. Thank you also to my external reader, Miriam Ticktin, for her discerning comments, and enthusiastic willingness to engage with my work.

While in Lebanon, my research benefited from the support and endorsement of many individuals and organizations. In particular, I would like to thank for their generosity and friendship: Lynn Maalouf, Anne Massagee, Ghazi Aad, Wadad Halwani, Ali Abu Dehn, Mohammed Safa, Monika Borgmann, Loqman Slim, Justine di Mayo, Fawwaz Traboulsi, Ghassan Moukheiber, Samir Frangié, Hala Frangié, Nizar Saghieh, Rabih Mroué, Alfred Tarazi, Nada Sehnaoui, Mirna Hamady, Sahar Assaf, Christine Tohme, Sari Hanafi, Amal Makarem, Amira Solh, Alexandra Asseily, Assaad Chaftari, Maha Yahya, Mona Hallak, Munir Bashshur, Antoine Messara, Ramez Salamé, Reina Sarkis, Rita Ayoub, Wadih al-Asmar, and May al-Khansa. I would also like to acknowledge UMAM Documentation and Research, Ashkal Alwan,

American University of Beirut's Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies, and the Orient Institute in Beirut for the wealth of information and access they provided during my research.

At the Graduate Center, I would like to thank the Department of Anthropology, and especially Ms. Ellen DeRiso, who always knew how to save the day and get things done. I thank too the Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center and its associate director, Dr. Anny Bakalian, whose hospitality, friendship, support, and editing got me through many tough periods of this project. Thank you also to the Center for the Humanities, whose seminars provided a much-needed source of critical inquiry during the write-up phase of this dissertation, and to its deputy director, Katherine Carl, for many stimulating conversations and engaging opportunities to present my work.

To the many friends, colleagues, and readers who have assisted me at various points along this long journey, I would also like to thank you for the valuable conversations, support, feedback, and friendship you provided. Thank you to Samer Frangieh, Alya Karami, Maya Karanouh, Nada Moumtaz, Ceren Ozgul, Abou Farman, Steven Pludwin, David Bahr, Christine Folch, Alessandro Angelini, Saygun Gokariksel, Ran Zwigenberg, Mazen Labban, Laura Schneider, Devrim Yavuz, Erin McMahon, and countless others. In addition, I would like to extend special appreciation to a long-time advisor and friend: David Theo Goldberg. I have learned more from him than he will ever know, and I am extremely grateful for his unwavering support, guidance, and mentorship, as well as the inspiration he provides.

My thanks also extend to the many people who commented on versions of chapters presented at conferences and workshops. In particular, I would like to thank Carole McGranhan, Mayanthi Fernando, Angelique Haugerud, Klaus Neumann, and the participants in the Mellon Seminar on Emotions for their eager and critical engagement with my work.

To my family, it was only with your love and dedication that I was able to make it through all of this, or even think about beginning it. Thank you to my mother, Sheri, my father, Michael, and my stepmother, Sue, to my brother Stanton, his wife Whit, and my nephew Roan, and to my other brother Cort, his wife Elham, and my nephew Kian. Thank you also to my grandmother Mitzi, my aunts Lauri and Jan, and my uncle Jim, whose support I always felt from afar. And, finally, I could not have written this dissertation without the love, support, and keen insight of Raja Abillama, my partner and closest friend, to whom I extend my deepest gratitude.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Chapters	
1 A War Without History	26
2 Truth for the Missing	55
3 The Power of Testimony	90
4 Memorializing the Ruins	125
5 Strategies of Reconciliation	159
Conclusion	193
Bibliography	200

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Billboard demanding “The Truth for Lebanon’s Sake”	1
2. Plaque announcing the establishment of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon	49
3. Protest tent set up by families of Lebanese detained or missing in Syria	55
4. Martyrs’ Statue in downtown Beirut	125
5. <i>In a Sea of Oblivion</i> , installation by the Feel Collective	138
6. <i>Civil War Museum</i> , installation by Mirna Hamady	143

INTRODUCTION



Figure 1: Billboard in Beirut demanding *al-haqiqa li ajli lubnan* (The Truth for Lebanon's Sake).
Photo by Shea McManus.

This dissertation grew out of a series of questions initially spurred by an encounter with the billboard pictured above, which reads: “*al-haqiqa li ajli lubnan*” (The Truth for Lebanon’s Sake). The highly publicized demand for “the truth” portrayed here, and elsewhere in Lebanon, immediately captured my interest, especially given that such calls have taken on such a powerful moral and political register in the contemporary age of transitional justice. In most transitional justice contexts, these calls are linked to the notion of righting historical wrongs through an acknowledgment of past violations, a recognition of victims’ suffering, and the promise of building a new future characterized by peace, democracy, and human rights. Along with public apologies, international tribunals, and the flourishing of memorial museums, truth seeking and truth telling mechanisms have become an essential fixture in the post-Cold War political landscape throughout the Global South. But I sensed that there was something else going on

here. The search for the truth is usually said to be undertaken on behalf of the victims of political violence, and is perceived as a way to valorize the voices and narratives of those who had previously been marginalized from history. But on this billboard there is a picture of only one man. Looking down from the sign is former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, who was assassinated by a massive car bomb on February 14, 2005. This led me to ask if there was a different concept of “the truth” being deployed in this context. Above the image of Hariri is a counter, marking the number of days from the date of his assassination until an international tribunal tries and punishes those responsible for his death. What is being called for, then, is not a restorative form of justice, but a retributive form of justice that will punish individual perpetrators and mark a new phase in the nation’s history characterized by the rule of law. While linked here to only one man, I could not help but wonder if the demand for truth and justice was also being extended to other issues in Lebanon and, if so, in what terms, and in relation to what conceptions of time and history. It was in pursuit of an answer to these questions that my research began, eventually leading me into the complex field of social and political activity that is the subject of this dissertation.

This project began as a study of transitional justice in Lebanon. As I will describe in more detail below, a host of international organizations entered the country following the assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri, and it was with their sites of activity that my research was originally concerned. Given that international tribunals and truth commissions have become a “global” and “normalized” (Teitel 2008) form of intervention following periods of civil war or state repression over the last two decades, I originally expected that their focus would be on the formation of a formal strategy for dealing with the Lebanese civil war. However, what I found instead was that their attention was concentrated on a highly complex and dynamic field of

activity where local actors were grappling with the question of what to do with Lebanon's violent past using concepts such as truth, memory, history, and reconciliation, and that they were attempting to intervene in the direction and development of their projects. As such, this dissertation grew into a study of both domains of activity, and the relationships, tensions, and issues that emerge between them. Before going into further detail, I will begin this introduction with an overview of the foundational assumptions and practices of transitional justice, and explain how the field has been shaped in relation to shifting concerns over democratization, the perceived needs and rights of victims, and threats to international peace and security. Then, I will describe how this relates to the way transitional justice operates inside Lebanon, and the larger field of which it is a part. I will conclude with a discussion of the methods I employed in my research, and a brief description of each of the chapters that follow.

Transitional Justice

The field of transitional justice is relatively new, emerging in the wake of the Cold War as an approach to redressing crimes committed in states transitioning from a violent, authoritarian past toward a more liberal, democratic future. It embodies a vision of social repair in which the harms of the past can be repaired in order to provide a secure foundation for peace, the rule of law, and human rights. It aims to accomplish this vision through a combination of practices that include legal prosecutions, truth commissions, institutional reforms, reparation programs, and commemorative projects, which are collectively referred to as the transitional justice "toolkit." These measures are said to be essential to repairing the harms of the past and to building a peaceful future since they not only hold perpetrators accountable, but they also raise public awareness of past violations, acknowledge and redress the suffering of victims, expand public dialogue, create a new collective memory for the nation, alleviate desires for revenge,

promote civic trust, and strengthen the rule of law (Kritz 1995a, 1995b; Minow 1998; Teitel 2000, 2003; Hayner 2002; Elster 2004; Roht-Arriaza and Mariezcurrena 2006).

The origins of transitional justice can be traced back to the post-World War II period, when international criminal justice and reparation programs were put in place to punish war criminals and redress the victims of Nazi crimes. After its conclusion, some asserted that the crimes committed by Nazi officials were of such magnitude that they should be summarily executed. However, others argued that the Allied forces had a moral and legal obligation to “stay the hand of vengeance” (Moghalu 2008: 30), and submit the former officials to the judgment of international law. The latter side won out, and the victorious Allied forces established two international tribunals, the 1945 Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, and the 1946 Military Tribunal for the Far East. These tribunals were significant not only because they undermined the doctrine of national sovereignty that had served as the basis of international relations since the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, but also because they prioritized international law and expanded its applicability to individuals, rather than states (Moghalu 2008). In Nuremberg, the prosecution team used the principle of individual criminal responsibility to try high-ranking military and political leaders on four charges: crimes against peace, conspiracy to wage wars of aggression, war crimes, and the newly constituted legal category of “crimes against humanity” (Bass 2000; Overy 2003), which was to set the legal basis for later international prosecutions.¹ Sitting in judgment over the accused were four international judges, who were charged both with holding the former officials judicially accountable, and with producing an historical accounting of Nazi

¹ In the Nuremberg Trials, the charge of “crimes against humanity” had to be made in connection with one of the other three crimes, and could not be made alone (Wilson 2011). According to Pierre Hazan, this made it possible for the Allies not to expose themselves to criticism for their own actions at home and in their colonies, which he labels as the “original sin” of transitional justice (2010: 27). It was not until the creation of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) that “crimes against humanity” would return, and gain the prominence it has today.

crimes.² This created a new role for international tribunals, making them responsible for producing and authorizing historical narratives on world crimes (Wilson 2011). After the conclusion of the hearings, the West German state was required to redress the crimes that had been committed before they were able to regain international recognition and legitimation. Motivated by political and moral interests, the West German state initiated unprecedented policies of repentance and reparation toward both the survivors of the concentration camps and the state of Israel. Although initially opposed by many inside Germany and Israel, this was the first time reparations were granted to individual victims of mass crimes in recognition of their suffering, an expectation that would later become a central tenet in transitional justice (Barkan 2001; Borneman 2011).

At the same time that the Nuremberg and Tokyo military tribunals were being held, the international community began building a new corpus of international human rights law. In 1948, the delegates to the newly founded United Nations enshrined this corpus in law when they passed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Over the next few decades, they added to it with the promulgation of treaties covering civil, cultural, economic, political, and social rights, as well as discrimination, torture, and genocide. In this same period, the basic infrastructure of the human rights regime was built with the establishment of regional human rights courts, and the establishment of international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (Dembour and Kelly 2007). Although inspired by transcendental aspirations, these organizations were severely constrained by the national security interests of the

² Despite being billed as the “world’s greatest history lesson,” many argue that the historical record that came out of Nuremberg was incomplete, framing the mass extermination of European Jews as the product of a horrible war of aggression, rather than of German nationalism or anti-Semitism. According to most legal scholars, this was the result of the legal strategy adopted by the prosecution, which focused on the conspiracy to wage a war of aggression and crimes against peace, and subordinated crimes against humanity (Wilson 2011).

great powers during the Cold War. As a result, they took on a primarily adversarial role, shaming repressive governments into treating their citizens more justly through an appeal to universal human rights (Clarke and Goodale 2010). However, this strategy was gradually modified when repressive regimes began to fall, first in Southern Europe and later in Latin America. After these regimes fell, human rights activists found themselves without a role to play in the new societies, which eventually led them to shift their focus to addressing human rights violations in times of political transitions (Arthur 2009).

It is amidst this broader historical shift in global politics, the rise of human rights as the language of democratic transition, and the end of the Cold War that the field of transitional justice began to take shape. The field emerged in response to the practical dilemmas of how to pursue accountability for past crimes during the transition from dictatorship to democracy. For the politicians, human rights activists, and political analysts involved in its formation, the key debate centered around the question of whether to “punish or pardon” human rights violations committed by prior regimes.³ While they considered prosecutions to be essential for establishing the democratic rule of law, they also worried that they could provoke a violent reaction from the outgoing elite that might upset the stability of the new government and threaten civil peace (Arthur 2009). It was under these conditions that the first truth commissions were created in Argentina and Chile.⁴ In both countries, the search for truth was particularly important because the prior regimes had developed forms of violence and repression that were carried out in secret, most notably enforced disappearances, torture and death squad killings (Neier 1999). Although

³ It is not by accident that the first in a cluster of meetings that helped to solidify the emerging field of transitional justice was titled “State Crimes: Punishment or Pardon.” It was organized by the Aspen Institute, and funded by the Ford Foundation in 1988.

⁴ The first truth commission was set up in Uganda under Idi Amin Dada in 1974, but was largely discredited. As a result, the 1983 National Commission on the Disappeared in Argentina and the 1990 National Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Chile (or “the Rettig Commission”) are widely considered to be the first truth commissions “worthy of the name.”

they didn't satisfy what human rights advocates referred to as the "international duty to prosecute" (Orentlicher 1991), truth commissions were viewed as alternate forms of accountability that could clarify the facts about past human rights abuses, and produce an official historical record condemning them.⁵ Presided over by a "representative moral elite" (Humphrey 2003: 172), they gathered testimony from survivors of the detention camps and relatives of the disappeared, marking an important shift in the focus of historical knowledge production to victims, rather than perpetrators. The private testimonies provided by victims, or those who spoke on their behalf, were used to produce an official written report documenting the persons who had been disappeared, the sites of detention and torture centers, and the forms of torture and execution that had been used. By exposing the "horrors" that had previously been denied or hidden by the prior regime, and passing judgment on them in an official report, advocates asserted that a new, democratic nation could be built through the forging of a shared public consensus on the need to prevent their repetition in the future through a new order of human rights (Hayner 2002).

While truth was primarily seen as a substitute for justice in the early stages of transitional justice, the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) transformed this view. Instead of being thought of as a default solution in situations where justice was not feasible, the TRC presented itself as a more moral and effective form of justice than legal prosecutions because it could heal the festering wounds of the past and reconcile the nation (Rotberg and Thompson 2000; Boraine 2001). The TRC differed from earlier truth commissions in that it relied on an exchange of truth for amnesty, and held public proceedings. Each perpetrator was required to come forward, admit to his or her guilt publicly, and give a complete confession to

⁵ After the fall of the Soviet Union, truth seeking was also adopted as a mechanism for dealing with Soviet era repression. However, instead of using truth commissions, it was pursued through lustration processes and the opening of secret police files (Cohen 1995).

the Commission before receiving amnesty. These confessions were used both to produce a historical record of the causes, nature, and extent of human rights violations committed by the apartheid regime, and as a means through which to reintegrate perpetrators back into the nation through a public declaration of repentance (Buur 2001; Posel 2008). The hearings also afforded victims and their families an opportunity to confront state officials, and to narrate their pain and experiences of suffering in front of a national audience. Over twenty thousand people testified in the public hearings, which were presented as a form of reparation granted in the form of social recognition, and followed by medical, psychological, and financial reparations. One of the key assumptions underpinning the TRC was that a natural connection existed between speaking, remembering, and healing. The verbal recounting of traumatic memories was said to be a transformative experience that would lead to the healing and empowerment of victims (Shaw 2007a). By restoring the dignity and psychic health of the victims, the TRC also asserted that society as a whole would be healed, and a new, more inclusive, nation established (Tutu 1999). Although many argue that the TRC was not particularly effective in serving the needs of victims, and that it was too selective in the crimes it chose to address (Wilson 2001; Mamdani 2002; Ross 2003), it added a powerful moral dimension to transitional justice, becoming a model for TRCs around the world.⁶

However, this model is no longer the predominant one. After the forms of violence that emerged in Bosnia and Rwanda, a concern with regional stability and international security began to overshadow the optimism that characterized transitional justice in its initial stages. In order to deal with the threats that such conflicts posed to international peace and security, a new transnational legal regime emerged to prosecute “the most serious crimes of concern to the

⁶ As of early 2012, there have been forty-five official truth commissions established around the world.

international community as a whole.”⁷ The International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and Rwanda (ICTR) were set up in 1993 and 1994, respectively, and were soon followed by the adoption of the Rome Statute and the subsequent creation of the International Criminal Court. Since then, there has been a marked growth of international courts and tribunals, which now surpasses that of TRCs (Clarke 2010). The aim of these legal mechanisms is to prosecute and punish the military and political leaders responsible for commissioning the most explicit form of violence to humanity. As the Deputy Chief Prosecutor at the ICTY, David Tolbert, explained, “It is not about putting a nation on trial, or about putting an ethnic group on trial. The focus is on individuals. Individual criminal responsibility is the cornerstone of all of these prosecutions. Not the responsibility for pulling the trigger, but the overall responsibility for planning and directing these crimes, or for failing to prevent them.”⁸ This concept is referred to in international legal circles as “command responsibility.” Its formulation can be traced back to the military tribunals at Nuremberg and Tokyo, but is now being employed to create a language of criminal responsibility that shifts the assignment of guilt from lower level combatants to high-ranking leaders and officials (Clarke 2011). Some argue that this helps to undermine accusations of group blame that could perpetuate further conflict (Akhavan 1998), but it also contributes to the construction of a new type of criminal enemy.

Unlike the Cold War enemy, who was viewed as rational, calculating, and disciplined, the new enemy of the international order is perceived to be an irrational predator or fanatic. As Pierre Hazan writes:

⁷ The Rome Statute states that the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court shall be “limited to the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole. The Court has jurisdiction in accordance with this Statute with respect to the following crimes: the crime of genocide; crimes against humanity; war crimes; the crime of aggression” (Article 5).

⁸ “A War Without Crimes? Amnesties and Prosecutions” Fourth Workshop in the “What is To Be Done?: Lebanon’s War-Loaded Memory” series. Held in Beirut, Lebanon, October 18-19, 2008.

‘The civilized world’ is now set against the ‘barbarian.’ The bloodthirsty head of a militia; the nationalist leader who fans the flames of ethnic passions; the suicide bomber willing to kill himself or herself in order to kill many others; the terrorist; the rogue state – all these figures are part of the enemy as criminal with whom negotiations are impossible. The term ‘crimes against humanity’ and the terms ‘war crimes’ and ‘genocide,’ which were redefined by a series of arrests by the UN criminal tribunals and then anchored in the Statute of the ICC in 1988, capture judicially these policies of ethnic cleansing, forced displacement of populations, extortion, destruction of religious sites, and plunder of possessions which will from now on be considered threats to international security and regional stability (2010: 53).

Within this new formulation, the role of international criminal justice is to protect international peace and security from the crimes and criminals who threaten humanity as a whole. It draws its power and authority from a moral discourse that works in pursuit of victims’ rights to justice, writ large. In opposition to TRCs, which assigned victims spaces to narrativize their experiences of pain and suffering through a human rights discourse for the production of compassion and reconciliation, Kamari Clarke argues that international justice mechanisms deploy the figure of the victim within a “morality of humanitarianism” (2011: 35). At the heart of this morality is the idea that the suffering of the “rights-endowed victim” can be alleviated through “international intervention and a kind of victims’ justice” (36). International trials and tribunals work on victims’ behalf to punish the individuals responsible for their suffering, but she contends that they also depoliticize victims. Drawing on Agamben, she argues they reduce those categorized as victims to a form of “bare life ... marked by a condition of pre-political absolute victimhood” (2007: 158).

While some argue that the increasing judicialization of international relations signals the erosion of transitional justice as a utopian model for rebuilding societies, a combination of practices from the transitional justice “toolkit” usually accompany the establishment of international trials and tribunals. This could include truth commissions, reparation programs, the

opening of archives, political and institutional reforms, expressions of repentance, the rewriting of history books, and the construction of memorials. Far from fading into the background, transitional justice has become a globally normalized model for remedying past wrongs not only in the aftermath of civil war, mass violence, and political repression, but also in the midst of ongoing conflict (Hazan 2010). Like international judicial mechanisms, this model draws its legitimacy from the claim that it is working on behalf of victims' rights. Under international law, victims of gross and systematic violations of human rights or humanitarian law are now recognized to have rights to truth, justice, and reparations (Roht-Arriaza and Mariezcurrena 2006). Working in support of these rights, the transitional justice model is being expanded to sites around the world through organizations specialized in each of its component mechanisms, and by international non-governmental organizations such as the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ).⁹ It has also become central to United Nations peace building doctrine, and the UN recently appointed its first Special Rapporteur on Transitional Justice.¹⁰ The person chosen for this role was the director of ICTJ's Research Unit, Pablo de Greiff, whose mandate is to "promote truth, justice, reparations, and guarantees of non-recurrence of serious crimes and gross violations of human rights around the world." This appointment marks the increasing transformation of transitional justice into an administrative and legal apparatus for dealing with "failed states" and "intrastate conflicts" in the Global South, which is now linked, like international criminal justice, to the concerns of international peace and security.

⁹ The International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) was first conceived at a strategy meeting hosted by the Ford Foundation in April 2000. More than two dozen participants, including legal scholars, as well as human rights advocates and practitioners, gathered to discuss ways of contributing to the rapidly emerging field of transitional justice, and decided to establish an organization dedicated to it. The ICTJ officially opened its doors in New York City on March 1, 2001, and has since grown to a staff of over 120 people working in over thirty countries.

¹⁰ The mandate for this position was established in September 2011, and the first appointment was made in March 2012.

Anthropology of Transitional Justice

With the expansion of transitional justice into new contexts, growing numbers of anthropologists have become involved in the study of how its mechanisms function in particular locations and histories, and to how they are experienced, perceived, and translated on the ground. This attention to locality has been useful for highlighting both the foundational assumptions and practices of transitional justice, and the “frictions” (Tsing 2005) that emerge between global mechanisms and local practices and priorities for social reconstruction. Many anthropologists emphasize the privileging of criminal justice over other forms, and argue that transitional justice fails to account for the forms of structural violence and pre-conflict injustice that characterize most contemporary intrastate conflicts (Wilson 2001; Mamdani 2002; Clarke 2009). While this helps to frame the conflicts through a clear victim-perpetrator dichotomy that provides international intervention its legitimacy, they contend that this dichotomy is not adequate for understanding the forms of violence that characterize these conflicts, or for addressing their aftermath (Theidon 2007; Burnet 2008; Finnstrom 2008). They also argue that transitional justice fails to take into account that people living amidst ongoing violence often develop complex practices of silence, secrecy, and forgetting (Ferme 2001; Lame 2005; Shaw 2007b; Vivian 2010). In the interest of individual and social healing, it encourages verbal remembering and truth telling. However, they point out that transitional justice mechanisms usually end up producing forms of truth that prioritize specific voices and narratives (Ross 2003; Dembour and Haslam 2004, Coxshall 2005; Slyomovics 2005). They also simplify the origins of conflicts, glossing over the complicated histories and complex social, political, and economic dynamics in which they are enmeshed (Feldman 2002; Eltringham 2004; Wagner 2008; Drexler 2009). By paying attention to the way people experience and relate to these mechanisms, such studies

provide valuable insights into the tensions, contradictions, and unexpected outcomes that characterize the encounter between international norms, national political agendas, and local realities through the operations of transitional justice, often leading to new tensions and forms of injustice (Hinton 2010; Shaw, Waldorf, and Hazan 2010).

This project is also a study of how transitional justice operates in its local engagements, but it does not focus on its formal mechanisms. Instead, it investigates how transitional justice functions outside, and sometimes in pursuit of, such mechanisms. Given that transitional justice increasingly operates through a network of international non-governmental organizations, I examine how these organizations connect the foundational assumptions and practices of transitional justice to perceived local needs and priorities. I conceptualize of transitional justice, then, not simply as a set of mechanisms, but as a formation of discourse and practice. In my analysis of this formation, I draw on Talal Asad's suggestion to see secularism through the concepts, practices, sensibilities, aesthetics, moralities, assumptions, and behaviors that come conceptually prior to secularism, and help to support it as a political doctrine (2003). When extended to the field of transitional justice, this approach is useful for interrogating the way international organizations operate inside Lebanon. Engaged in a variety of disconnected sites, what ties their projects together is not a unified or coherent plan, but an emphasis on distinctive concepts, practices, and sensibilities.

In order to make sense of this, it is first necessary to explain how international organizations became involved in Lebanon. After the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, a demand for *al-haqiqa* (the truth) emerged, and was directly linked to a demand for an immediate investigation by the international community into the murder. In the weeks and months that followed, downtown Beirut was filled with protestors blending demands for an

international investigation into the assassination with demands that the Syrian regime, which had maintained a presence in the country since the end of the civil war in 1990, withdraw from the country. The demonstrations reached their most dramatic staging on March 14, when a crowd estimated to be around 1 million people filled the center of the city. The next month, the Syrian regime withdrew from Lebanon, and the UN Security Council launched an investigation into the murder, which it labeled as a “terrorist act.” Two years later, in May 2007, the UN Security Council mandated the creation of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL), becoming the first international tribunal established to try the crime of terrorism, and to try a case that falls under the jurisdiction of national courts. Not all members of the populace or the government welcomed this form of international intervention, creating a political stalemate that prevented the ratification of the tribunal through the Lebanese Parliament. As a result, the STL was established under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which allows the Security Council to “determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression” and to take military and nonmilitary action to “restore international peace and security.”

After the end of the civil war, a general amnesty law was passed pardoning most war-related crimes, except for some financial crimes and the assassination or attempted assassination of religious or political leaders.¹¹ Passed in 1991, this law blocked legal prosecutions, as well as the development of any truth-seeking mechanisms or commissions. In the immediate aftermath of the war, politicians argued this was the best way to secure peace, and they urged the Lebanese to *tayy al-safha* (turn the page) and look to the future. Although it was not heavily contested at the time, in the mid-1990s, memory activists began to assert that the postwar government had encouraged a form of “collective amnesia” (Khalaf 1994, 1997) towards the civil war years.

¹¹ Law 84 promulgated on 26 August 1991. ‘The Granting of a General Amnesty for the Crimes Committed before 28 March 1991.

They also argued that this amnesic approach to the past manifested itself in the reconstruction of downtown Beirut, where all traces of the war were erased and replaced by an idealized version of the city's pre-war cosmopolitan past (Makdisi 1997). They advocated for commemoration and debate about the civil war for many years, but it was not until the broad movement for "truth" emerged that they were able to expand their campaign, demanding the right to know the truth not only about the assassination, but also about the civil war. In 2005, the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) set up an office in Beirut to provide assistance and advice to these activists, and to promote the development of measures to seek truth and accountability for the human rights violations committed during the civil war, and during the periods of Israeli and Syrian occupation that followed.

Located in this complex field of actors, institutions, and discourses, this project takes as its subject the politics of transition in postwar Lebanon. It examines the varied and dynamic field of activity that has taken shape around issues such as truth, memory, history, and reconciliation in Lebanon, paying particular attention to the concepts, practices, and projects employed by local actors. As it examines this rich field of activity, it also traces the work of transitional justice in it. Instead of being focused on formal mechanisms, I show that transitional justice experts seek to latch onto already existing local initiatives, and reorient them. While I do not argue that their efforts are always, or even often, successful, their engagements provide a valuable lens through which to examine what lies at the heart of contemporary transitional justice intervention as it moves into new contexts. In Lebanon, I argue that international experts endeavor to cultivate distinctive moral sensibilities towards suffering, modes of political subjectivity, practices of speaking and remembering, and conceptions of guilt and responsibility. I will demonstrate that they seek to accomplish this not through an outright imposition of normative notions, but by

reframing local needs and priorities, and connecting them to a larger set of global issues, concerns, and norms. In the chapters that follow, I trace the sites and modes of their intervention, as well as the tensions and contradictions that arise in these sites, paying particular attention to the different modes of reckoning with the past and imagining the future that each domain of activity presents and creatively explores, but cannot easily be grasped from within the transitional justice framework.

Methods and Research Sites

In order to account for this politics of transition ethnographically, I conducted research in two domains of activity: among groups and individuals engaged with issues related to the 1975-1990 civil war, and in a series of training workshops and working groups organized by the ICTJ in Lebanon. I began my fieldwork in July 2008, approximately one year after the UN Security Council mandated the creation of the STL, and the ICTJ began working in Lebanon. Prior to beginning my fieldwork, I spent four months in Beirut, in which time I was able to meet with most of the groups and people that form the basis of this study. The only group I was not able to speak with was the ICTJ. I called and sent emails to the local office in Beirut, but it was not until I contacted the Director of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Program in New York that I was able to speak with a member of the organization. This revealed two important aspects of how the organization operates in Lebanon. It prefers to work in the shadows, usually under the cover of local civil society groups, and it maintains a fairly closed network, only interacting with a select group of activists and collaborators that speak the discursive languages on which it is based.

I met with the head of the ICTJ Lebanon Program upon my arrival in Beirut, and quickly learned that this would also be a condition of my further involvement. In my meetings with ICTJ

directors and global experts, it was simply taken for granted that I, as a Western academic researching transitional justice, shared with them a common concern for expanding human rights and strengthening the rule of law in Lebanon. As such, I was granted permission to attend a yearlong series of private two-day workshops organized by the ICTJ and one of its local partners, UMAM Documentation and Research entitled, “What is To Be Done?: Lebanon’s War-Loaded Memory.” Each workshop in the series was held in the conference center of a five-star hotel located in or near Beirut, and was open only to invited guests. The workshops focused on themes central to transitional justice, addressing the topics of enforced disappearances, mass graves and forensic science, legal prosecutions and amnesty laws, truth commissions, archiving and documentation, moral and material reparations, and museums and memorials. For each topic, an international expert was brought in to frame the topic, guide the proceedings, and provide advice and feedback to local participants. All of the experts had prior on-the-ground experience with the topics they discussed, and were either associated with international organizations or mechanisms such as the ICTJ, the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Commission for Missing Persons, or the International Criminal Court, or with organizations addressing transitional justice topics in specific countries, which included experts from Argentina, Chile, South Africa, Bosnia, and Iraq. There were between 40-50 local participants invited to each workshop, which included representatives of victims’ groups, religious and political leaders, human rights activists, NGO directors, and others involved with the issue being discussed, but no journalists.

To enter the workshop, participants were required to check in at tables marked by the first letter of their last name, where they were greeted and handed their pre-printed name badge and a package of reading materials. From there, they would proceed into the conference space, where

they could pick up a morning pastry and coffee or tea, provided by professional waiters, and talk with friends and colleagues before moving into the conference room. In the conference room, participants sat at cloth-covered tables, which were usually arranged in a large open circle. The international expert and the moderator were positioned at the head table, and everyone else was able to choose their own seat. In front of each person was a water glass and coffee cup, both of which were kept full throughout the day by waiters. In order to address the group, participants were required to speak into the microphone positioned in front of them, which made it possible for their statements to be recorded, and translated by professional translators positioned in a soundproof booth in the corner of the room. Headphones were made available to those who asked for them, and the proceedings were also recorded in both English and Arabic, and later transcribed. The workshops were always held on weekends, and included a group lunch in a hotel restaurant on both days, as well as a dinner for the international expert and some of the invited participants in a Beirut restaurant on Saturday night. During my fieldwork, I attended these monthly workshops and social events, as well as the planning and follow-up meetings that accompanied them, and I also conducted interviews with most of the participants.

In addition to the workshops and training sessions, I conducted participant observation and interviews with groups and individuals dealing with a range of post-war concerns in Lebanon. Their work centered around four primary arenas of activity, which also formed the basis of my research. In the first, I worked with groups focused on the issues of enforced disappearance and political detention. This included an association of the relatives of the kidnapped and missing from the civil war, an association of the relatives of the arbitrarily detained in Syria, an organization working on behalf of those detained in Syria, an association of former Lebanese political detainees in Syria, and an association working on behalf of victims of

torture. I conducted interviews with the directors of each of these organizations, and I also participated in their meetings and activities on an ongoing basis. Most of this took place at a protest tent pitched in front of the UN ESCWA building in downtown Beirut, which I will discuss in more detail in the second chapter. Continuously occupied since April 2005, this is a site where relatives and former political detainees now meet on a daily basis, and also the site where they hold most of their meetings and press conferences.

While often linked, I also participated in events organized by a range of groups concerned with issues of truth and memory. All of these organizations are very active, so I attended a constant stream of public events, lectures, discussions, film screenings, and open “*hiwar*” (dialogue) sessions addressing the civil war, and its lingering effects on Lebanese society. I also attended many commemorative events related to the war, especially around the anniversary of its outbreak on April 13, 1975. In addition, I helped assemble film and document archives. This included sorting through already collected archival material, and collecting it myself. I quickly discovered that social relations in this field are maintained through a transfer of archival materials, and I found myself tracking down items of interest to specific people and groups almost compulsively. In fact, I made my final exchange on the way to the airport, marking the end of my formal fieldwork with the exchange of an old documentary film for a legal study.

Given that one of the richest sites of post-war activity in Lebanon is art, the third focus of my research centered on the contemporary art scene. I attended numerous art exhibitions and theater performances. This included everything from the opening exhibition of the Beirut Art Center, which was entitled “The Road to Peace: Paintings in Times of War, 1975-1991,” to more experimental performance pieces hosted in private living rooms. I also met with numerous artists

and filmmakers engaged with issues related to the war. I asked to see and discuss their work, and I also collected copies of their films, recordings of their past performances, and exhibition programs from past art shows. During my fieldwork, there were also several memory interventions staged in downtown Beirut, on a variety of scales. I met with the artists, students, and activists who designed these projects, and I also spoke to various people who encountered them in the streets to discuss their reactions.

The fourth issue I focused on was grassroots reconciliation initiatives. I learned about this work through Assaad Chaftari, a former high-ranking militia leader who issued a public apology to all those he victimized during the war after becoming involved with Moral Re-Armament (MRA). Although MRA is a global movement, it does not maintain a public presence in Lebanon, and prefers to work “one heart at a time.” On the grassroots levels, its members are very active in what they refer to as “reconciliation work,” which includes everything from speaking to schoolchildren to working for religious or political reform. I was invited to become involved in many of these activities, and to participate in the regular inter-faith dialogue and listening sessions organized for women, providing me with a perspective from which to examine the restorative justice approach to healing social divisions, which differs quite significantly from the transitional justice model.

Chapter Outline

This dissertation is organized into five topics of conceptual and ethnographic inquiry. Each chapter investigates a specific issue of concern to social and political actors in Lebanon, and the ways they are addressing them, sometimes through discourses and practices used in transitional justice, and sometimes through others. It also traces the modes of international intervention employed around the issue being considered, paying particular attention to the

distinctive concepts, practices, and sensibilities emphasized by international experts, and to the further initiatives that have been developed or implemented. I use these sites of engagement to critically interrogate the foundational concepts, assumptions, practices, moralities, and sensibilities of transitional justice, the ways they are connected to specific needs and priorities in Lebanon, and the implications of this form of international intervention.

Chapter One, “A War Without History,” examines the issue of history in Lebanon. Given that there is no official history of the civil war, it does not attempt to present a historical accounting of the conflict or its aftermath. Rather, it investigates the struggles that have taken place over that history, and its absence. I contextualize these struggles in relation to the post-war amnesty law and the reconstruction of downtown Beirut, which many in “civil society” argue contributed to a “state-enforced amnesia.” I also explain how historical memory was incorporated in the postwar era. While corporate planners and some artists and writers privileged a nostalgic vision that emphasized the cosmopolitanism of the pre-war period, others sought to face up to the war and reckon with its ethical questions of guilt and responsibility. I trace how the second trend became intertwined with the political movement that changed the balance of power in Lebanon in 2005, and the developments that ensued afterwards in the political and cultural domains. I conclude with a discussion of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) and the entrance of the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) into Lebanon. Although they are tangentially connected, the ICTJ contends that the STL is too selective in its pursuit of justice, and endeavors to develop a more comprehensive transitional justice strategy. In support of this, it has developed its own historical narrative for the country, defining Lebanon’s past in terms of a string of human and humanitarian rights violations, which I link to its larger project of reshaping political imaginaries in the present and future.

Chapter Two, “Truth for the Missing,” explores the activities taking place around the families of the disappeared in Lebanon. There are 17,415 people still officially unaccounted for from the civil war. The families of the missing have been campaigning for information on the fate of their loved ones since 1982, and, to assist them, the ICTJ has also taken the issue of the missing as one of their primary sites of involvement. Through a detailed analysis of the workshop led by the Director of the International Commission for Missing Persons, this chapter argues that the emerging discourse on missing persons in Lebanon is both constitutive of and constituted through a form of political subjectification that gives rise to the relative of the disappeared as a “rights-endowed victim,” on the basis of mental trauma. I show how this form of political subjectification enables the Lebanese state to be criticized both for its lack of compassion for victims, and for its refusal to acknowledge the relatives’ rights under international law through the creation of specific legal, political, and forensic mechanisms. Then, I trace its effects in the social and political domain, investigating several recent initiatives developed by local and international organizations to address the issue of missing persons. In my analysis of these activities, I argue that the relatives’ suffering is linked to international rights discourse, and employed as a means to expand the reach of international laws and norms of governance.

Chapter Three, “The Power of Testimony,” examines the use of video testimony in Lebanon. I show how a key debate over guilt and responsibility is expanded into the public domain through the production and screening of video testimonies with former militia fighters. I begin with a discussion of how the increasingly prevalent genre of video testimony is used to forge new sites of moral concern and political action in Lebanon. Then, I undertake an in-depth analysis of two documentary films, one consisting of testimonies collected from women fighters

and the other from male fighters. I argue that each of the films highlight specific values, concerns, and practices in relation to the narratives being presented, giving rise to overlapping and gendered frameworks through which to evaluate and reckon with the fighters' testimonies. I then turn to an investigation of testimony in the transitional justice field, where public testimony is reserved for victims' narrations of pain and suffering, and perpetrator testimony is limited to truth commissions and legal proceedings. I conclude by examining an oral history project developed by the ICTJ, showing how it shifts the focus to the collection of traumatic testimonies related to the civil war. I argue that what is at stake is not just the projection of a different image, but the structuring of public memory around specific notions of pain and suffering that expand the domain of victimhood beyond the relatives. I suggest that this constructs the war as a site of cultural trauma marked by violations that affected all those who lived through it, drawing attention to specific wrongs that, it can be claimed, must be addressed for the sake of the future.

Chapter Four, "Memorializing the Ruins," explores how artists and activists engage with the concept of memorialization in Lebanon. After discussing the traditional role of memorials and museums in representing national historical pasts, it examines two art installations that draw attention to their absence in Lebanon: an anti-memorial to the victims of the war, and a temporary civil war museum in the streets and alleyways of Beirut. These projects endeavor to bring the past into the present as a means to provoke and stimulate new ways of thinking, acting, feeling, and remembering the war and its victims. They emphasize that the present cannot be conceived of through a linear conception of time, not because of the presence of a past that will not pass, but because of the lack of memory and mourning. Through a detailed analysis of the materials distributed at the workshop on memorialization, I show how this type of work conflicts with the goal of the "new" memorialization paradigm, which aims to settle the disruptive force of

memory through a turn to history and memorial museums, not provoke it. I conclude with an examination of a heritage conservation and museum project supported by international organizations such as the ICTJ in Lebanon, and a reflection on what this reveals about the politics of time at the heart of transitional justice. Although it seeks to revive traumatic memories from the past, it also endeavors to control their irruptive potential through pedagogical forms of remembrance that represent the violations of the past as a dark moment in the nation's history, and provide visitors with a morally and temporally removed perspective from which to judge and learn from it.

Chapter Five, "Strategies of Reconciliation," analyzes two conceptions of reconciliation. It begins with an examination of how reconciliation is understood and practiced by actors associated with Moral Re-Armament (MRA) in Lebanon. MRA is a global spiritual movement that stresses the idea that changing the world starts with seeking change in oneself. One of its core ideas is that one must reconcile with oneself and the past in order to be able to reconcile with others and change the world. I examine how this idea is put into practice in Lebanon through an analysis of the stories of personal transformation articulated by two of its most prominent public figures: Assaad Chaftari and Muheiddine Shihab. Chaftari is well known in Lebanon, being the only former militia leader who has publicly apologized to "all those he victimized" during the war, and Shihab often travels and speaks alongside Chaftari. I then explore some of the less public dimensions of MRA reconciliation work, along with one of the movement's key concepts: forgiveness. In the final section, I examine the problems this concept raises for transitional justice, which asserts that reconciliation must occur on the civic or political level, not on the personal level, and that it must be accomplished through official actions that foster civic trust in state institutions. I conclude by showing how this makes possible the

exclusion of Chaftari's apology from the workshop proceedings, revealing the limits of transitional justice in its engagements with alternate conceptions of social repair.

In the conclusion, I consider the larger implications of this form of international intervention in Lebanon. While it opens up new political possibilities, it also closes off many others, encouraging a form of social and political activism that critiques the state for past crimes through the language of human and humanitarian rights. I argue that this not only contributes to the further expansion of international rights discourses, but also leads to an uneven emphasis on legal and political infrastructures as the mechanisms through which to achieve justice and reconciliation, expanding the global dominion of international law and liberal democracy in the interest of international peace and security.

CHAPTER ONE

A War Without History

I have been collecting worthless material for almost ten years now, taking good care arranging it, documenting it, indexing it, and preserving it from any possible damage. This material is constituted of cut outs from local newspapers, photographs, interviews, news stories, excerpts from television programs, objects and other things ... Today I possess what resembles an archive, or let's say I possess a real archive that relates only to me: a kind of added memory that occupies different corners of my domestic space, despite the fact that I do not actually need it. It is an invented memory that is exhausting me, and which I cannot liberate myself from. For this reason, I will uncover some parts of my archive, hoping that – by making it public – I can get rid of its weight. This will be my attempt to destroy a memory that doesn't know how to erase itself.

The above text appears as an introduction to Rabih Mroué's lecture-performance entitled *Make Me Stop Smoking (kif baddi waqqif tadkhin)*.¹ In this performance, Mroué takes the audience on a visual journey through the material he has collected, which is projected onto a large video screen at the back of the stage. Along the way, he reflects on the material, and on the history of Lebanon and its civil wars. He explains that his concern is not so much with the material itself, but with the question of why he continues to collect it. Jumping from the assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri to the citizens who went missing during the Lebanese Civil Wars to photographs of manholes and street lamps, he ponders what it is that compels him to collect and keep this material, but prevents him from doing anything with it. He asks: "Is it a fear of the future, or, in another term, a fear of death?" Seeming to reference Jacques Derrida, he adds, "death has the capacity to threaten every archival desire" (2007). Is this what is getting in his way? Is he afraid of another outbreak of violence? As he is talking about his material, he tries to make decisions about what to keep and what to throw away, but he keeps getting lost in his material. It is what he describes as "raw and untreated," revealing what he terms his "weakness

¹ The English title of the piece is "Make Me Stop Smoking." The literal translation of the Arabic title into English is "How I Want to Stop Smoking."

and idleness in a city that is still living its wars, a city that gives its back to the future” (2007). In this context, he is unable to ever complete a project. He is stuck between past and future, remembering and forgetting, collecting and destroying. He begins a new project and leaves it unfinished, then he moves on to another one but doesn’t continue it, so he moves on again to a new project. He is overwhelmed with memory, but it has nowhere to go, no history in which to be placed.

In a country where official history books end three years after Lebanon achieved independence from France in 1943, and does not include the fifteen years of war fought between 1975 and 1990, the issues raised by Mroué hold a particular significance. Not only is there no official history that extends beyond 1946 in Lebanon, there is also no national archive in which to gather information on the war. Michel-Rolph Trouillot contends that archives assemble the facts and sources that are to count as historical evidence, and “condition the possibility of existence of historical statements” (1995: 52). They are the institutionalized sites that “prepare facts for historical intelligibility,” which, in turn, set up the substantive elements from which historical narratives can be told. Although the construction of historical narratives is usually thought to be integral to the formation of a national imaginary that create a collective history around which the nation can cohere, the Lebanese state has not yet been able to find a narrative that all segments of the population agree upon. While perhaps this is part of the issue, this does not seem to be the main problem facing Mroué. He clearly articulates a fear of the future, and of death. In *Archive Fever*, Jacques Derrida states that the death drive “never leaves any archive of its own. It destroys in advance its own archive, as if that were in truth the very motivation of its most proper movement” (1995:10). Perhaps as a way not to give into this destructive drive, Mroué obsessively collects everything that he can get his hands on.

But he is unable to do anything with his material. He has no “archival power” (Trouillot 1995: 52), so his personal archive remains nothing more than an added memory. Instead of being prepared for historical intelligibility, his material remains “raw and untreated,” like an open wound. He attributes this to living in a city that “gives its back to the future.” Much like Walter Benjamin’s angel of history, he can only see destruction and catastrophe. In the ninth thesis of his famous “Thesis on the Philosophy of History,” Benjamin comments on Paul Klee's painting “*Angelus Novus*.” He writes:

A Klee painting named “*Angelus Novus*” shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress (1999: 249).

Benjamin's angel of history is caught up in a storm called “progress.” For Benjamin, the storm of progress was a mode of modernity that made a claim of future happiness without acknowledging the horror of destruction being perpetrated on the way. This storm is blowing the angel of history into the future without being able to “awaken the dead” or mend the catastrophe at his feet. Unlike Benjamin’s angel, Mroué is not being blown into the future. In fact, he doesn’t seem to have any sense of past, present, or future. He is firmly emplaced in Beirut, which is what has its back turned to the future. It is caught up in a deceit that makes a claim on happiness rather than the horrors of destruction that are still going on. Mroué is stuck in the wreckage, and trying to find his way out.

Of course, this is only one interpretation of Mroué's performance, which is designed to provoke thought, rather than provide answers. I begin with this piece in order to highlight the difficulties of writing a historical background to the present for this dissertation. In Lebanon, history is something that is very much up for debate, and, as artistic pieces such as this one demonstrate, a rich resource for thinking through the present. For that reason, I do not attempt to write a historical background in this chapter. Instead, I provide a brief background on what is referred to as the "civil war," and discuss the various ways that its history has been erased, mobilized, challenged, and critiqued since 1990. This approach will enable me to trace the postwar state's approach to history and memory, the forms of memory work that emerged in response, and the ways this work later become connected to the call for truth in 2005. I will then conclude with a discussion of the issues social actors are engaged with today, and the ways international organizations are currently trying to participate in the writing of a new history for the nation.

The War and Postwar

The Lebanese civil war began in April 1975 and officially ended in October 1990. Rather than being a single war, many argue that it is best described as a series of battles fought along shifting political, sectarian, and ideological lines by a variety of local and foreign militias and armies. Some scholars contend that the conflict was part of a longer, cyclical pattern of violence fueled by ongoing "communal strife" and "atavistic fear" (Khalaf 2002), inadequate peace settlements,² or inter-communal rivalries (Beydoun 2007; Choueiri 2007).³ Other scholars emphasize the weakness of the Lebanese state; colonial influences and competing nationalisms;

² Cyclical explanations of the civil war connect it to previous rounds of violence that occurred in 1840, 1860, and 1958.

³ In Lebanon, there are 18 different religious communities officially recognized by law. These include Muslim, Christian Catholic, and Christian non-Catholic communities, and the Jewish community.

foreign allegiances and regional interference; ideological battles and class struggles; or tribal and kinship loyalties (Owen 1976; Barakat 1979; Hudson 1988; Salibi 1990; Hanf 1993; el-Solh 1996; Gilsenan 1996; el-Khazen 2000; Makdisi 2000; Nasr 2003; Salam 2003; Traboulsi 2007). Most likely due to a combination of factors, the war quickly grew into a complex social system that perpetuated itself in the absence of a strong state apparatus. During the fifteen years of fighting, the country became a hotbed for snipers, kidnappings, car bombings, cross-town artillery battles, communal violence, mass killings, and multiple foreign interventions. Militias controlled most of the country, often managing local sanitation, taxation, housing, the economy, defense, as well as internal opposition, and demarcating the areas under their control with posters, graffiti, and logos (Traboulsi 2007; Maasri 2009).

According to official statistics compiled by Lebanese law enforcement officials in 1991, the war claimed 144,240 lives, left 197,506 people wounded, 17,415 missing, and 13,968 handicapped, and either displaced or uprooted two-thirds of the population.⁴ After numerous failed ceasefires, the country's leaders entered into a truce in the fall of 1989. The truce was brokered with the Document of National Understanding, or what is known more commonly as the Ta'if Agreement.⁵ Signed on October 22, the agreement endorsed national reconciliation, called for the disarmament of all national and non-national militias, and restructured the political system through a redistribution of political power among the country's sects.⁶ It also called for the establishment of special relations between Lebanon and Syria, which were later formalized in

⁴ These statistics were published in *Al-Hayat* on March 10, 1992.

⁵ Ta'if is the city in Saudi Arabia where the agreement was negotiated and signed by sixty-one of the seventy-two surviving members of Lebanon's 1972 parliament.

⁶ According to the 1943 National Pact, the president is to be a Maronite Christian, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim, and the speaker of parliament a Shi'a Muslim. This did not change with the ratification of the Ta'if Agreement. However, the Ta'if Agreement transferred power away from the Lebanese presidency and invested it in a cabinet that was divided equally between Muslims and Christians. Before the Ta'if Agreement, the seats had been allocated according to a 6:5 ratio of Christians to Muslims.

the 1991 Treaty of “Brotherhood, Cooperation, and Coordination.”⁷ This treaty provided for the creation of joint government institutions for cooperation in defense security, foreign policy and the economy, coupling Lebanese and Syrian diplomatic tracks and economic policies. It also stipulated that Lebanon would not be made a threat to Syria's security and that Syria was responsible for protecting Lebanon from external threats, legitimizing Syrian military presence in Lebanon to guard against the Israeli forces who continued to occupy southern Lebanon until May 2000 (Zahar 2002).

In the early years of recovery, most of the reconstruction efforts were concentrated on political and economic recovery. The postwar government took as its goal the building of a “state of institutions” to guard against a future return of violence (el-Hoss 1994). In compliance with the provisions of the Ta’if Agreement, it filled the seats of those Parliament members who had passed away during the war with new members, bringing the representation of Christians and Muslims to an equal ratio. Some of the new Parliamentarians included militia leaders from the last phase of the war,⁸ and the government also integrated substantial numbers of former militiamen into the Lebanese Forces and the Internal Security Forces (Zahar 2002; Salam 2003). In the interest of peace and security, the newly constituted Parliament also enacted two measures. First, in March 1991, all militias, with the exception of Hezbollah, who was still fighting the Israeli occupation in the South, were dissolved (Picard 1999). Second, in August 1991, a general amnesty law (*qanun al-‘afu al-‘am*) was approved.⁹ This law granted amnesty for all minor

⁷ Signed in Damascus on May 20, 1991 and ratified by the Lebanese Council of Ministers on May 27, 1991.

⁸ Three of the most notable militia leaders given official positions in the postwar government were Elie Hobeiq, Nabih Berri, and Walid Jumblatt.

⁹ Law 84, promulgated on 26 August 1991. “The Granting of a General Amnesty for the Crimes Committed before 28 March 1991 According to Specific Conditions.”

offences, misdemeanors,¹⁰ and felonies committed before 28 March 1991, including murder committed for political motives, kidnapping, and torture.¹¹ But two important exceptions were made, allowing for prosecutions against perpetrators of “crimes of assassination and attempted assassination of religious figures and clerics, political leaders, and Arab or foreign diplomats,”¹² and crimes referred to the Judicial Council before the promulgation of the law.¹³

These measures were designed to turn the page on the past, while also confirming the power, and centralized authority, of the state. Through a dual declaration of exception, the postwar state established itself as sovereign (Schmitt 2005), converting former militia leaders into figures of state, whose lives were deemed sacrosanct. In this sense, it can be said to have been constitutive of a new form of power, vested not in militia leaders, but in the post-Ta’if state. Through the passing of the amnesty law, the state established a new temporal order. It declared the war to be over, and the crimes of the past to be pardoned and forgotten. The connection it forged between amnesty and amnesia has a long history, dating back to the first known amnesty law passed in Athens in 403 B.C.¹⁴ The Athenian amnesty law declared the events of the civil war officially forgotten, and forbade anyone to recall them against anyone, punishing anyone who did (Cassin 2001). Lebanon’s amnesty law did not forbid remembrance, or threaten censure. It simply closed the files on past crimes, which it justified through an official war discourse of *la*

¹⁰ Except some offences, mostly financial, which are specifically excluded by the law.

¹¹ Amnesty Law, art. 2 (3) and (7). The latter mentions crimes under Article 569 of the penal code, which was amended by Decree Law 112 of 1983 in order to cover abductions.

¹² Amnesty Law, Art. 3 (3). The only person tried under this exception was Samir Geagea, head of the Lebanese Forces and a prominent war figures in the 1980s. In 1994, Geagea was prosecuted and convicted for the assassination of political leaders during the war.

¹³ Amnesty Law, Art. 3 (2). The Judicial Council is a special court that tries criminal cases referred to it by the Council of Ministers, which has the power to refer any case it considers a threat to internal or external security.

¹⁴ After nearly three decades of war, Sparta defeated Athens, occupied the city, and installed “the Thirty Tyrants.” The excesses of the tyrants resulted in civil war, after which a general amnesty law was passed, proclaiming the actions of both warring factions officially forgotten.

ghalib wa la maghlub (no victor, no vanquished). This doctrine enabled the state to declare that there had been no winners, and no losers in the civil war. Since everyone was guilty and everyone had lost, it asserted that there was no need to stir up further tensions by probing into issues of communal or individual responsibility, or even the war itself. The state's leaders avoided any open discussion of the conflict, referring to it in official discourse only as *al-ahdath* (the events) or as a "war of others" (Dagher 2000).¹⁵ This discourse focused blame for the war on external actors, making it possible for a discourse on national unity to prevail, and attention to be centered on the issue of postwar reconstruction.

Given the scale of damage inflicted by the war, one of the most significant challenges facing the postwar state was the rebuilding of Beirut's central district, which was badly damaged during the war, and had been left all but abandoned. Prior to 1975, many of the major commercial, financial, and cultural institutions of the Middle East had been located in downtown Beirut, and its revival was seen to be essential to improving the country's economy, and to attracting local and international investment. The redevelopment plan for the downtown area was undertaken by a partnership between the Lebanese state and a publicly traded corporation called Solidere.¹⁶ In 1994, Solidere was given permission to plan and manage the reconstruction of the central district. Instead of repairing the damage inflicted by the war, Solidere conceived of downtown Beirut as a blank slate to be demolished and then reconstructed from scratch (Makdisi 1997). With the goal of returning Beirut to its previous role as the cosmopolitan center of the Middle East, its initial plan was to design a sterile and monumental downtown with few references to the past. However, this plan met with heavy public criticism, so it eventually decided to go with a design that emphasized the city's harmonious pre-war history and

¹⁵ This phrase was termed by Ghassan Tuani in his book *Une guerre pour les autres* (1985).

¹⁶ The Lebanese Company for the Development and Reconstruction of the Beirut Central District (Solidere) is a joint stock company founded in 1994 by its main shareholder Rafiq al-Hariri.

Lebanon's ancient roots in Roman and Phoenician times (Makdisi 1997; Nagel 2002; Sawalha 2010). In order to implement its plans, Solidere had to acquire large areas of central Beirut from private owners, who were compensated with shares in the company, and it also had to remove the 4,000 squatters who had moved into the war-damaged buildings after being displaced from their homes. Once they had acquired the land, most of the traditional city center was demolished and cleared away in order to make way for what was promoted as "An Ancient City for the Future."¹⁷

Solidere's master plan called for the creation of a "lively and attractive" urban core, the image of which is reflected in the promotional photograph above. It described its plan as the revival of a genuine Beirut, where Muslims and Christians could once again intermingle as friends and neighbors in peace and harmony. By erasing all traces of the war from the urban landscape, its strategy was to recreate an idealized vision of the prewar past in a space where all Lebanese could meet on equal terms (Nagel 2002). The model for its reconstruction was the golden age of the 1950s and 1960s, when the city was a regional commercial and cultural hub, and had a reputation for openness, tolerance, and cosmopolitanism. Although the company authorized plans for some new designs, its priority was to restore and recuperate the feeling of the old. It restored the two Serails, or military barracks, constructed by the Ottomans, the Place de L'Etoile, Parliament, and National Library, built by the French, and the Place des Martyrs, named after the Arab nationalists hung by the Ottomans in 1916. It also retained the old facades on hundreds of buildings, and created new structures of the same Ottoman-French style architecture to match them (Yahya 2007). In addition, it fabricated elaborate symbolic and

¹⁷ In a surface area that encompasses 1.2 million square meters, only 260 buildings were designated as recoverable, and saved from demolition. Solidere preserved each of these building's original exterior features and facades so that that the central district would retain some of its previous exterior appearance (Makdisi 1997).

aesthetic references to the Phoenician and Roman past, and it made a special effort to incorporate the archaeological ruins from these periods uncovered during its demolitions.¹⁸ This cultural heritage was said to be essential not only to attract investors and tourists, but also to establish a shared sense of *turath* (heritage) around which the nation could be united (Hanssen and Genberg 2001). While this process is common in many cities around the world,¹⁹ in Beirut it had the effect of burying and denying the history of the civil war. According to Saree Makdissi, “the spectacle here has assumed for itself, and hence has eliminated, the very function of time; it has taken on the tasks and duties of history: of a history cleansed not merely of pain, but of all kinds of other feelings as well; in short, it has produced a prosthetic history” (2006: 212).

Other problems manifested themselves in the writing of the nation’s official history. Before the war, most schools used their own history textbooks, which was claimed to have led to deepening disunity and differences among communities. So, the politicians involved in negotiating the Ta’if Accord agreed that a common history book was necessary to create a collective national memory. The Ta’if Agreement called for the “revision and development of curricula in such a manner as to strengthen national attachment and integration, encourage spiritual and cultural openness, together with unification of textbooks in the two subject matter areas of history and national education.” However, unifying all of the different points of view about difficult periods in Lebanon’s history was a daunting task. Different communities in Lebanon had different versions of the country’s history, and there were certain points of contention, such as Lebanon’s relationship with the West, its Arab heritage, and the causes of the civil war. A committee of historians tried repeatedly to produce a history book satisfactory to all

¹⁸ While claiming to preserve the past, archaeologists and urban historians contend that the postwar reconstruction of Beirut’s city center demolished more architectural and historical ruins than fifteen years of fighting (Sader 1998; Becherer 2005).

¹⁹ For more on the branding of national culture for international consumption in other Arab cities such as Dubai, Cairo, and Damascus see Longva (1997), Ghannam (2002), and Salamandra (2004).

of the country's political factions, but it was never successful.²⁰ As a result, the official unified national history curriculum ends Lebanon's history in 1946, and does not include anything relating to the civil war (Bashshur 2003, 2007).

Remembering the War

In the era of reconstruction, public discussions about the past were not encouraged. While the state did not prohibit such discussions, or other initiatives dealing with the war, they did seek to constrain them through a discourse focused on the *mustaqbal* (future).²¹ In 1994, it also passed a broadcasting law that outlawed the broadcasting of any “matter seeking to inflame or incite sectarian or religious chauvinism or seeking to push society, and especially children, to physical and moral violence, moral deviance, terrorism, or racial or religious segregation.” This set in place a censoring mechanism that could be used to limit discussions of the war, as well as representations of it on stage and screen, deemed dangerous to the civil peace. Nonetheless, in the mid- to late-1990s, many artists, activists, and public intellectuals began to take up the issue of the war and challenge what they referred to as the “collective amnesia” (Khalaf 1994, 1997) of Lebanese society, and the “state-imposed amnesia” (Kassir 2002), enforced by the political leaders.

In the popular domain, a number of Lebanese feature films focused on the civil war. One of the first, and to date most popular films, was Ziad Doueiry’s *West Beyrouth* (1998). This film is a semi-autobiographical depiction of the coming of age of two Muslim boys and one Christian girl at the beginning of the war in Beirut. The city features prominently in the film, first as an

²⁰ The most recent committee of historians submitted a curriculum proposal for a new history textbook in early 2012. After accusations that key elements of Lebanese history had been left out, students affiliated with the Kataeb party and the National Liberal Party staged a demonstration in downtown Beirut, where clashes erupted. As a result, Prime Minister Najib Mikati decided to suspend the proposal for the new book and asked that a new history book be submitted that is acceptable to all factions.

²¹ The name for a wide array of companies, television stations, radio stations, and newspapers owned by Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri (1992-1998 and 2000-2004).

exciting place where the boys thrill in the adventure of crossing from East to West Beirut, and then, increasingly, as a dangerous zone full of sectarian violence and destruction. One night, one of the boys ends up at a brothel located on the “Green Line” separating East and West Beirut.²² For him, it represents the one remaining site where the political and religious differences of the war have no place, and he is determined to show his friends that such a place still exists. When they return, his dream is shattered, and he realizes that differences predominate even there. Like most of the well-known postwar films, the main focus in this film is placed not on the violence, but on the spirit of Christian-Muslim coexistence that persisted in spite of the chaos and destruction engulfing the country. This theme found its expression in numerous films, such as *The Tornado* (1992), *In the Shadows of the City* (2000), and *Zozo* (2005), establishing a narrative memory through which the civil war could be understood, not as a war of external others, but as a war of internal others who terrorized ordinary Lebanese families that were still holding onto a pre-war ideal of inter-communal tolerance (Khatib 2008).

Contemporary artists often aimed to resist and intervene in popular and official discourses on the war by highlighting the difficulties and politics of representing the conflicts (Westmoreland 2008). In the mid- to late-1990s, a group of artists known as the “postwar generation” rose to prominence both in Lebanon, and internationally.²³ Using a mixed media and archival approach, their work aimed to provoke thought and memory, but without offering any ready-made answers or narratives in which to place them (Rogers 2007). For example, Walid Raad's well-known *Atlas Project* (1999) presents viewers with what appear to be found visual

²² The “Green Line” is the line that divided East and West Beirut during the war. It refers to the belt of greenery that emerged when grass and trees grew in the streets and buildings that were destroyed and abandoned. The Arabic term for the front line is *khutut al-tamas* (confrontation lines).

²³ Included in this group are artists such as Tony Chakar, Lamia Joreige, Biial Khbeiz, Bernard Khoury, Rabih Mroué, Walid Raad, Walid Sadek, Jalal Toufic, and Akram Zaatari.

archives from the civil war.²⁴ One of the archives is a series of video interviews with a Lebanese man who Raad claims was held in the same room as each of the Western hostages captured in Lebanon during the 1980s, but was omitted from all the official accounts of the incident. Another is the work of Fadl Fakhoury, a fictitious Lebanese historian created by Raad. In Fakhoury's archives, Raad presents a set of notebooks with photographs of racing horses and bookmakers' notes. The notes are supposed to have been taken by prominent civil war historians, who Raad claims met at the racetrack every week during the war to gamble on the horses. These slightly absurd, yet historically plausible, stories raise questions about the nature of historical and artistic representation in Lebanon while also serving as a sort of witness to the war. Although restricted to a somewhat specific audience, works such as this one opened up an innovative site of artistic creativity, and helped to lead to the formation of a dynamic contemporary art scene where Lebanese could reflect on the histories, memories, experiences, and representations of the war, and on themselves and their society.

During the 1990s, a burgeoning civil society (*al-mujtama al-madani*)²⁵ also struggled to develop and define itself. It aimed to challenge simplistic narratives of the war, and push the nation to engage with its past in a more comprehensive nature. Initially quite limited, Sune Haugbolle contends that two political changes in the region helped to expand their activities. In May 2000, Israel gave up the occupation of South Lebanon, and one month later, the Syrian president Hafiz al-Asad died (2010). These events created a more open political climate in which an increasingly vocal group of intellectuals and cultural critics began to call for public debate on

²⁴ The Atlas Group archive can be viewed online at: <http://www.theatlasgroup.org/>

²⁵ In Arabic, there are two terms that can be used to describe civil society: *al-mujtama al-ahli* and *al-mujtama al-madani*. The first, *ahli*, implies kinship, and the second, *madani*, a sense of being urbanized and civilized. Omar Traboulsi claims, "civil society in Lebanon is more of an *ahli* rather than of a *madani* nature" (quoted in Barak 2007: 54). However, the groups and organizations discussed in this dissertation identify themselves as being part of *al-mujtama al-madani*.

the war. One of the most important, and highly publicized, events in this period was the public colloquium “Memory for the Future” (*dhakira li al-ghad*),²⁶ which was held at the UN Building in Beirut in April 2001 and brought journalists, activists, academics, psychiatrists, and lawyers from Lebanon together with representatives from other countries with divisive pasts, like Rwanda, Germany, and South Africa. By comparing the Lebanese approach to dealing with the civil war with these countries, the hearings sought to problematize the Lebanese postwar situation. The seminar addressed topics such as truth telling, commemorations, and reconciliation, and highlighted the importance of dealing with the wounds of the past in order to build a peaceful and democratic future.

In this performance of civil society, the participants vociferously contested the idea that “closing the files” on the past was the best way to bring civil peace and national reconciliation. Drawing on globally circulating notions of postwar social repair, they argued that the only way to move beyond past violence is to reckon with it, and acknowledge the truth about what happened. Some focused their attention on the amnesty law, arguing that the state’s quasi-policy of forgetfulness ultimately found judicial expression in the law passed by Parliament in 1991. They asserted that the amnesty law “blackened out the victims’ suffering” (Saghieh 2002: 225), and denied them the reparations necessary to participate in national life on the same footing as other citizens. In addition, they criticized the way the amnesty law had transformed former warlords into national symbols, contending that it “conferred an aura to the warlords” (225) and set up a regime based on the ‘charisma’ of the communal leaders, itself dependent on the super charisma of Syria” (226). Because the country’s leaders had been stripped of political responsibility, and placed under Syrian tutelage, the postwar system had “led to the lasting domination of Lebanese society by the warlords, even after peace was re-established” (Kassir

²⁶ The conference was funded by the Swiss Department of Foreign Affairs, Frierich Ebert Stiftung.

2002: 204). And, to make matters worse, the constant recourse to Syrian mediation had “allowed some militias to transform into mafias” (204), paralyzing the state, as well as the national economy.

As the event organizer, Amal Makarem, stated in the introductory session, the basic premise of the colloquium was that “the past remains present, and we must overcome it so that it stops overshadowing our life and obstructing the future” (2002: 42). The participants criticized the lack of attention to the past in Lebanese society, and asked how, and with what, a new future could be built when Lebanese continue to live in what Makarem termed the “pernicious oblivion of those who are content with repressing their traumas” (35). Drawing on psychoanalytic discourse and the therapeutic approach to memory popularized by the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), she claimed that the traumas of the war had been buried, and warned that repressed memories always reemerge into consciousness, and inevitably lead to the re-enactment of the acts that have been suppressed. Because Lebanon “was not granted the salutary oblivion that one reaches after working on overcoming a trauma” (35), she, and others, argued that there was a danger that the violence would reappear. There were still invisible barriers between communities that persisted from the war, and the only way to build a real national reconciliation was to deal with the traumas of the past, and bring the truth into the open. However painful that may be, all of the participants agreed that the agonizing process of reckoning with the past was essential to preventing the Lebanese from resorting to violence in the future, and to building a modern nation free of the old power structures. As Makarem told the audience: “memory is an instrument for thinking. Thinking in order to preserve what humanity lies within each one of us” (35). The motivation for introspection was not only to problematize the atavistic and uncivil behaviors that she and others believed continued to predominate in

society, but also the social and political structures underpinning them. The speakers repeatedly emphasized the need to pay attention to victims. Makarem emphasized that “these victims are our victims, no matter what community they belong to or what opinions they profess,” asking the audience, “how can we turn the page and ignore them?” (35).

After the success of its initial seminar, some of the organizers founded the Association *Mémoire pour l’Avenir* (Memory for the Future). Having already established the importance of memory for building a just future, the Association sought to expand its cause through a national campaign. Two issues of primary concern to the Association were the commemoration of the war, and the construction of a memorial. Both of these issues were also important to the *Lajnat Ahali al-Makhtufin wa al-Mafqudin fi Lubnan* (Committee of the Families of the Kidnapped and Disappeared in Lebanon), a group that I will discuss in greater detail in the next chapter. After many years of campaigning for a state inquiry into the fate of the 17,415 people still missing from the civil war, the Committee of Families decided to change its tactics in 1999. It brought in an experienced campaign manager, who encouraged the families to not only call for a public inquiry, and a social assistance program for the relatives, but also add to its demands the establishment of April 13 as national day for the disappeared, and a war monument in central Beirut. April 13 was significant because it was the day that the hostilities broke out in 1975. By the time the Association was formed, the idea of a yearly commemoration had already gained popularity among intellectuals and cultural critics. Working with the Committee of the Families, the Association staged an elaborate campaign for commemorating the war in 2003 under the motto *tinzikir ma tin ‘ad* (Remember Not to Return). The campaign gained wide media attention, and attracted hundreds of people to a mass gathering in Martyrs’ Square. Blending the concerns of both movements, the campaign material argued that the war would not be over for the

relatives of the kidnapped and missing until they learned the fate of their loved ones, and it asserted that their predicament was a symptom of a larger crisis facing the nation. This is made clear in a brief excerpt from one of the documents, which stated:

Each of us bears in the heart, sometimes even in the body, the impacts of the devastating war ... Shall we deal with it as if it never took place? Is it useful for our children and our country to ignore it as if it did not occur? Civilized people do not forget; they rather seek to be reconciled with their past, to learn from it (quoted in Haugbolle 2010: 201).

In such formulations, the quest for memory and truth was linked to healing, progress, and peace on both an individual and a societal level. While initially limited to the realm of intellectual debate and criticism, such interventions introduced a set of concepts and discourses that would soon be further expanded into political and popular discourse as opposition to the Syrian presence in Lebanon escalated.

Demands for Truth and Justice

In September 2004, the opposition to Syrian power increased with the unpopular extension of President Emile Lahoud's mandate.²⁷ In the same month, the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1559, calling for the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon and the disarmament of all militias, including Hizbollah. In this context, a new set of anti-Syrian alliances emerged, not only at the level of high-ranking politicians, but also among student movements, women's groups, and syndicates of writers, journalist, artists, lawyers, workers, and industry groups (Safa 2006: 31). In December 2004, the *mu'arada* (opposition) was formalized in a meeting held at the Bristol Hotel in Beirut. Attended by political parties representing the Druze and Christian communities, as well as some leftist groups, the opposition

²⁷ The Syrian leadership forced an amendment to the Lebanese constitution that allowed President Emile Lahoud's term to be extended by three more years.

published what was termed the “Bristol Declaration.”²⁸ This document framed the issues facing postwar Lebanon as a moral crisis stemming from the country’s failure to deal with the legacy of the civil war. It claimed that the Lebanese people “remained prisoners of the past and its conflicts” because their corrupt state officials did not respect the agreement that put an end to the war, continued to justify Syrian tutelage by proclaiming that the Lebanese people were unable to govern themselves, and used fear and separation as a means to perpetuate its control over society. In order to overcome this moral crisis, it asserted that it was necessary for the Lebanese people to take responsibility for their role in the war, and acknowledge their common guilt:

We have known all kinds of wars, have believed that violence could be an instrument of change, have lived through segregation, have imposed and undergone communal cleansing. We made of religion a militia identity, rejecting the values of tolerance, respect for human dignity and justice. We sought the assistance of others in the wars that we fought, thus renouncing our independence and sovereignty. We were reduced to simple instruments in a “war of others” fought on Lebanese soil. We have a common responsibility, Christians and Muslims alike, for the war that devastated our country; we believe that recognizing this responsibility is an essential condition for learning the lessons of the war so that we will not be condemned to indefinitely repeat our past errors. We have suffered much, but we have also learned much. We paid a high price for that experience ... We paid with the destruction of our cities and our villages. We paid with the exodus of hundreds of thousands of our children; we paid with the loss of our quality of life; we paid with the decline of our standard of living; we paid with our misery. That knowledge cost us our capacity for hope, and for self-esteem. We have also learned that resorting to violence can lead only to destruction and death, and that the destruction of “the other” leads only to the destruction of oneself. Finally, we have learned, both Christians and Muslims, that we are bound together for better or for worse by the same destiny.

The Bristol Declaration highlighted that it was not Lebanon’s multi-confessional system that had landed the country in political and economic stagnation, but corruption, fear, and mistrust. The Declaration blamed a “perverted” version of multi-confessionalism for stalling Lebanon’s development and preventing post-war reconciliation, arguing that it had worked to hinder honest

²⁸ On December 12, 2004, the Bristol Declaration was printed in various local newspapers, and it was also posted online at <http://www.beirutletter.com>.

and truthful dialogue on the problems facing the country. As a remedy, it urged all Lebanese to take their shared destiny in their hands, and work to achieve the liberation of Lebanese territory, the recovery of national sovereignty, and the reform of the institutions of the Republic.

A few months later, former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri was assassinated, triggering a dramatic escalation in demands for *al-haqiqa*, or “the truth.” Following his death, there was a major influx into the central Martyrs’ Square. Almost immediately, the central slogan of the mourners and protestors became “*nurid an na‘rif al-haqiqa*” (we want the truth). Posted on billboards, signs, and banners throughout the city, they demanded an immediate investigation into the assassination in order to uncover, as one banner read, the “hidden hands” of death and destruction threatening the country.²⁹ In the middle of Martyrs’ Square, young members of the principal parties in the opposition erected a tent city, where they were also joined by numerous civil society groups. In the protests, the demonstrators blended demands for an immediate investigation with demands for a Syrian withdrawal. At first, these emerged spontaneously, but a professional design company soon took over, and began mass-producing red and white banners demanding *haqiqa* (truth), *istiqlal* (independence) and *huriyya* (freedom). As Sune Haugbolle (2010) has suggested, “what started out as a spontaneous outcry against Hariri’s death, and a demand for an investigation, grew in scope to encompass a program for political reform, national unity, and full sovereignty linked to the agenda first formulated in the Bristol Declaration.” Now, “the truth” about Hariri’s death was linked to the Declaration’s calls for freedom in the political system and a call for independence from Syria. He argues that this formulation “included a concept of truth that went beyond finding the truth about Hariri’s death to include an idea of

²⁹ In the wake of Hariri's assassination on 14 February 2005, Kofi Annan dispatched a fact-finding mission to investigate the killing. Operating from February 25 until March 24, 2005, the mission interviewed Lebanese officials and politicians, studied the Lebanese investigation and legal proceedings, examined the crime scene, collected evidence, and interviewed witnesses. Its findings were published in the Fitzgerald Report (2005).

coming clean about the state of affairs in Lebanon more generally” (209). The slogan *al-haqiqa* was “both a call for a truthful political culture that dares to resist political mismanagement, lies, and violence and a call for a reconstituted public sphere of dialogue, acceptance of otherness, and political participation” (229).

However, the very idea of national unity promoted by the *mu‘arada*, which now included Hariri’s Future Movement in addition to the groups who met at the Bristol Hotel, was already ignoring the fact that Amal and Hizbollah, the political parties representing the Shi‘i population, refused to join in the opposition. On March 8, 2005, Hizbollah organized a major rally downtown, where its leader, Hassan Nasrallah, thanked Syria for its support securing peace and stability in Lebanon. He also warned against American interference in the region, especially through the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1559. The protest was the largest to date, drawing hundreds of thousands of demonstrators into central Beirut. The massive showing mobilized on March 8 challenged the *mu‘arada*’s claim of national unity, and highlighted the fact that not all Lebanese shared its goals. In response, the *mu‘arada* decided to organize an even bigger demonstration. Its rally was held on March 14, when an estimated one million Lebanese descended on Martyrs’ Square and downtown Beirut to mark the one-month anniversary of Hariri’s assassination.³⁰ The highly coordinated protest was aimed to show that a majority of Lebanese did support the opposition’s calls for an international investigation and a full withdrawal of Syrian troops, but the deep divisions in the country between the March 8 and the March 14 coalitions could no longer be ignored.

Nonetheless, the end of what was termed the Independence Uprising (*intifadat al-istiqlal*) was marked by a Unity Week (*jum‘at al-wihda al-wataniyya*) festival. From April 6-13, events

³⁰ This figure is contested by the March 8 camp, but is widely cited by the March 14 camp, and others.

ranging from pop concerts, pony rides, and prayer sessions to a “unity marathon” were organized in downtown Beirut to celebrate Lebanese unity. Timed to coincide with the thirtieth anniversary of the outbreak of the civil war, the festival was not seen as a commemoration, but as a sign that the Lebanese had come to terms with the war, and entered a new period in the nation’s history in which social and political differences would be handled through dialogue instead of violence. The events attracted tens of thousands of people, but many in civil society were unhappy with the superficial and commercial nature of Unity Week. They continued to stress the importance of remembering the painful aspects of the war, and commemorating its victims. One group of organizations staged an alternate series of events at the *mathaf*, the national museum where people used to cross between East and West Beirut. At this former checkpoint, they hung an “apology banner” that was suspended for people to sign “for the sake of forgiveness and honesty.” They also installed a heart-shaped statue to commemorate the victims of the war and organized a procession that marched along the Green Line from the *mathaf* to Martyrs’ Square to honor those who had died or gone missing. In another part of town, Memory for the Future held a conference entitled “National Reconciliation versus National Memory,” where speakers drew attention to the continued marginalization of war memories, and lack of attention given to victims, both by the state and by society. It also revealed the launch of a national contest to design a monument for the war’s victims, along with a project to compile their names, which would be engraved on the memorial.

Weeks later, after the Syrian army’s withdrawal on April 26, came the parliamentary elections. The March 14 coalition won the majority, and established a new government. Soon afterwards, the new Parliament passed two private amnesty laws. These laws pardoned and freed from prison the only former militia leader ever convicted of war crimes, Samir Geagea, as well

as almost three dozen Islamist detainees.³¹ Said to be in the interest of “national unity,” these laws gave rise in civil society to a sense that nothing had changed with the election of the new government. Both the 1991 amnesty law, granted under Syrian control, and the 2005 amnesty laws, granted by an anti-Syrian Parliament, absolved the powerful of their crimes and ignored victims. The new government continued to ignore the plight of the disappeared, but it endorsed the UN-led investigation into Hariri’s assassination, in which the Syrian regime and its allies in the Lebanese security services were the prime suspects.³² In December, the Lebanese Cabinet followed up on the investigation with a request to the UN to form a quasi-international court to try those accused in Hariri’s death, and a string of other high-profile assassinations.³³ Heavily opposed by the Hizbollah-led opposition, the ministers from the Amal movement and Hizbollah walked out when this decision was made, bringing the government to a standstill until their return in February 2006. Nonetheless, the drafting of an agreement began in early 2006, and continued for most of the year.

In July, the country was hit by a massive Israeli bombing campaign aimed at South Lebanon and the Southern suburbs of Beirut in what was known as the July War (*harb tammouz*). The conflict lasted 34 days, in which time over 1,200 people were killed, one million

³¹ Law 677 of 20 July 2005.

³² The United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission (UNIIC) was established by Security Council Resolution 1595, passed on April 7, 2005. Its first report was delivered by Detlev Mehlis on October 19, 2005, and its last report was delivered by Daniel Bellemare on December 3, 2008. The UNIIC mandate ended on February 28, 2009 and was superseded by the Special Tribunal for Lebanon on March 1, 2009.

³³ A number of prominent figures were assassinated after September 2004. On October 1, there was an assassination attempt against MP Marwan Hamadeh. In 2005, Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, journalist and MP Samir Kassir, politician George Hawi, Defense Minister Elias Murr, and journalist and MP Jibril Tueni were assassinated, and there were attempts made on journalists Ali Ramez Tohme and May Chidiac. In 2006, MP Pierre Amine Gemayel was assassinated. In 2007, MP Walid Eido, MP Antoine Ghanem, and Brigadier General Francois Elias Hajj were assassinated. In 2008, ISF Chief Wissam Eid was assassinated, and PLO leader Kamal Naji was assassinated in 2009.

displaced, and the Lebanese civil infrastructure was severely damaged.³⁴ Israel justified the campaign as a response to the kidnapping of two soldiers and as necessary to eliminate Hizbollah. But it was unsuccessful, and Hizbollah celebrated what it called “the divine victory” (*al-nasr min allah*) in September 2006. Afterwards, it accused the Lebanese government of trying to “impose US tutelage on the country, monopolize the country's decisions, and build a weak state that serves international interests.”³⁵ After its victory, it called for an increased role in the government, and, in October, began threatening to resign from the government if its demands for a more representative government were not met. The final draft of the agreement for the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) was delivered to Beirut on November 10, and the five opposition ministers resigned the next day. They resigned in protest over the government’s monopolization of power, but the opposition also denounced the STL as a violation of national sovereignty, and an attempt by external actors to impose a new political order. The Cabinet approved the Agreement without the five ministers, but its decisions were no longer legally binding. In December, Hizbollah called for street protests to demand the resignation of Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, and the creation of a new “national unity” government. It also erected a tent city in downtown Beirut, and, in January, expanded its protests to ministries and public institutions. On January 23, it held a nationwide protest that paralyzed the country and ended in violent clashes. Afterwards, Siniora announced, “We are at a dangerous crossroads: Either we are heading to a civil war, or heading to dialogue.” A tense deadlock in Lebanese domestic politics ensued, which prevented the ratification of the STL Agreement through the Lebanese

³⁴ Lebanon Higher Relief Council. “Lebanon Under Siege.” Retrieved April 9, 2012.

³⁵ This statement was published in *Al-Safir* on September 28, 2006.

Parliament. As a result, the STL was established under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, mandated by UN Security Council Resolution 1757 on May 30, 2007.³⁶



Figure 2: Plaque announcing the establishment of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon inside the site where Hariri's grave is located in downtown Beirut. Photo by Shea McManus.

Amidst the increasing tensions, outbursts of violence, and breakdown of political dialogue, many of the people I spoke with during my fieldwork said they feared the outbreak of another civil war. In the chapters that follow, I trace the various ways they seek to counteract the signs of conflict they see around them by resisting and intervening in official and popular discourses on the civil war. Using a variety of mediums that range from urban art interventions to the production of low-budget documentary films and guerilla marketing campaigns, a range of actors have become involved in these activities, not all of whom define themselves as civil society actors. They include everyone from university students with no personal experience of

³⁶ Chapter VII of the UN Charter allows the Security Council to “determine the existence of any threat to the peace, breach of the peace, or act of aggression” and to take military and nonmilitary action to “restore international peace and security.”

the civil war to seasoned veterans who fought in the wars, to well-financed NGOs with international connections. What draws them together is that they in some way seek to draw attention to the lack of truth and memory about the war, the ongoing presence of the warlords in political life, and the marginalization of victims. They argue that the only way to break the cycle of violence in Lebanon is to truly reckon with the past. However, they seek to do so using new forms and mediums that are more creative, confrontational, and participatory than the ones employed previously, bringing issues of memory and truth into the present not only as a lived experience, but also as a shared encounter.

A New History

This new generation of memory entrepreneurs is now joined, and often funded by, a range of international organizations focused on the promotion of democratic values and practices. While this includes organizations such as Heinrich Böll Stiftung, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, and USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), the most deeply involved is the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ). The ICTJ has been working in Lebanon since 2005, following the Syrian withdrawal.

Although transitional justice strategies often work in conjunction with international tribunals, the ICTJ is not associated with the STL. It views it as a potentially useful mechanism for raising awareness on issues of accountability and rule of law in Lebanon. However, it also acknowledges many of the common concerns that local and global observers have with the Tribunal, most significantly its politicization. The United States and France were the key architects of Resolution 1757, which mandated the creation of the STL, and the aim of the tribunal was seen by many as a way to selectively target the Syrian regime and limit its

interference in Lebanon (Hazan 2010).³⁷ Given the lack of initiative on behalf of the UN Security Council to prosecute Israeli violations of UN Resolutions, or the crimes committed during the 2006 July War, this charge was especially powerful inside Lebanon (Wierda, Nassar, and Maalouf 2007). Adding to this was the fact that the STL was passed under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The Security Council chose to override Lebanon's constitutional process, and escalate already existing political tensions, in order to prosecute those responsible for the "terrorist attacks" perpetrated against high-profile figures in Lebanon. It is the first international tribunal established to try the crime of terrorism, instead of the more common war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, and also the first to allow trials *in absentia* (Aptel 2007; Gaeta 2007; Jurdi 2007), raising many charges that it is being used to change the regional balance of power.

Yet, the most problematic aspect of the STL, from a transitional justice standpoint, is that it ignores the "mass atrocities" of the past in favor of pursuing selective political crimes. Drawing comparisons between the STL and the 1991 amnesty law, the ICTJ entered Lebanon to pursue truth and accountability for all victims, not just the political elite. It describes the necessity of its work in the following terms:

With a succession of interrelated wars, two parallel occupations and a string of high-profile assassinations, Lebanon carries a heavy legacy of human rights and humanitarian law violations. A Red Cross study concluded that 75% of Lebanese citizens had "personal experience" of armed conflict.

There are successive periods for which truth and accountability is being sought. The first is the 1975–1991 war, in which a wide range of local and international actors were involved. Over 100,000 civilians were killed and approximately 17,000 disappeared in this conflict.

No serious measure has been taken to address these violations, and no one has ever been prosecuted for these abuses—due to a comprehensive amnesty law passed in 1991.

³⁷ It has since shifted its focus, and issued indictments for 4 members of Hizbollah in July 2011.

Abuses continued to be committed throughout 1991–2005, and parts of Lebanon remained under occupation by Israel and Syria.

The 2005 assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and a number of political and intellectual figures in a series of targeted attacks led to the establishment of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) in 2007.

Despite its value in seeking accountability for high-profile assassinations, the STL's presence highlights the lack of justice for the tens of thousands who have also been lost to political violence in Lebanon.³⁸

In a country without an official history past 1946, I suggest that the ICTJ is endeavoring to create a new one. It sees the history of Lebanon as a history of human rights and humanitarian law violations perpetrated against tens of thousands of victims that have not been addressed. Those in the human rights and transitional justice community argue that during the fifteen years of civil war in Lebanon, many atrocities were committed that could, and *should*, be qualified under international law as war crimes and crimes against humanity (Saghieh 2002; Wierda, Nassar, and Maalouf 2007). They also claim that the emphasis placed on post-war silence worked to prevent public demands for accountability and truth seeking, and resulted in the marginalization of “ordinary victims” who suffered as a result. By pursuing justice only for the political elite, the STL is seen to be similar in practice to the amnesty law, further entrenching the idea that there are two categories of victims in Lebanon: one with access to truth and justice, and the other without.

As shown in the preceding sections, transitional justice discourses are not foreign to Lebanon, and have long been deployed as a form of social and political contestation. For those who use them, they are seen as a resource to challenge Lebanon's political leaders, confront divisive communal narratives, and promote personal healing and national reconciliation. However, they are used more as a form of critique than as a model for achieving the specific

³⁸ <http://ictj.org/our-work/regions-and-countries/lebanon>

goals most often linked to transitional justice. It is in these spaces that the ICTJ is now active in Lebanon. The aim of its activities can be read through its own description:

ICTJ works to help societies in transition address legacies of massive human rights violations and build civic trust in state institutions as protectors of human rights. In the aftermath of mass atrocity and repression, we assist institutions and civil society groups—the people who are driving and shaping change in their societies—in considering measures to provide truth, accountability, and redress for past abuses. We do this by providing technical expertise and knowledge of relevant comparative experiences in transitional justice from across the globe.³⁹

The term “transitional justice” is usually used to refer to the set of judicial and non-judicial measures implemented to redress legacies of massive human rights abuses, which include criminal prosecutions, truth commissions, reparations programs, and various kinds of institutional reforms. However, I will show that the assistance it provides is not always aimed at the creation of specific measures, but at the reorientation of political projects. Like all political projects, this depends on the construction of a specific historical narrative. In this case, a vision of the past understood as a series of human rights and humanitarian law violations that have not been addressed by the state. But more than that is an understanding of history based on the premise that, if we return to the quote by Benjamin cited at the beginning of this chapter, the “wreckage upon wreckage” of the past must be accounted for in legal and moral terms in order to “make whole what has been smashed.” By addressing the crimes of the past, it is assumed that they can be safely settled in the past, and a new, and better, future established characterized by the nonrecurrence of violence, the democratic rule of law, and a culture of human rights.

Conclusion

As Mroué’s lecture-performance at the beginning of this chapter illustrates so cleverly, memories of the civil war abound in Lebanon, but they have no official historical narrative in

³⁹ <http://ictj.org/about>

which to be placed. After the war, politicians closed the files on the past, deciding that it was the only way to end the relentless cycle of violence. They also erased all traces of the war from the urban landscape of downtown Beirut, replacing it with an idealized vision of the cosmopolitan pre-war past. Although a popular critique emerged that the postwar government had encouraged a form of “collective amnesia” towards the war years, this chapter traced the various ways artists, activists, and politicians have mobilized, challenged, and critiqued the lack of historical memory in Lebanon. These efforts form the historical background to this dissertation, which focuses both on how social actors seek to intervene in official and popular discourses on the war, and on how the ICTJ endeavors to intervene in their projects and initiatives. Despite the problems that the lack of history raises for many in Lebanon, I will show that it offers certain creative potentials with which to engage in the present. It is my contention that the historical narrative proposed by the ICTJ channels such possibilities, focusing attention on specific human rights and humanitarian law violations that have not been addressed by the state. Since this dissertation is a study of a field that it is still in formation, this can only be discerned through a careful analysis of distinct sites of international intervention. In the next chapter, I will examine the most prominent site of intervention, which centers on the issue of missing persons. This chapter will illustrate how humanitarian rights violations are used to redirect political activity into the domain of law, calling for the creation of state institutions designed to alleviate the suffering of family members. In the chapters that follow, I will investigate how a more general history of violations has begun to be elicited. Central to this is the collection of traumatic testimonies, which serve as the basis for constructing a new collective memory for the nation, and for reshaping political imaginaries in the present and future.

CHAPTER TWO

Truth for the Missing



Figure 3: Protest tent erected in front of the UN-ESCWA headquarters in downtown Beirut by families of Lebanese detained or missing in Syria. Photo by Shea McManus.

The blue construction barricades encircling Jibran Khalil Jibran Park make the families' protest tent nearly imperceptible from the street, but that doesn't preclude those of us sitting near the tent from seeing out through the cracks. As the sun begins to shift, many of the relatives comment on the stream of people leaving the UN building, signaling the end of another workday. With this, more family members begin to join the group. Sonia goes inside the tent to prepare a fresh *rakwa* of coffee, the conversations expand, and we once again move the chairs to remain in the shade of the large tree under which we have been sitting all afternoon. Wadad approaches the circle of chairs and sits down next to Ghazi. Leaning over, she listens into our conversation. After a few minutes, she interrupts us and asks why I am interested in the issue of *al-mafqudin* (the missing). Before I have a chance to respond, she tells me, "what you really need to understand is the relatives' *mu'anat* (suffering)."

It was not until I asked Wadad to explain her comment to me over lunch the following week that I began to see why she chose to stress the relatives' suffering so emphatically. Wadad is one of the founding members of *Lajnat Ahali al-Makhtufin wa al-Mafqudin fi Lubnan* (Committee of

the Families of the Kidnapped and Disappeared in Lebanon),¹ an advocacy group established two months after her husband Adnan was taken from their home in September 1982.² During the war years, the committee of mostly women advocated for the return of their husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers. After the fighting came to an end in 1990, it worked to gather information on them, and to achieve social and political recognition of the issue of the missing and kidnapped in Lebanon. The Committee was largely unsuccessful on both fronts, which Wadad attributes both to a lack of political will, and to the lack of support the Committee received from other organizations, and society at large, during the postwar years. Now the situation has changed quite dramatically. After years of ignoring their plight, the issue of the missing has become what she likes to call “a popular cause.” Local and international organizations are clamoring to get involved with the families and, as Wadad told me, “take our suffering away from us.”

After the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri and the withdrawal of the Syrian military and security forces from Lebanon in 2005, many local and international organizations began to demand the right to know the truth not only about the assassination, but also about the fate of the 17,415 people who officially went missing during the civil war. When I spoke to the activists involved with these organizations, they always expressed admiration for the relatives’ efforts, claiming that, as one told me, “they single-handedly kept memory alive,”

¹ The Committee’s name is usually translated into English as “Committee of the Families of the Kidnapped and Disappeared in Lebanon.” The more direct translation would be “Committee of the Families of the Kidnapped and Missing in Lebanon.” However, the term “missing” (*mafqudin*) is replaced with “disappeared” (*makhfiyyin*) in its translation. The reason for this will become clear as the chapter progresses, and reflects the power of the term “disappeared.”

² On September 24, 1982, Wadad Halwani and her husband, Adnan, were at home preparing lunch when two men entered their apartment. They took Adnan at gunpoint and forced him into a white Peugeot, assuring Wadad that it would only be a “brief investigation,” but Adnan never returned. A few days after his abduction, Wadad put out a radio message calling for other women in a similar predicament to gather in downtown Beirut. She only expected three or four to show up, but a few dozen came. This was later followed by a demonstration in November 1982, which was attended by hundreds of relatives of missing persons, giving rise to the Committee of the Families of the Kidnapped and the Missing in Lebanon.

despite the government's attempts to turn the page on the past. When it entered the country, the ICTJ also saw the issue of the missing as the best entry point for addressing the larger legacy of the civil war in Lebanon. When I asked why it had made this decision, the head of the Lebanon program explained that it was the most pressing issue still left unresolved, and that it was necessary, from a humanitarian perspective, to alleviate the relatives' suffering. Another international activist explained, "the slow and prolonged mental torture of the relatives has been going on for up to three decades, and many among them face the risk of dying without ever experiencing respite from this pain. Only by knowing with certainty the fate of their loved ones can they find some peace of mind" (Jaquemet 2009: 3). While most of the relatives would not contest this claim, what I seek to examine in this chapter is how their suffering is being deployed, by whom, and in what terms.

In this chapter, I will trace how international intervention is transforming the relatives' suffering, and orienting it around a particular concept of victimhood linked to international rights. While many scholars of international law, transitional justice, human rights, and humanitarianism suggest that global forms and practices of intervention reduce those labeled as victims to a state of depoliticized victimhood (Malkki 1996; Humphrey 2002; Kennedy 2002; Meister 2002; Clarke 2007; Lundy and McGovern 2008; Madlingozi 2010; Theidon 2010), I contend that the emerging apparatus on missing persons is both constitutive of and constituted through a form of political subjectification that gives rise to the figure of a suffering victim with rights. Through an examination of various sites of international intervention, I will demonstrate that the figure of the relative of the disappeared is constituted both in terms of its mental trauma and in terms of the rights it is granted under international humanitarian law.³ Taking my cue

³ International humanitarian law (IHL) is part of the body of international law that governs relations between states. IHL aims to limit the effects of armed conflicts for humanitarian reasons. It aims to

from Talal Asad's question, "What do human rights do?" (2000), I ask what rights granted under international humanitarian law do. My concern is not with practical achievements, but with how and where these rights intersect with the "variable functions of the nation state, the shifting structures of international power, and the moral languages in which injustice is identified and its elimination advocated" (2000). I will show that the mobilization of the relatives' rights enables the state to be denounced not only for its lack of compassion, but also for its lack of compliance with the provisions set out to alleviate relatives' suffering under international law. What I wish to highlight is that this form of advocacy advances a morality of humanitarianism that focuses attention on the suffering of victims, the rights they hold under international law, and the reform of state practices and institutions. I will begin with a discussion of how humanitarian practices constitute political subjects and subjectivities. Then, I will locate this in the Lebanese context, and investigate the features and objectives of the relative of the disappeared as it is being constituted by international organizations engaged in the country. I will conclude with an examination of what happens to this abstract figure when it is transferred into the practical domain of Lebanese politics, and the transformations and contestations that take place as a result.

The Politics of Humanitarianism

Given that this form of political subjectification is constituted on the basis of the relatives' suffering, it is essential to first discuss how humanitarian practices contribute to the construction of political subjects and subjectivities. After doing so, I will relate this to the issue of missing persons, where transitional justice and humanitarianism merge.

protect persons who are not or are no longer taking part in hostilities, the sick and wounded, prisoners and civilians, and to define the rights and obligations of the parties to a conflict in the conduct of hostilities. The legal corpus of IHL consists in the Geneva Conventions and their additional Protocols, the Hague Conventions, as well as a range of other international conventions and protocols, international case law, and customary international law.

Humanitarian action is often criticized for its failure to address the political dimensions of crises. Driven by the moral and ethical imperative to save lives and alleviate human suffering, its primary goal is to meet the most basic needs of life, providing victims of humanitarian crises with food, shelter, and medical assistance. The anthropologist Peter Redfield has described this as a form of “minimalist biopolitics” (2005), arguing that humanitarian organizations foreground matters of biological survival, rather than addressing the broader social and political concerns that put people at risk (2005, 2006; see also Pandolfi 2003, 2008). His argument relies heavily on the work of Giorgio Agamben, who contends that humanitarian organizations “can only grasp human life in the figure of bare or sacred life” (1998: 133). For him, bare life is a form of biological life that has not been given social or political value by the political community. As such, its life is of no consequence to the community, which is concerned with the regulation and management of those lives included in the space of the political. Using the example of the refugee, Agamben argues that humanitarian practices reproduce the distinction between bare and political life by configuring refugees not as social and political subjects, but as objects in need of aid and charity. Liisa Malkki examines the effects of this construction in her ethnographic study of Hutu refugees in Tanzania. She contends that one consequence of humanitarian intervention is that “refugees stop being specific persons and become pure victims.” In her view, the practices of humanitarian organizations erase individual and collective histories, making particular displaced people into universal “refugees,” which has the effect of “abstracting their predicaments from specific political, historical, cultural contexts,” and reducing those who receive assistance to “mute victims” (1996: 378).

While most scholars agree that humanitarian practices universalize human suffering in a process that reifies the histories and experiences of victims, many ask whether there can actually

be said to be a space devoid of politics. They argue that humanitarian interventions give rise to new forms of political life, even in refugee and detention camps. For example, in her study of humanitarian practices in Gaza, Ilana Feldman shows that humanitarian distinctions drawn between the “refugee” and “native” in the early years after 1948 produced enduring distinctions within the population, giving rise to new categories of political identification around the “refugee” and the “citizen” (2007). This case helps to illustrate that humanitarian categories can be transformed into politically significant forms of identification, and give rise to new ideas about citizenship and political belonging. Instead of creating a space outside of politics, they produce new political forms and modes of activity from which more expansive demands for rights and recognition become possible. However, as Miriam Ticktin has shown, such possibilities can also become delimited when humanitarianism begins to fill in for political rights and discourses. She examines the consequences of an “illness clause” introduced in France to protect undocumented immigrants with life-threatening pathologies from deportation on humanitarian grounds. This humanitarian provision opened up a new option to undocumented immigrants, or *sans papiers*, by which they were able to attain legal residency papers by turning to physical injury or infection. Although aimed at the protection of biological life, she argues that this provision produced a form of political life that was composed of “a series of biological compromises” (2006: 40). She contends that this produces an impoverished form of politics, based not on the provision of social or political rights, but on the “moral imperative of compassion” (34). Rather than doing away with politics, she shows that this form of politics “allows for the combination of bare life and political life in new ways, such that the political dimension of human life is never lost” (34-35). While this form of political life is far from

desirable, the case is useful for illustrating the growing presence of humanitarianism in politics, and the types of political choices it enables, and disables.

In addition to the expansion of humanitarianism into national politics, humanitarian organizations have also become increasingly politicized on the global level. Beginning with the birth of Médecins sans Frontières (MSF, or Doctors Without Borders) in 1971, humanitarian experts have expanded their domain of activity into the realm of political denunciation through the act of bearing witness. They not only aim to provide protection and assistance to victims of humanitarian disasters, but also to speak out against human rights abuses and violations of humanitarian law on behalf of the victims.⁴ In his studies of humanitarian testimony, Didier Fassin has shown that humanitarian agents bear witness not to what they have experienced, but to what they have seen and heard in the course of their work. By providing testimony, they become spokespeople for those who have lived through the crisis, translating their suffering onto the global stage in a testimonial form that carries weight with an international audience (2007, 2008). This act of giving testimony enables humanitarian experts to pronounce judgments on the injustices and atrocities they witness, and give voice to the suffering of victims. Using the language of morality and the power of affect, this has made them into political actors in their own right, shifting them from a politics of action to a politics of representation.

According to Fassin, one effect of the proliferation of humanitarian testimony is that it enables and makes necessary a particular form of political subjectification. He uses the term political subjectification to describe “the advent of subjects and subjectivities onto a political

⁴ Neutrality was a long-standing humanitarian principle followed the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) since the 1870s. To be able to offer care, the ICRC agreed not to speak out about what it witnessed on the battlefield. After World War II, this principle was criticized when it was revealed that humanitarian agents had agreed to remain silent about what they saw in the camps. However, it was not until the 1970s that a split emerged in the humanitarian movement, giving rise to Médecins sans Frontières and later to Médecins du Monde, who actively endorse the act of bearing witness, along with providing care (Fassin 2008: 536-7).

scene” (2008: 533). He argues that these figures are produced within discursive regimes that both “enable individuals to be described (by others) and identified (by themselves) in the public arena” (533). In his study of humanitarian testimony in Palestine, he presents the trauma victim as one such figure. According to Fassin, trauma is an essential category in the testimony of humanitarian psychiatrists and psychologists, but they use it “less as a clinical category than as a political argument” (555). This produces the victim as a political subject, or a figure that can be used to advance political claims about the conflict through an appeal to emotion and morality. This figure is used not only by humanitarian psychiatrists, but also, in different ways, by people who describe and present themselves as victims of trauma. This is what Fassin means by political subjectification, which “constitutes both a subject called on to identify him or herself, sometimes against his or her will, with the way in which she or he is designated, and a subjectivity that conforms, at least in part, to this injunction” (533). The trauma victim is not, in other words, simply an abstract rhetorical figure used to advance political claims. It is a politically significant category that designates individuals as trauma victims, and calls on them to identify with their designation by conforming to the norms and standards set out for the victim of trauma by humanitarian psychiatry. Only after they do so are they able to exist politically, and make claims in the political domain by making reference to this subjectivity. This is not to say that this produces people who think of themselves as victims, but that humanitarian discursive regimes contribute to the formation of “victim subjectivities to which social agents must make reference” (554) in order to make their political claims heard. While this leaves room for creative reinterpretation and appropriation, it nonetheless helps to establish suffering and victimhood as the basis of political claims, and affect as the means of political argumentation.

In this chapter, I employ the concept of political subjectification to examine the process by which the figure of the relative of the disappeared is both constituted and used to advance moral and political claims by international experts and by family members. This figure has been given shape through an international apparatus formed to address the issue of missing persons in post-conflict states. The missing persons issue is an object of relatively recent, but significant, international humanitarian concern. Organizations like the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) contend that governments have a legal and moral obligation to ensure that people do not go missing as a result of armed conflict or internal hostilities and, if they do, to ensure that their fate and whereabouts are known and their families informed.⁵ This requires that states maintain records on all those who are detained and arrested, register all deaths, and keep information on burials and the fate of human remains. The ICRC claims that this “represents the fulfillment of the right of human beings not to lose their identities after death” and “the right of families to know what has happened to their relatives” (2004: 3). They work to alleviate the suffering of family members by helping local governments locate missing persons, and identify their remains. However, this is often complicated by the fact that national governments have sole legal jurisdiction and sovereign claim over the dead bodies in their territory, and are the only institutions that can order exhumations. This requires humanitarian organizations to elicit the participation of national governments before they can deliver aid to family members through exhumations and forensic investigations, which often requires the form of humanitarian testimony described by Fassin, and is undertaken on behalf of the surviving relatives.

⁵ For more on this, see the published material produced by the multidisciplinary task force on ‘The Missing’ begun by the ICRC in 2003, which is available at: <http://www.icrc.org/eng/war-and-law/protected-persons/missing-persons/index.jsp>.

But locating and identifying human remains is no longer seen solely as a humanitarian endeavor to be undertaken on behalf of missing persons and their families. Exhumations and forensic investigations have also become an increasingly important mechanism in the transitional justice framework, and a key component to fostering social repair after mass violence. It was on these grounds that the ICMP was established in 1996.⁶ The ICMP was formed to address the social and political issues related to missing persons in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and was to serve as a model of how an ethnically divided country could be “rehabilitated” through the identification of human remains (Wagner 2008). Thus far it has identified the mortal remains of over 16,000 missing persons exhumed from clandestine graves in the former Yugoslavia using DNA technology, but its activities also extend into many other realms of activity. In conjunction with the ICRC, the ICMP has contributed to the drafting of national legislation on the missing, the creation of official mechanisms for the delivery of information to relatives, the production of public archives, and the development of memorials to the missing. In other words, it has become actively involved in post-war state reconstruction on an institutional level. After its success in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the governments that support the ICMP made a decision to expand its work to other parts of the world.⁷ As a result, the organization’s mission is now to “to secure the co-operation of governments and other authorities in locating and identifying persons missing as a result of armed conflicts, other hostilities or violations of human rights and to assist them in doing so.” In addition, it “supports the work of other organizations in their efforts, encourages

⁶ The ICMP was formed at the initiative of President Clinton at the G-7 Summit in Lyon, France.

⁷ The participating governments that fund the ICMP are Canada, Chile, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, the Holy See, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

public involvement in its activities and contributes to the development of appropriate expressions of commemoration and tribute to the missing.’’⁸

This is essential to understanding the processes currently underway in Lebanon, where the ICMP is one of the international organizations helping relatives to address the issue of missing persons. My concern in this chapter is with the form of political subjectification that is both constitutive of and constituted through the apparatus taking shape around the family members. This form of political subjectification gives rise to the figure of the relative of the disappeared, a protected category of humanitarian assistance under international law. Similar to the trauma victim analyzed by Fassin, this victim category can be used to advance political claims through an appeal to suffering, but it is also a rights-endowed victim. Relatives of the disappeared are granted specific rights under international humanitarian law on the basis of their mental suffering. It is these rights that organizations like the ICMP use as the basis of their work, working with relatives to establish specific forensics practices, legal mechanisms, and political institutions to address their needs and priorities. Regardless of the eventual success of such initiatives in Lebanon, I am interested in how the political activity taking place around this victim category is shifting the terms of moral and political discourse through which injustices are being identified, and their remedies sought.

Initiatives in Lebanon

During the course of the Lebanese civil war, thousands of individuals were abducted from their homes or at checkpoints, and never returned. While the majority of these people were most likely killed, some were kept alive and traded in prisoner exchanges between the militia groups, used as a means of financial extortion, or transferred to secret detention inside Syria or

⁸ <http://www.ic-mp.org/mandate/>

Israel (Young 2000). After the war came to an end, the Committee of the Families of the Kidnapped and Disappeared in Lebanon asked political officials to negotiate the release of all those who were still alive, and to gather information on those who had been killed. However, the postwar government chose not to address the issue, except to acknowledge that 17,415 people had gone missing the war.⁹ In 1991, it passed two laws designed to bring an end to the violence, and promote reconciliation. The first law dissolved the armed militias, but did not ask any questions concerning the remaining prisoners. The second law granted a general amnesty for most war-related crimes, but did not place any obligations on those being pardoned to come forward, or to share the information they had concerning the fate of the missing.

Unwilling to accept the idea that their loved ones were dead without being given proof, the Committee of Families demanded that the state investigate what happened to their missing relatives through the establishment of an official commission of inquiry. It talked to local officials and international human rights' organizations, organized press conferences, and held demonstrations to demand an investigation into the fate of their missing relatives. In 1995, the government tried to appease them by passing a law that facilitated the procedure for declaring a missing person dead.¹⁰ While this law made it easier for family members to deal with the material aspects of disappearance, it did nothing to address the relatives' request for information. As a result, the Committee began a new campaign under the title "*min haqqina an na'rif*" (it is our right to know), which Halwani claims eventually led to the formation of the first official commission of inquiry in January 2000.

⁹ Although the official figure of disappeared persons is 17,415, the actual number is much likely lower. Nevertheless, the figure of 17,415 is the one most commonly referenced in Lebanon.

¹⁰ Law 434 of 25 May 1995, which shortened the period of time required for families to have their abducted relatives legally declared dead.

The first commission of inquiry was composed of five representatives from the security services who were closely aligned to the Syrian regime. It received 2,046 submissions, and claims to have investigated each case. Following its investigation, the commission published a three-page report concluding that apart from 17 people detained in Israel, all people who had been missing for more than four years “should be considered dead.” The report did not provide families with any further information, and simply stated “all parties and armed militias committed mutual extra-judicial executions during the armed conflicts, and the bodies were discarded in different places in Beirut, Mount Lebanon, the North, Bekaa, and the South.” The report mentioned the location of three mass graves found in Beirut, but declared that no identification was possible on the bodies “due to the number of years” they had been buried, and it added that some bodies “were discarded in the sea.”¹¹ Given the scope of the killings and the nature of the dead bodies, the commission urged families to formally declare their loved ones dead.¹² Although unsatisfied with the findings, some of the families followed the advice of the commission because they needed to obtain a formal death certificate in order to begin inheritance proceedings or secure government compensation. Even under such circumstances, many of them found it very difficult to initiate the legal proceedings that would “kill” their loved ones, especially when they could not be sure if they were actually dead (Young 2000). The need for more conclusive evidence became obvious when 54 of the people who the commission had declared dead were released from Syrian prison five months after the release of the report. This made it clear to the families that the commission had not properly investigated the cases that had been submitted to them. As one family member told me during my fieldwork, eight years later,

¹¹ Report of the Official Commission of Investigation into the Fate of the Kidnapped and Missing Persons (25 July 2000). This alludes to the fact that the headquarters of the Lebanese Forces militia were located close to the seashore during the war and that the militia is known to have disposed of the bodies of its victims in the sea.

¹² This was made possible by Law 434 of 25 May 1995.

“the commission actually increased the suffering of families by forcing them to declare their missing relatives dead without conducting a proper investigation.”

After the release of the prisoners, the Committee of Families demanded an impartial commission of inquiry. The government agreed to appoint a second commission in January 2001. This commission was more diverse and had in its membership military personnel, politicians, judges, and a lawyer from the Beirut Bar Association. This helped to satisfy some of the families’ criticisms of the first commission, but the mandate of this commission was much reduced, and ultimately did not assist the families in their quest for information. While the first commission was charged with the investigation of all cases reported by families, the mandate of the second commission was to identify only the fate of missing persons who were still alive. Due to its limited mandate, the commission was only able to accept complaints from relatives who had evidence that their loved ones were still alive. Most of the family members were unable to meet this burden of proof, and only 750 names were submitted. The commission tried to obtain as much information as possible, but it faced insurmountable challenges and was ultimately unsuccessful because it was not given access to the state archives, and was forced to rely on information from Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the ICRC. After its investigations were complete, the government asked the commission to delay publication of its results, and no official report was ever issued.¹³

Since the conclusion of the second commission, the families have continued to hold demonstrations, organize press conferences, and hold candlelight vigils for their loved ones. They usually choose dates that hold special significance in relation to the war, the most important of which is the anniversary of the day the conflicts broke out, April 13, 1975. Drawing

¹³ After the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, the Beirut Bar Association decided to issue its own report, which was published in *As-Safir* newspaper on April 29, 2005.

on the symbolic weight of this day, they declare that the war will not be over for them until their loved ones come home. Every year, they choose a site along the former demarcation line that used to separate East from West Beirut during the war, and they sit and stand in silent protest holding photographs of their missing relatives in their hands as “token[s] of absence” (Sontag 1977: 16). Their activism shares much in common with the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo,¹⁴ who turned their “interrupted mourning process” (Suarez-Orozco 1991: 491) into a model of “trauma-driven performance protest” (Taylor 2002: 156) that has since become globalized.¹⁵ In their weekly demonstrations, the Mothers silently walked in a circle around the Plaza de Mayo, wearing the photo IDs of their missing children around their necks to mark the names and photographs that had been erased from the official archives by the military regime, and to make visible the practice of enforced disappearance in Argentina (Gordon 1997; Taylor 1997). While similar in form, the Lebanese families’ protests do not have the same target. The state is not viewed as the perpetrator of the crime of disappearance, but as the entity that refuses to locate and identify their loved ones. In their protests and vigils, the relatives articulate their trauma as a form of suffering linked to waiting, a theme they also articulate when they speak about their long and frustrating search for information, and about their endless and agonizing wait for the return of their loved ones, even, as one mother told me, “if it is in a coffin.”

However, their calls for assistance did not make much of an impact before the April 2005 Syrian withdrawal. In the same month, another association, Support of Lebanese in Detention and Exile (SOLIDE), pitched a protest tent in front of the UN ESCWA building in downtown

¹⁴ One of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, Laura Bonaparte, visited Lebanon to lend her support to the relatives in April 2003. She participated in the three-day commemoration of the war organized by Memory for the Future and the Committee of the Families that was discussed in the last chapter (Al-Nahar, April 11, 2003).

¹⁵ This form of activism has become globalized, and is now practiced by mothers’ movements around the world (Malin 1993; Sant Cassia 2005; Wagner 2008; Simic 2009).

Beirut. SOLIDE works on behalf of “victims of enforced disappearance at the hands of the Syrian intelligence,”¹⁶ and set up the tent to remind the international community that the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon would not be complete until all of the Lebanese detained in Syria had been released. However, the tent soon became a meeting ground where the Committee of the Families and SOLIDE met, and the demand later became focused on the formation of an independent commission to investigate the fate of all people who went missing during the civil war. By the time of my fieldwork, the tent had become an active social space where family members, former political prisoners, and concerned activists would gather on a daily basis to talk to one another, drink coffee, play cards, tell their stories to visitors, and strategize their next political moves. The families maintain a continuous presence at the protest site. They take turns camping overnight inside the tent, which is outfitted with two beds, a television, a fan, and a refrigerator. Surrounding the tent stand several large pieces of plywood on which fading pictures of the missing are tacked in peeling plastic protective covers. In the photographs, images of men and women from the 70s and 80s stare out, reminding visitors of how much time has passed since they were last seen alive. Many of the relatives also wear pictures of their sons, daughters, and husbands pinned to their clothing on cards that read *ila mata?* (until when?).

In the summer of 2009, a new picture was added to the tent, and now hangs above the plywood boards. The picture is of Audette Salem, one of the relatives who helped to set up the tent, and lived there for over four years. On September 17, 1985, her two children, Richard, 22, and Marie-Christine, 19, were kidnapped as they were driving home for lunch, along with their elderly uncle Georges. From that day forward, Salem never wavered in her search to find out what happened to her children, or stopped hoping for their return. During the war, she talked to

¹⁶ This statement was published on the organization’s website: <http://www.solide-lb.org>. It classifies those detained in Syria as victims of enforced disappearance because the Syrian authorities do not admit their detention or existence and has not revealed their fate and whereabouts.

local militia officials, then she presented whatever information she had to the official commissions formed by the government after the war, but she never learned who took Richard and Marie-Christine, or whether they were dead or alive. Then, on the morning of May 16, 2009, she was hit by a car as she was crossing the street to the tent, and she died later that day. Following her death, the families posted her picture on the tent to honor her commitment and highlight the importance of finding out what happened to all those who disappeared during the war before more family members die. Her death became a symbol for them of the lack of care and attention given to the issue by the Lebanese government, and the suffering their indifference has caused thousands of relatives. They also took a sample of her DNA in the hope that one day the government would establish an independent national commission to investigate the fate and whereabouts of the missing, and use DNA analysis to identify any human remains that are found.

The Construction of Victimhood

Since the Syrian withdrawal in April 2005, a number of international organizations have entered the country to support the families. Some, like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the ICRC, have been working on behalf of the missing, kidnapped, and detained in Lebanon since the civil war. But the field is now predominately constituted by transitional justice organizations, most significantly the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ). In this section, I will explore how the figure of the relative of the disappeared is constituted in the sites of international intervention. Unlike the trauma victim, this political subjectivity is not reduced only to the logic of compassion, but is constructed through a combination of legal and psychological discourses that give rise to a victim who is granted rights under international law on the basis of the mental trauma inflicted by enforced disappearance. As I will demonstrate, relatives of the disappeared are called upon to identify with this subjectivity, and to challenge the

state as rights-endowed victims. However, in their abstract formulation, these rights also serve to regulate their political activity, and to channel it into the process of post-conflict state building. I will return to this point in the last section, where I will elaborate on how the relatives' rights are actually being put to use, interpreted, and reconfigured in the social and political domain of Lebanon.

The features and objectives of the relative of the disappeared were outlined in a local training workshop organized by the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) to address the topic of missing persons in June 2008.¹⁷ More than sixty local NGO directors, representatives of family committees, government officials, religious and political leaders, and representatives of international organizations were invited to participate in the two-day workshop, and the Executive Director of the International Commission of Missing Persons (ICMP), discussed above, was invited to serve as the “international expert.” In the opening speech of the workshop, the expert, Kathryn Bomberger, began by telling the invited participants, “the tone of this meeting should be one of setting out practical priorities.” Speaking into a microphone from the center of a large conference room in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, she praised some of the family associations' most recent initiatives, but urged them to “begin taking their work in new directions.” Thus far she told them they had been acting “in a role as very strong advocates,” but “now its time to take it to a new level and begin engaging as activists.” While the distinction may appear inconsequential, it is essential to understanding the political subject and subjectivity set out in the workshop. Instead of appealing to the state as advocates for their missing loved ones, she encouraged them to begin demanding their *own* rights under international humanitarian law. In other words, to view themselves not as *citizens*, whose

¹⁷ “And They Never Came Back: Enforced Disappearances in Lebanon.” Second Workshop in the “What is To Be Done?: Lebanon’s War-Loaded Memory” series. Held in Beirut, Lebanon, June 21-22, 2008.

suffering was being ignored by the state, but as *victims* who are granted rights under a body of international law designed to protect humanity from improper abuses of state power.

According to Bomberger, the basis of their political claims resides in the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. Before I explain the details of her argument, it is essential to point out that the concept of enforced disappearance is different from that of the missing. The standard international definition of the missing is “all people unaccounted for as a result of an international or non-international armed conflict or internal violence” (Crettol and La Rosa 2006: 355). It is a broad category that includes all persons, civilian and military, who go missing as a result of armed conflict. Anyone who is arrested, abducted, displaced, or killed during a violent conflict, and their fate and whereabouts are not known, is considered missing. The notion of enforced disappearance is a much narrower concept. It was initially developed to explain a practice used by dictatorships in Latin America during the 1970s to eliminate political opponents.¹⁸ In cases of enforced disappearance, people are kidnapped, and then usually detained, tortured, and killed by state agents. Their fate and whereabouts are kept concealed by the state and, in the event of their deaths, their bodies are hidden or destroyed by state agents in order to prevent them from being found, making them effectively “disappear.”

Before it was defined in international human rights law, enforced disappearance was considered a violation of multiple human rights including the right to liberty, the right to personal security and humane treatment, the right to a fair trial, to legal counsel and to equal protection under the law, and the right of presumption of innocence, among others (Dewhirst

¹⁸ Although disappearances are often considered a phenomenon that began in Latin America, some argue that its roots can be traced back to Hitler’s *Nacht und Nebel* (Night and Fog) decree, which led to the establishment of secret units within the Gestapo that kidnapped thousands of political opponents, who simply vanished into the night (Dewhirst 2008).

2008). On December 20, 2006, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance,¹⁹ which established enforced disappearance as a distinct crime under international law. The Convention also provided a binding definition for the crime of enforced disappearance, as stated in its second chapter, which reads:

For the purposes of this Convention, “enforced disappearance” is considered to be the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law (Chapter 2).

According to this definition, a person whose disappearance can be linked to state involvement, and whose fate or whereabouts is concealed by the state, is a victim of enforced disappearance. If a person disappeared during a period of armed conflict, and the above conditions are not met, the person is usually classified under the broader category of the missing.

The concept of enforced disappearance does not universally map onto Lebanon. While those who were transferred and held in secret detention inside Israel or Syria can be said to belong to the category of the forcibly disappeared, most of those who vanished during the civil war are thought to have been killed during battles and massacres, or abducted by local militias who were not working with the authorization or support of the state, making them missing persons. Unaware of the local details, Bomberger used the concept of enforced disappearance to describe all of the people who went missing during the war. When participants pointed out that not all of those who vanished meet the international legal standards to be considered victims of enforced disappearance, she told them “the legal classifications are often unclear.” Citing the case of Srebrenica, she said that many people still argue that those who were killed were not

¹⁹ A/RES/61/155 and E/CN.4/2006/57, Annex I.

victims of enforced disappearance, but she herself considers it “a classic case of enforced disappearance.” Then, she declared that the distinction “doesn’t matter. However they went missing, they are gone now.” From this point on, she used the concept of the missing to refer to people who vanished in Srebrenica, Lebanon and elsewhere, but relied on the legal classification of the disappeared to discuss their legal rights, and the rights of their families.

According to Bomberger, the importance of the Convention is that it recognizes two categories of victims. In addition to those who disappeared, it also defines as victims “any individual who has suffered harm as the direct result of an enforced disappearance” (Chapter 24). In her view, this is essential because “the continuing uncertainty regarding the fate of missing persons is a form of mental torture and, as victims, the family members who are left behind have rights.” She did not explain why she limited the second category of victims to family members, or who she considered to be included in this designation, saying only that the rights of surviving family members are clearly detailed in the Convention. These rights include the right to know the truth about the fate of their relatives, the right to know what a government or other institution is doing to locate, recover, and identify their relatives, and the right to reparations from the state. While the “right of families to know the fate of their relatives” is also afforded to families of the missing under international law,²⁰ the Convention expands the rights of families significantly, giving relatives of the disappeared the right to be kept informed of all activities related to the search for missing persons, the right to be engaged and involved in the process, and the right to reparations.

As the wording of the Convention makes clear, these rights are based on the family members’ classification as victims who have “suffered harm.” While most experts in the field

²⁰ Chapter 32 of Additional Protocol I to the 1949 Geneva Conventions relating to “Missing and Dead Persons.”

acknowledge the social, legal, and economic hardships families have to contend with as a result of enforced disappearance, they usually explain their suffering in psychological terms. They argue that the uncertainty, doubt and apprehension that relatives are forced to endure over a prolonged and continuing period of time causes severe mental distress and anguish (Fondebrider 2002; ICRC 2007, 2009). Some, like Bomberger, classify this as a form of “mental torture,” which makes the withholding of information a human rights abuse.²¹ Others explain it using purely psychological terms. They argue that the lack of tangible evidence regarding the fate of their loved ones cause family members to suffer extreme mental anguish. In the absence of reliable information telling them whether their relatives are still alive and, if so, where they are detained, and under what circumstances, experts contend that family members are unable to work through the absence of their loved one and convert it into a form of loss, leading them to suffer from a condition known as “ambiguous loss” (Boss 1999). This, in turn, prevents them from beginning the natural grieving process, and thus from ever moving beyond the early stages that precede grief and are characterized by anxious waiting and worrying. Trapped between hope and grief, experts contend that they suffer from what is called “unresolved grief” (Blaauw and Lähteenmäki 2002; Williams and Crews 2003; Stover and Shigekane 2002). These conditions are said to be shared by all relatives of the disappeared, regardless of cultural, ideological, or religious differences (Fondebrider 2002). Without bodies and funerals, experts claim that family members cling to hope as a survival mechanism, believing that their loved ones may still be alive somewhere (Stover, Haglund, and Samuels 2003). While the mental health profession has officially recognized neither of these conditions, they nonetheless carry significant moral and

²¹ The pain caused by the lingering uncertainty of their situation has also been classed as a form of mental torture by the United Nations and the European Court for Human Rights.

emotional weight, testifying to the psychological consequences of disappearance and state inaction for the family members through the expert language of humanitarian psychiatrists.

The above analyses reveal that international organizations like the ICMP use law and psychology to define the features of the suffering relative, but they also show that their appeal to these discourses is vague and contradictory. Law and psychology serve as the sources for an authoritative vocabulary that they use to designate attributes of the suffering relative not as a legal or psychological subject, but as a political subject. They can afford to be inconsistent in their use of legal and psychological concepts because they are not making clinical evaluations or legal arguments. They are making moral and political claims. The concepts they use to make these claims are extracted from law and psychology and reconfigured for use in the political field. This alters the meaning of the concepts, turning them into signs that carry emotional and ethical force in the global “market for suffering” (Kleinman, Das, and Lock 1997: xi), but also carry the force of a body of law designed to protect victims against state abuses. Once they are reconfigured in this way, the legal and psychological concepts work together to constitute the suffering relative as a victim not only of war, but also of unethical and undemocratic postwar political practices, a construction that holds even when the legal and psychological concepts employed to give this subject authority are inconsistent. The combination of law and psychology in the formation of this political subjectivity enables criticism to be deployed against the state along two vectors, one at the level of suffering, and the other at the level of rights. Though distinct, they do not have the same status and relationship to one another. The affective weight of suffering is the precondition for, and thus precedes, the juridico-political configuration of relatives of the disappeared as rights holders.

While the rights afforded to family members in the Convention have the force of law in countries that have ratified the treaty,²² Lebanon is not yet a state party to the Convention.²³ In such cases, the thrust of the claim is moral and political, not legal. The relative of the disappeared is transformed from an international legal subject to a political subject, a designation family members are encouraged to identify with in order to use the rights set out for them as victims in the Convention to make political claims against the state. While the family associations in Lebanon have long been appealing to international norms and concepts in their demands for an official investigation into the fate of their loved ones, Bomberger encouraged them to “insert themselves in the decision making process as political actors with rights.” In other words, as victims who are granted rights under international law. Although the rights granted to family members in the Convention do not have legal force in Lebanon, she told them that they give them a new way to exist politically. It makes their suffering politically meaningful, but it is up to them to transpose their suffering from the legal domain to the political domain.

By asserting their rights under international law as political actors, Bomberger told the relatives that they could demand that the state draft legislation on the missing and disappeared, establish an independent national commission mandated to locate and protect mass graves, carry out proper exhumations, and identify the remains of the dead, and provide them with moral or financial reparations. Even if the state chose to ignore their demands, she stressed that this would help to draw public attention to their plight, and to the failures of the Lebanese state to live up to the provisions of international humanitarian law designed to alleviate their suffering. While opening up new possibilities for political action, this reveals that the rights granted to the

²² On December 23, 2010, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance reached the 20th ratification necessary for its entry into force.

²³ Although Lebanon signed the Convention on February 6, 2007, it has not yet been ratified. This is an issue of great concern to many international organizations, most notably Amnesty International, which has made this the issue of a recent political campaign in Lebanon (2011).

relatives under international law also set the limits and horizons of their political demands, at least in their abstract formulation. Many social and legal theorists have emphasized the regulatory force of rights discourses, and drawn attention to how they delimit political demands (Merry 1992; Brown 1995; Gledhill 1997; Povinelli 2002; Duggan 2003; Menon 2004). This is clearly evident here, where the rights afforded to relatives of the disappeared under the Convention are used both to delimit their political demands, and to create the perception that they are the essential means to the alleviation of their suffering. However, there is also something more going on here. Their rights focus political activity on the accomplishment of a specific set of legal, political, and forensic practices and institutions. In other words, they contribute to the regulation of local governments, which are called upon to act in accordance with international standards on the missing in order to alleviate the suffering of their citizens. Nonetheless, discourses of rights are never always or inevitably proscribed. In many places, social actors appropriate rights discourses and reconfigure them based on their own histories, subjectivities, and goals (Postero 2004; Goldstein 2007; Speed 2007). In the following section, I will examine how family members interpret and deploy the rights afforded them on the basis of their suffering to avoid their own appropriation in the transnational political space taking shape around them.

The Politics of Victimhood

As it is constituted by international organizations, the relative of the disappeared is an abstract political subject that can be mobilized to advance political claims on the government through an appeal to law and morality. This enables the state to be criticized both on

humanitarian and on legal and political grounds.²⁴ But I will demonstrate that it also makes possible the transformation of moral and political discourses around the missing, and contributes to an increasingly rights-based form of political activism. In Lebanon, family members and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have long used suffering and victimhood as a practical political strategy to challenge the political leaders and society at large. In this section, I will discuss the approach of local NGOs to the issue, and then trace how it is being adapted, transformed, and reoriented through the initiatives of international organizations and the family associations. My concern is not with the success of various initiatives, but with how moral and political discourses are being transformed, and with how political activity is being reoriented.

As I described in the last chapter, the issue of the missing became a mobilizing point for many self-proclaimed “civil society” activists in the late 1990s and early 2000s. They asserted that the policy of enforced forgetting advocated by the political elite would only ever lead to the eventual re-enactment of the memories and acts that had been repressed, perhaps leading to the emergence of another civil war. Inspired by the truth and reconciliation discourses prominent at the time, and the “revealing is healing” paradigm of social repair promoted in the South African TRC, they argued that memories of the war needed to be brought out into the open and discussed truthfully. In their view, this was the only way people would be able to “move forward and restore the human and social links between individuals belonging to different communities.” However, for this to be accomplished, it was essential that people “realize that neither responsibility nor pain were exclusive to one group,” and to see all victims as their victims, not just those from their own religious or political community (Makarem 2002). At the time, these ideas were limited primarily to the realm of public intellectual discourse, but a wide range of

²⁴ This form of denunciation is clearly articulated in a recent Amnesty International report entitled “Lebanon’s Missing People” (2011).

NGOs dedicated to dialogue, peace, civility, and remembrance now advocate them. Instead of relying on conferences and seminars, they have begun to develop programs and initiatives that appeal a more diverse audience.

As these initiatives continue to proliferate, the families' ability to represent the issue of the missing is increasingly been challenged by other organizations seeking to work on their behalf. The most significant project to date was organized by UMAM Documentation and Research (UMAM D&R). Timed to coincide with the anniversary of the start of the war and the beginning of the year-long series of workshops it organized with the ICTJ, UMAM D&R unveiled a photo exhibition in April 2008 entitled, "*wa lam ya'udu*" (and they didn't return) in Arabic, and "Missing" in English. The exhibition was comprised of hundreds of photographs of people who disappeared during the civil war, which were collected mostly from the family associations.²⁵ It was careful to emphasize that the people in the pictures were from diverse confessions, origins, and political persuasions, and on each picture was written the missing person's name, date of birth, and date of disappearance. The exhibition traveled the country for two years and was accompanied by public events, such as the one pictured below, in each city it visited. After it was completed, it was published as a book, and it also has its own Facebook page.²⁶ According to the founders of UMAM D&R, this project was created to help foster public awareness about the magnitude and impact of enforced disappearance on Lebanese society. The brochure that accompanied the exhibition read, "over time, it seems the more resolved we became about the non-existence of those who disappeared, the easier it became for us to ignore our responsibility to conduct effective investigations into their continued and painful absence."

²⁵ Most of the photographs in the exhibition were collected from the family associations. Additional photographs were contributed by friends and family members not associated with any of the associations, and the exhibition continues to be expanded as new photographs come in.

²⁶ On its Facebook page, UMAM D&R publishes a new picture every day, and also solicits more photographs.

Appealing to a sense of social responsibility for those who had been forgotten, the exhibition was an attempt to remind viewers that although the people displayed in the exhibition were no longer visible in society, they had not ceased to exist, and deserved to have their absences investigated, regardless of their religious or political affiliation. The sheer number of photographs in the exhibition helped to make this point, and to emphasize that this was a problem that affected all communities. In addition, it sought to draw attention to the suffering that these absences inflicted on family members. The brochure stated, “In the absence of truth or justice, those who have been left behind are also locked into a purgatory of endless waiting. Waiting for good news or bad, waiting for the return of their sons or their bodies, waiting for the reports of commissions, for official responses, waiting for recognition, action and closure.” Deceptively straight-forward, this statement not only highlights the suffering that family members endure as a result of not knowing the fate of their loved ones, but it also describes, and delineates, what they need in order to move on: information, recognition, and the return of their relatives, alive or dead.

In this initiative, the relatives’ suffering is used to encourage a form of social responsibility grounded in a compassion for the family members as fellow citizens and human beings, not as members of a specific religious or political community. While the most significant, this is by no means the only initiative aimed to help the families. There have been music concerts, guerilla marketing campaigns, live graffiti shows, documentary film screenings, and art installations, to name just a few, all with the same message of taking action for the families on the basis of a shared humanity, and for the good of society.²⁷ When this is compared to the initiatives undertaken by international transitional justice organizations, a number of

²⁷ Many of these events have been organized by Act For the Disappeared, an NGO formed in 2010 to “engage Lebanon’s youth and larger segments of society in efforts to address Lebanon’s past legacy of enforced disappearances and find a meaningful and sustainable solution to the issue of those who disappeared in the country since 1975.”

obvious differences can be discerned. Instead of speaking for the relatives, they encourage them to speak about their own suffering, to make rights claims, and to pursue the establishment of laws, commissions, and memorials for the missing. Usually staying in the shadows, they provide the relatives with advice, assistance, and connections through which to call for the institutions and practices that it says are essential for the alleviation of their suffering.

Immediately following the workshop, the ICTJ began working with the family associations to pursue what it calls “strategic litigation.” As the Director of the Criminal Justice Program at the ICTJ explained, it uses this strategy “to focus attention on specific issues, but it isn’t necessarily designed to achieve anything.” An official complaint against the government was drafted, requesting the protection of the three mass gravesites mentioned in the first commission’s report (2000), the release of all information withheld by the commission concerning missing persons and the location of other mass gravesites, and the establishment of a social service organization to provide health and psychological support to the families as compensation for “moral damages.” The complaint was jointly submitted by the Committee of the Families and SOLIDE, who announced it a press conference held at one of the mass gravesites mentioned in the commission’s report. In her statement to the crowd, Halwani described the contents of the complaint and then said, “It is our right to know. It is first and foremost a legal right, the right not to be mentally tormented.” She then went on to say that “the relatives of victims of enforced disappearances have the right to demand the disclosure of any piece of information that can help in shedding light on the facts, including the protection of mass gravesites and their exhumation.” She concluded by accusing the Lebanese government of not respecting the rights of the family members, and drawing attention to the fact that the state’s efforts come “in total opposition to processes currently going on in several countries around the

world to address the issue of disappearances,” adding that the Lebanese state had “disregarded basic human dignity.”²⁸ The harm it had inflicted on the families was also reflected in the complaint itself, by the call for moral reparations.

I was initially quite struck by Halwani’s language, given her statements at the beginning of this chapter. I had expected her not to adopt the language put forward at the workshop quite so explicitly. But this reveals the ultimate paradox at the heart of international intervention. The relatives want the bodies of their loved ones back, and they want to know the truth about what happened to them. Whenever I sat with them at the tent, they were eager to recount their stories, and always asked me where they would be published, and whether I thought it would help more Americans become involved in their struggle. Although they often expressed frustration privately, they were more than willing to accept the help of international organizations if it would help them find out what happened to their sons, brothers, and husbands, and even if it meant adopting their language and priorities. Yet, it is important to point out that the issue of mass graves raises specific challenges for the families. The protection of mass gravesites is important from a transitional justice standpoint because exhumed corpses can be used to establish the fact of criminal violations, and can serve as material evidence in judicial proceedings. This often means that only the cause and manner of death are investigated, with little attention being placed on the identification of remains (Laqueuer 2002; Ferrándiz 2006). When a mass grave is located, forensic teams dig up the ground, systematically record the findings, collect the human remains and personal belongings of the deceased, examine the marks of perimortem torture or mistreatment recorded on the bones, and analyze the disposition of the bodies. From this material evidence, a particular story can be deciphered, and used to establish criminal responsibility in a court of law (Weizman and Keenan 2012). However, the needs of

²⁸ Al-Akhbar, May 14, 2009.

families often get sidelined in the pursuit of justice. Halwani repeatedly brought this point up in the workshop on mass graves,²⁹ drawing attention to the forensic expert's lack of regard for the families needs, and breaking out in tears in the middle of one of his technical lectures, yet this is also the only way the relatives have to find out what happened to their loved ones. On this point, it is interesting to note that the relatives' decision to save Audette Salem's DNA was announced a few days after the press conference at Horsch Beirut, drawing attention to the issue of what lay inside of the mass graves - human beings with names and families. Their families were still waiting for them to come home or, in Salem's case, to be buried alongside her.

In October 2009, the Judge of Summary Procedures of Beirut issued a decision calling on the Cabinet's secretariat to provide the families with the unpublished full report and results of the investigations conducted by the first commission in 2000. This was widely hailed by international organizations as an "encouraging first step toward recognizing the right of families of victims of enforced disappearances."³⁰ They started building on the momentum begun by this ruling, and the following June, a delegation of Lebanese parliamentarians, ministry representatives, judges, lawyers, and family association representatives was sent on a trip to visit the ICMP in Bosnia and Herzegovina.³¹ The purpose of the trip was to assist high-level state and family association representatives discuss and develop guidelines and recommendations for the drafting of legislation that would address the families' rights and respond to their needs. During their stay in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the delegation met with officials at the Missing Persons Institute, spoke with the country's Chief Prosecutor, toured ICMP's DNA labs and forensic

²⁹ "The Story Beneath Us: Forensics and Mass Graves." Third Workshop in the "What is To Be Done?: Lebanon's War-Loaded Memory" series.. Held in Beirut, Lebanon, July 12-13, 2008.

³⁰ Statement issued by the International Center for Transitional Justice, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Federation for Human Rights, and the Euro-Mediterranean's Federation Against Forced Disappearances on November 4, 2009.

³¹ The trip was jointly organized by ICMP, ICTJ and the German foundation Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES).

facilities, and visited the Potočari Memorial Center in Srebrenica. This begun a long process of consultation between the family associations, local and international non-governmental organizations, legal and forensic experts, activists, judges, and jurists. In February 2012, the Committee of the Families and SOLIDE announced the draft law entitled, *qanun al-ashkhas al-mafqudin wa al-makhfiyyin qasran fi lubnan* (Law on the Missing and Forcibly Disappeared Persons in Lebanon). Based on the “right to the truth” recognized in international conventions and protocols, the law calls for the establishment of an independent commission to investigate the fate of those who went missing during the civil war. The commission would be charged with locating and protecting mass graves, carrying out exhumations, and identifying and returning the human remains to families. In an interview conducted by the ICTJ, Halwani said:

I cannot say I am optimistic that this is close to being resolved. We as a committee spent 18 years making demands and holding demonstrations and strikes before we achieved recognition from officials that this is even an issue. But that is not to say the draft law is not a critical step. We worked on this law with the assistance of a number of judges, lawyer Nizar Saghieh, and with the help and direct supervision of ICTJ, which suggests it is a comprehensive mechanism for resolving the issue of the missing. We, the victims—since the victims are not only the missing but their families as well—helped create a legal mechanism to finally resolve the issue and we will do our best to ensure the bill passes. Had we lacked hope throughout this long journey of almost 30 years, we would have become frustrated, stayed home, and abandoned the cause. We would have listened to the politicians who said that the issue died with the war. But even though they took our loved ones, nobody can take our hope. We will push forward until we achieve the truth.

Framing it in relation to the Committee’s long struggle for the truth, and emphasizing the families’ unwavering hope and determination, Wadad makes clear that the families’ will not stop campaigning until they achieve their goals. Yet, this bill transforms the form and direction of their activity. With the creation of the draft law, the family associations’ new task is to lobby civil society, parliamentarians, and other government officials to urge the passage of the bill, and

to make alliances with other lobbying organizations.³² They will continue to maintain their protest tent, and keep up their demonstrations and strikes, but now their energy is increasingly focused on getting the draft law passed, which will mandate the creation of the kind of commission they have been calling for, and guarantee their rights as victims.

The point I wish to make here is not that relatives' perceive themselves to be victims, but that they are increasingly becoming obligated to speak as victims in order to maintain their place on the political stage. As pressure mounts on the Lebanese government, more national and international organizations are getting involved in their struggle, and seeking to speak and lobby on their behalf. Rather than drawing on the authoritative discourses of law and psychology to make political claims against the state, I would like to suggest that they are actually appealing to their rights and suffering in order to resist their own appropriation in the judicialized political space taking shape around them. While this speaks to the flexibility of rights discourses, it also reveals the hierarchies being produced in this transnational space. Although given a voice, transitional justice deploys the figure of the victim within a morality of humanitarianism. As Kamari Clarke has remarked in relation to international judicial mechanisms, at the heart of this morality is the idea that the suffering of the "rights-endowed victim" can be alleviated through "international intervention and a kind of victims' justice" (2011: 36). In this case, justice is not legal, in the sense of being criminal justice, but institutional, in the sense that it is delivered through the adoption of legislation, the establishment of political commissions, and the location and identification of human remains.

³² They are now working with organizations lobbying for a civil marriage bill, and being advised by an organization who recently lobbied for a law against domestic violence.

Conclusion

Although humanitarian practices are commonly thought to reduce those it assists to a state of depoliticized victimhood, this shows that the categories of victimhood produced by international humanitarian law can also give victims access to rights and lead to the production of new forms of political action. This is perhaps not surprising given that “humanitarianism has become a major component of contemporary government on the local and global scenes of affliction” (Fassin 2010: 238). The spread of humanitarianism into government is especially evident in the practices designed to address the problem of missing persons. Global humanitarian and transitional justice agents can be found helping local governments identify mortal remains, develop commissions of inquiry to clarify the fate of missing persons, and draft national legislation in line with the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. However, what I have sought to highlight in this chapter is that the establishment of these activities is very much dependent on victims’ active political engagement.

The mobilization of relatives of the disappeared not only enables the state to be denounced for its lack of concern for their welfare, but also for its lack of compliance with the rights set out to alleviate their suffering under international law. This form of advocacy links the moral imperative of compassion to international rights discourse, making it possible to call upon the state to respect the relatives’ rights through the creation of specific legal, political, and forensic mechanisms. Although this rights-based form of political activism has undoubtedly led to an expansion in the relatives’ political visibility, and might eventually bring them the truth they desire one day, what I want to emphasize is that it also establishes law as the appropriate forum for social and political dispute. While many scholars argue that rights struggles work to reinforce the delimiting and regulating capacities of the modern state, this case adds another

dimension to the critique by showing that the regulatory capacities of the state are also themselves being called on to conform to international laws and norms through the rights claims articulated by the relatives of the disappeared. Given that this is the most significant site of transitional justice intervention, I suggest that it presents a means through which to understand much of its other work. In the next chapter, I will look at how the domain of victimhood is being expanded beyond the relatives of the disappeared through the elicitation of traumatic testimony from those who lived through the war. This activity is still in its formative stages but, when placed in relation to the local initiatives described in this chapter, helps to reveal some of the larger issues and debates that get sidelined by transitional justice.

CHAPTER THREE

The Power of Testimony

At the workshop on truth-seeking mechanisms,¹ two members of the Lebanese Parliament were invited to speak about the role of the government in seeking the truth about crimes committed during the civil war. In the first presentation, Samir Frangieh, a public intellectual elected to Parliament after the Syrian withdrawal in 2005, told the audience that the government had no role to play in seeking the truth. He reminded them that an amnesty law was passed in 1991, pardoning most war-related crimes. Although he acknowledged that the law was unfair to individuals, he explained that it was designed to protect the public interest (*al-salih al-am*). For him, the problem was not the law, but the fact that its original aims had been violated by the political leaders in the postwar government. Intended as a means to reintegrate militia members and leaders into the state, he said that it ended up “placing the country in their hands.” After they laid down their arms, the “warlords” (*umara’ al-harb*) were given official posts in the government from which they could continue to “draw their power and legitimacy from the roots of the civil war, and from the posts they used to hold during the civil war.” In his view, this transformed the conflict, moving the battleground from the military to the political realm. No longer a “militia or guerilla war,” the new war was, and continues to be, fought by politicians who draw their legitimacy from the past, and use it to create divisions in society. Now, he worries that “war is renewing itself.” But he told the participants that this is not simply the fault of the warlords, but of all members of society. He said, “We are all guilty of one crime. While we may not have not killed anyone, we have not helped our society extract itself from the

¹ “Truth Seeking Mechanisms.” Fifth Workshop in the “What is To Be Done?: Lebanon’s War-Loaded Memory” series. Held in Beirut, Lebanon, November 29-30, 2008.

swamps of the past war.” He urged those in the room to stop pointing fingers and summoning events from the past, and to focus on drawing conclusions and taking lessons from the war.

Following his presentation, several participants voiced angry opposition to Frangieh’s claim that “we are all guilty.” One stated it clearest when he said, “there is a theory that all of us are victims and all of us are executioners.² But I believe that there are criminals in this war and there are victims.” Since “the perpetrators are individuals, we have to focus on individual responsibility” in order to “treat the victims in a just way.” Frangieh responded to this by saying, “we all know that people have been killed.” However, the focus shouldn’t be on who killed them, or on how many were killed, but on the social conditions that mobilized people to take up arms. He told the participants that opening the civil war file would only serve political needs, but would not help to build a new society. Instead of taking a “political standpoint,” he said it was necessary to take a “moral standpoint,” and think about what is best for the society. In response to this statement, Lebanese human rights lawyer Nizar Saghieh burst out angrily, “individual responsibility is the beginning of morals.”

Ghassan Moukhayber, a long-time advocate for the missing and kidnapped in Lebanon, who was also elected to Parliament in 2005, spoke next. He told the audience that there are certain moral standards that must be upheld in society, and can never be forgotten. In his view, “no person and no group should go beyond a certain red line.” The taking of life is a crime that cannot be overlooked. But he also told the participants that it is important to be practical. He asked, “how do you make justice prevail in a country where warlords are ruling, and where those warlords have actually agreed to remain silent about each others’ crimes?” In this context, legal accountability may not be a feasible option. But the criminals can still be identified. He thinks

² This is a reference to Joseph Saadeh’s book *Ana al-dahiyyah wa al-jallad ana* (I am the victim and the executioner).

society has a right to know that a person was a criminal, and “this person should continue to bear the scarlet letter on his forehead so that people know he is a criminal.” Society can choose to take him back, but “we should know what his crime was.” In his view, this approach would help to ensure that certain acts of violence are designated as morally unacceptable, and prevented from reoccurring in the future.

At the heart of this long-standing debate in Lebanon is the question of how to build a new moral and political community in the wake of civil war. While many, like Frangieh, stress the notion of moral responsibility, others, like Saghieh and Moukhyber, assert that individual perpetrators must be held accountable for their crimes in order to designate their actions as violations that should not be repeated in the future. Although they sometimes disagree about whether this should be pursued judicially or extrajudicially, these activists share a common belief that it is essential for the crimes of the past to be integrated into the heart of the new society, either through justice or truth. In this chapter, I examine how this debate is being expanded into the public domain through the production and screening of video testimonies with former militia fighters. Given that the issue of who actually fought the civil war is not something that has ever been officially addressed in Lebanon, I contend that these testimonies serve not only as a critique against dominant social and political discourses on the past, but also as a point of intensity through which to discuss issues of war, morality, and responsibility, and questions of self and nation. I begin with a discussion of testimony, and how it is used to forge new sites of moral concern and political action, particularly in the medium of video. This is followed by an in-depth analysis of two documentary films, one consisting of testimonies collected from women fighters and the other from male fighters. I argue that each of the films highlight specific values, concerns, and practices in relation to the narratives being presented, giving rise to overlapping

and gendered frameworks through which to evaluate and reckon with the fighters' testimonies, and the issues they raise. After examining how these testimonies are put to use in specific contexts, I turn to an investigation of testimony in the transitional justice field. In this domain, perpetrators' testimony is limited to truth commissions and legal proceedings, and traumatic testimony is reserved for victims' narrations of pain and suffering. I conclude by examining an oral history project recently undertaken in Lebanon, suggesting that it is attempting to shift the focus onto victims, and the subject of concern to people's daily life during the war, their survival, and their suffering. I argue that what is at stake is not just the projection of a different image, but the structuring of public memory around specific notions of pain, suffering, and victimhood that sideline the issues of agency, motivation, intentionality, and responsibility that are of concern to those involved in the debate over former fighters.

Video Testimony

During the 1975-1990 civil war, it is estimated that approximately 100,000 men and women joined Lebanese militias (Johnson 2001). They held a variety of positions, ranging from the leaders, who planned the overall strategies, to the district commanders, who supported them, to the foot soldiers, who fought the battles and controlled the streets. As I discussed in the first chapter, after the conflicts came to an end, all of the militias, except for Hizbollah, were dissolved, and the postwar amnesty law pardoned most of the crimes that had been perpetrated during the war, including kidnapping, torture, and murder. Some of the former militia fighters and leaders were given posts in the civilian and military branches of the government as a means of postwar reintegration, but the majority simply laid down their arms. The amnesty law relieved them of any legal obligation to identify themselves, admit to their crimes, or provide information to victims. While a few have written about their experiences and reflections on the war in

memoires and semi-autobiographical novels (Saadeh 1989; Hatem 1999; Beshara 2003; Sneifer 2006; Bazzi 2007), such personal accounts remain limited.³

Despite the dearth of personal accounts, popular representations of former fighters abound. In cinematic docudramas, Najib Hourani (2008) argues that the iconic figure of the poor, rural, premodern militiaman has been constructed to function as the internal enemy against which the modern nation can be enacted. This image renders the war “instantly legible but only in a larger narrative in which irrational violence born of premodern dispositions is located in the poorest of the poor. There is no discipline. No rationality. No reason. No politics” (304). As the embodiment of the fractious sectarianism and ruthless violence of the war, he contends that this icon becomes a symbolic representation of all that must be excluded and guarded against so that the modern nation may come into being. Although this representation is common, Sune Haugbolle points out that many interviews, plays, and novels have begun to present a different image of the former fighter, one who “regrets his misdeeds but also blames the political leadership in Lebanon for his misfortunes” (2012: 135). He contends that his more nuanced view asks people to consider the ways ordinary militiamen were drawn into fighting by social, economic, and political circumstances, and how they have continued to suffer in the postwar period. As he points out, the staging of the “repentant militiaman” has become an important component for artists and activists who aim “to create ways to begin a process of reconciliation outside the political establishment” (135).

In this chapter, I focus on the appearance of former fighters in the public domain through the medium of video testimony. As I discussed in the previous chapter, testimony has become an

³ In addition to memoires and novels, some ex-militiamen have been interviewed by local newspapers, most notably in a series of thirty open-ended interviews brought together under the heading *Rihla fi nufus milishiyin sabiqin* (A journey through the souls of former militiamen), which appeared in *al-Nahar* on February 12-13, 1998 and have been analyzed by Haugbolle (2012).

essential aspect of contemporary human rights and humanitarian activism (McLagen 2003, 2006; Schaffer and Smith 2004; Dawes 2007; Fassin 2008; Fassin and Rechtman 2009). Like all concepts, testimony has a history. The word testimony evolved from the Latin root *testis*, whose literal meaning is “one present as a third party.” In Roman law, it referred both to the witness who was present in a legal transaction, and to the witness who testified in court. Andrea Frisch argues that until the fifteenth century, legal witnesses were called upon to testify not to what they had seen, but to the moral virtues of a person. It was only in the modern era that this external, third-party position transformed into the institution of eyewitnessing, shifting the focus of testimony onto the validity of the first-hand experience, both in law and in travel writing (2004). It was not until after World War I that a flood of veterans’ writings “turned testimony into a collective phenomenon and a new literary genre” (Givani 2011: 158). The goal of these soldier testimonies was to transmit a faithful image of war as a lived experience, giving voice to its horrors and psychological effects. After the Holocaust, an altogether new modality of testimony emerged. Annette Wieviorka has discerned three successive phases in the evolution of the roles and images of the Holocaust witness. The first phase is marked by the testimony left by those who did not survive the Holocaust, but still managed to record their experiences. The second phase is centered on the Eichmann trial, which Wieviorka argues is the moment when a general disregard for survivors’ testimonies was replaced by the image of the witness as the “bearer of history.” After this, she traces the changing nature of the witness into a third phase, which she calls “the era of the witness” (2006). In this most recent phase, she contends that testimonies help to define not only twentieth-century history but also more recent catastrophes that are only now “becoming history.” This is evidenced by the proliferation of testimony in relation to such events

as state terror in Latin America, the genocides in Bosnia and Rwanda, the Israel-Palestine conflict, and the War on Terror (Castongauy 2002; Cubilié 2005; Weine 2006; Allen 2009).

In the contemporary era of witnessing, testimony has been reinterpreted as a performative act elicited by psychotherapists, staged by filmmakers, and utilized by politicians and activists. For scholars such as Shoshana Felman and Lori Daub (1992), it represents an impossible and yet necessary act that transmits traumatic and ineffable experiences to a larger community of witnesses. They argue that it does not provide a totalizable account of an event, but an individual narrative of trauma that transfers unsettling experiences to secondary witnesses, who are then called upon to preserve a trace of the atrocity. While this view of traumatic testimony is widely accepted, it is important to keep in mind that trauma, as both a concept and a diagnostic category, is a Western construction that, like testimony, has a history.⁴ Nonetheless, it has taken on tremendous political resonance in the post-Cold War era. As I discussed in the last chapter, it has become highly politicized in the human rights and humanitarian domain, and is often articulated through the genre of testimony, which has itself grown into a powerful and pervasive tool for “bearing witness” to injustice through the language of suffering (LaCapra 2009). However, the genre of testimony differs substantially according to the medium and context in which it is performed (Assmann 2006; Ekman and Tygstrup 2008). In the domain of video, Meg McLagen argues that the moral and political efficacy of testimony rests on the visual presentation of victim’s suffering bodies, which forges a “sensuous link between the bodies represented on screen and bodies in the audience” (2003). Focusing on human rights media, she contends that by producing video testimonies, “activists explicitly seek to create moral spaces through which

⁴ According to Laura Brown (1995), the term trauma first appears in its modern form in the nineteenth-century, and is the product of a specific sociopolitical and clinical genealogy assembled out of Euro-American experiences, and attempts to treat “hysterical” symptoms, the anguish produced by train accidents and shell shock and, later, by concentration camp experiences and domestic abuse (for more on the history of this concept see Leys 2000).

processes of political mimesis can occur, and sympathy can be evoked and performed” (2003). In her view, this is accomplished both through the medium of video, and by the context in which the testimonies are presented. Whether they are screened in a city square, in a cultural center, or on a website, the context shapes the type of action that is generated in different ways, conditioning the forms of public that is mobilized as secondary witnesses.

While this mode of analysis is useful for understanding how video testimonies are used to designate specific issues as sites of moral concern and political action, it is not always suffering bodies that are presented on the screen, and it is not always empathy that is evoked. In Lebanon, the bodies on the screen are those of former militia fighters, and they are speaking about their actions during the civil war. While many studies of testimony from “perpetrators” say they “beg questions about ‘factual’ truth and mendacity” (Eaglestone 2008: 128), this seems to miss the point. In the medium of testimony, it is the individual and affect that is seen to wield power in representing the past and present, not claims to a totalizing or overarching truth (Wieviorka 2006). Many scholars who focus on the study of testimony claim there are “emotional truths embodied in the way a narrative is told” (Waterson 2007: 56). Especially in filmed testimony, there are “clues to be read in the speaker’s manner of self-presentation, with all its attendant dimensions of non-verbal communication: the style of speech, the pitch, tone and tempo of voice, pauses, hesitations, facial expressions, body language, gesture and all that these tell us about emotion and state of mind” (61). Understood in this way, the act of testifying on film can be seen as “an event, which itself becomes part of history” (66). As Walter Benjamin has commented, film provides a lasting record that can be viewed repeatedly and outside its original context, becoming “an object for simultaneous collective experience” (1999: 228). As such, filmed testimony contributes new points of view to the historical record, opening up new

possibilities for re-interpreting the past. In the context of Lebanon, I argue that the collection of testimonies from former fighters is not an attempt to create a “true” history of the civil war, but to expand the historical record, and raise new issues for public reflection and debate. The former fighters who appear in the videos I analyze live in the midst of Lebanese society as mothers, fathers, friends, neighbors, unemployed veterans, and Members of Parliament. Through the collection of their testimonies, the differences and similarities between their narratives are presented to the video public for analysis and reflection. Some acknowledge regret, some account the details of atrocities they saw or perpetrated, some explain their motivations for fighting, some denounce the political leaders, and some give voice to ongoing hatred. Due to the nature and complexity of these issues, the moral and political space established by the video testimonies is not produced simply through the evocation of sympathy, but also of anger, sadness, and sometimes disgust. I argue that through a combination of framing and context, the public mobilized around these testimonies is a deliberative one, which is called upon to reckon with the fighters on the screen, as well as the larger issues raised by their narratives.

Women on Screen and Stage

The first set of testimonies I will analyze were collected by Sahar Assaf. In 2008, she interviewed seven women fighters from the civil war, and combined four of their testimonies in a documentary film entitled *likayy takun faqat dhikra ... nisa' muqatilat (So it will only be a Memory ... Women Fighters)*.⁵ As she explains it, the point of the film was to show “the absurdity of war, and to sensitize the public to the psychosocial needs of ex-combatants.” In a personal conversation, she told me that by selecting certain parts of their stories, she “wanted the audience to see how their stories are connected, to love them, to *not* judge them, and to learn

⁵ Assaf made this film as part of her professional MA studies in “Psychosocial Animation in War-torn Societies” with the International Organization of Migration and the Lebanese University.

from their experience.” She considered this to be an important undertaking because when the civil war came to an end, its fighters became invisible, and their needs, concerns, thoughts, and aspirations were not taken into account. While true for men as well as women, she stressed that women fighters, in particular, were invisible both during and after the war. Through the making of this documentary, she wanted the public to understand their needs and concerns, and to feel compassion for them, but also to learn from them.

The film is split into five thematic sections, each of which contains segments from the four individual interviews. This framing highlights the similarities between the women’s stories, instead of their differences. One of the most important themes to Assaf was the conditions that led the women to pick up arms. As she explained:

The experiences, circumstances, and opinions of the women were usually consistent with each other. When speaking about the conditions that led to their participation in the armed conflict, they all narrate how they engaged in the fighting at an early age, 14 to 17. They all woke up to a childhood haunted by war and displacement. There was always a man (mainly the father) that influenced the women in the early stage of their lives and later in their choice to fight. They all went to war to defend their families, their lands, and their existence in it. Although they were fighting against each other, the title of their cause (*qadiyya*) was the same: Lebanon. They all fought for Lebanon, or so they thought. Without them naming their enemy, or me asking them who the ‘other’ was, all of the stories I heard blended into one.

The similarities in their narratives were most apparent when the women discussed their memories from the war. This was the most emotional segment of the film, when all four women expressed the hold that certain painful memories still have on them, both in their words and in their bodies. For example, one tells the story of a battle in which one of her friends was killed. Their unit was positioned inside a building that came under rocket attack, and he fell on top of her, dying almost instantly. As she is telling the story, her eyes fill with tears and she asks to stop for a moment. When she resumes, she says:

When you are speaking, you feel the things you see in front of you. I used to shoot, yes, but I never saw the face. I used to see a stranger who was attacking me, and I am defending myself, but to distinguish faces and ... no. The reaction came later. After a month or so, when I became aware of my injury, because I was injured then, I could not sleep at night. Because when you remember how your friend looked when he was injured, and when you know how he was before, you really feel hurt. I cannot forget it. It is not that I haven't seen this before, I saw it a lot, but I was really touched that time because he was, he was mutilated.

Another shares an equally painful memory, which she described as “a scene I won't forget all of my life.” She recounts going to the site of the Karantina massacre,⁶ and seeing the dead bodies being piled inside plastic bags. She broke off, saying “there are many things you hide in your memory, you repress it. But when a small incident brings it up then you feel a huge sadness.” Then, she asked, “why does this mother who has given birth and has raised a child have to receive her son in a plastic bag? What is this great cause that permitted us to kill each other in this way?”

Although differences are already apparent in this segment, with one woman mourning the loss of her comrade, and the other victims of a massacre, they become more pronounced when the women are asked if they would be willing to pick up arms in the future. One admits, “It is not all finished yet. Bit by bit the hatred is diminishing, but it is not finished for me.” Two acknowledge that they would be willing to pick up arms against an external enemy, but would never pick up arms in an internal war again. One of them admits, “it is that time that I regret. I regret it.” The other is more ambivalent about the notion of regret. She says she is willing to “forgive every Lebanese who fought while thinking that he was defending his country, like I was doing,” but emphasizes that “the ex-militant needs to be understood, to respect his cause, and to respect what he did, and not to attack him instantly. ‘Oh, you killed and you do not care, you are

⁶ The Karantina massacre occurred on January 18, 1976. It took place in a predominantly Muslim neighborhood in Christian east Beirut inhabited by Kurds, Syrians and Palestinians, which was attacked by the Lebanese Christian militias, resulting in the deaths of approximately 1,000-1,500 people.

a criminal.”” The fourth woman takes a much more critical attitude towards the decision to pick up arms. She states:

The worst thing in one’s life is when people choose war. The war was imposed on us. We did not choose it. But the sidetracks we went in later were the biggest mistake in our lives. We should get rid of the slogan ‘we sacrifice our blood and soul for you.’ Who is he? Is he God? Who is he? Let him give me so that I can give him. Let him give me security, dignity, independence so that I can give him my vote. I do not want to give him my life. My vote only. The politician pushes you to sacrifice your life, but when you fall, he will never help you. When you are injured and you are paralyzed, he will drop by once or twice and he will pat your shoulder and take a picture with you to prove his visit. But your daily life, he can’t do anything about it. He apologizes? He can’t because many will become like you.

She makes clear that she has let go of her former cause and loyalties to political leaders, and wants to see a new type of society be established in Lebanon, free of the forms of allegiance that led to war. She ends the documentary, saying: “You say I want to live with you, but you are holding the weapon. But I am holding weapons because I want to defend myself. But I can drop my arms, if you drop your coalitions that put you against me. I can drop my weapons. Drop your weapons, and let’s talk with each other.”

Despite such differences, the main focus of the film is on the psycho-social effects of war on the lives of all four women. Their testimonies reveal that they were largely abandoned after the war ended, without education, jobs, friends, or family support. Assaf wants to stress that former fighters cannot simply be “thrown to the edge of society.” They need to be provided jobs, psychological counseling, and social support, and society has a duty to embrace them and listen to their stories. She hopes their stories will serve as a wake-up call to “those youngsters who rush into the streets with their weapons whenever there is a political conflict today,” thinking “the war game is fun, powerful, and exciting.” She believes that the women have lessons for the younger generation. Although they all made the choice to pick up arms, and some of them seem to have

enjoyed certain aspects of the war, the film stresses that they were manipulated into fighting and later abandoned by the political leaders, who will do the same to others.

This film was screened to the public in several venues, and continues to be shown in Lebanon and abroad.⁷ One of these showings was as part of a larger film series entitled *Confronting Memories*, which was organized by UMAM D&R to run in conjunction with the private workshops on transitional justice. As the title reveals, it was envisioned as a means to confront Lebanese with their violent past, and to stimulate discussion on the issues being addressed in the private workshops. After each film screening, a member of the UMAM D&R staff moderated a discussion amongst the audience members on the film and the larger issues it raised. *So It Will Only Be a Memory* was shown in January 2009, and the women featured in the documentary were invited to attend the screening and answer questions from the audience in the discussion period that followed. Three of the women accepted the invitation, along with a former militia leader who I will discuss in more detail below, Assaad Chaftari. After the screening, many audience members thanked the women for sharing their stories, saying that it took a lot of courage to come forward. After some time, someone asked if they regretted their involvement in the war. While two of the women admitted that they did, the woman who asked for her cause to be respected in the documentary did not say that she regretted her decision to fight. She said that her “community was being threatened,” and that she did not regret the decision to take up arms to defend it. At this point, a heated argument developed, and audience members began grabbing for the microphone in order to condemn her stance. They said that she represented the worst aspect of the conflicts. Instead of rejecting violence, she was willing to blindly follow the leaders into war. Chaftari tried to reason with the irate audience members, explaining that at the time it

⁷ The film was used as the basis for a full-length documentary produced by Al-Jazeera entitled, “Lebanon’s Women Warriors.” The Al-Jazeera film featured the testimonies of several of the same women shown in this documentary.

was very “difficult to know right from wrong.” However, this only further antagonized the situation because they said that she should know the difference by now, and admit that she was misled. Without people like her coming forward and admitting their mistakes, they said the younger generations would repeat the same mistakes.

In a conversation I had with Chaftari later, he said it was as if the women “were in a tribunal and they were going to be condemned.” He later discovered that the woman who didn’t express regret was still thinking about whether or not she was sorry. Because the audience was demanding that she answer one way or another, she wasn’t given the chance to explain any of this to them. He told me that she didn’t take part in any of the internal fighting, and was on the front line, fighting like any army. In his words, she “only shot at people wearing green and attacking.” As we were talking, the conversation slowly shifted to the responsibility of the community. He said, “not everyone who took up a gun or took part in the war was responsible for the massacres, but yet while these massacres occurred, no one inside the communities said that what they were doing was wrong. They accepted what was being done. Of course, when militias are ruling, you don't dare raise your voice, but even the leaders of the communities remained silent.” He said that the community was “like a factory producing ideas in the heads of those who were in the streets.” But many other people I talked to during my fieldwork disputed this idea. They repeatedly told me that the militias ruled through terror, making it not just difficult, but impossible to speak out. They would often become very upset when they heard such arguments being put forward, arguing that the failure to speak out cannot be equated with support for what was going on. Yet, none of these topics came up in the public conversation that followed the screening, nor did the needs of the fighters, which was what Assaf had hoped to highlight. Far from what she had envisioned, this shows the importance of the screening context.

The fighters entered the context already mediated. They did not transmit their testimonies directly to the audience, but through the edited medium of the documentary. This gave the power of speech and judgment to those in the audience, who came to the screening prepared to “confront” the memories of war and violence with which they were presented. In another confrontation staged between a former militia fighter and a live audience, the discussion session began with the question: “should we accept him?” This seemed to be the unstated question at the heart of the conversation with the three women, and of the next documentary I will analyze.

Men on Screen and in Print

In this section, I will examine a set of testimonies collected by Loqman Slim and Monika Borgmann, the co-founders of UMAM Documentation and Research. UMAM D&R was established in 2004, after Slim and Borgmann made *Massakre*, a documentary that portrays the personal testimonies of six militia fighters involved in the 1982 massacre at the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian refugee camps.⁸ When the German-Lebanese couple was trying to corroborate the information they had collected from the former combatants, they realized that there was no official archive relating to the civil war. In order to address this absence, they founded UMAM D&R, which has two goals: first, to build a public archive on Lebanese history with a special focus on the civil war and, second, to host cultural events, encounters, and discussions on issues related to civil violence and war memories. Slim and Borgmann see the conspicuous absence of a national archive relating to the civil war as proof that “the very idea of dealing with the past is still fighting to impose its legitimacy” in Lebanon. They contend that “the pool of conflicting memories that have their roots in this past” are continuously updated by cyclic disturbances in

⁸ The Sabra and Shatila massacre took place between September 16 and September 18, 1982. While the camps were surrounded by the Israeli Defense Force, thousands of Palestinian and Lebanese civilians were killed by Christian Phalangists. On December 16, 1982, the United Nations General Assembly condemned the massacre and declared it to be an act of genocide.

the country, fostering further distance, misunderstanding, and divisiveness. In order to neutralize the “potent force” of memory, they argue that, “Lebanon must urgently begin the painful yet essential task of truth seeking and public truth-telling.” This is the goal of UMAM D&R, which “aims to preserve, examine, and debate the memories of civil violence as well as to provide a platform for public access to, and exchange of such memories.”⁹ One of the ways it attempts to accomplish these goals is through the production and public screening of video testimonies related to the civil war. Borgmann and Slim insist on the importance of video, preferring it to the medium of audio not only because it enables the audience to see and react to the speaking subject on screen, but also because it makes possible the formation of a viewing public to watch and discuss the testimonies. They believe that such resources “represent the keys to building Lebanon’s future through historical and political self-analysis, understanding national and individual identity formation, acknowledging and recognizing responsibility and blame, and eventually achieving reconciliation without resorting to further violence.”

Since making *Massakre*, Slim and Borgmann have continued collecting testimonies from former fighters with a broad range of backgrounds, allegiances, and points of view. From these, they produced a second documentary entitled *awwaluha najwa ... wa akhiruha: arba‘ shahadat fi hurub ‘madiya’ (quduman)*,” which was translated as *In Place: Four Returnees from the Lebanese Civil Wars*.¹⁰ The film premiered at the Lebanese Film Festival in August 2009,¹¹ and was later screened in the Hangar, an interdisciplinary public space for artistic and cultural

⁹ <http://www.umam-dr.org/>

¹⁰ The title in English is different from its Arabic title. In Arabic, the title is closer to: “it’s beginning secrecy ... and it’s ending: four testimonies in ‘past’/continuing wars.”

¹¹ In addition to be shown in Lebanon, this film has been screened in film festivals around the world.

exchange managed by UMAM D&R in Haret Hreik, and in festivals around the world.¹² The documentary features interviews with four men who participated in Lebanon's wars. According to the press release, "the testimonies they offer are based on the different political sides they represent, the different episodes of the wars and the different levels of responsibility they held during the conflicts." These differences are the organizing theme of the documentary, which aims to problematize the "often thorny category of 'former fighters of the war'" by presenting the different reasons the men chose to fight, what they did in the war, and how they perceive the actions they took now. The press release states that their "narratives blur the typical black and white distinctions regarding the actions they took in shedding the blood of their opponents as well as other Lebanese." This not only makes possible a more nuanced analysis of the variations that exist between those who participated in the war, but I argue that it also enables the formation of a standard for evaluating the testimonies to emerge. As I will demonstrate below, this is accomplished through specific framing mechanisms, including the titles given to each testimony, the order in which the testimonies are arranged, and the questions that are asked of different fighters by the interviewer, Loqman Slim.

The documentary is organized into four chapters. The first chapter, *al-yawm a'tadhir* (Today I apologize), features a discussion with Assaad Chaftari. Chaftari was a senior intelligence official and head of the Lebanese Forces' security apparatus during the war. In January 2000, he published an apology letter, which the introductory text to this chapter describes as "a premiere in the history of Lebanon's wars." In the film, he reads the letter aloud, saying that he apologizes to "all the people I victimized, or who were my victims, whether they knew it or not, or if I knew them or not, whether it was directly, or through proxies." He also

¹² The Hangar was built in the 1950s and served as a warehouse until the 1970s. The building was deserted during the civil war, and remained unoccupied until 2004, when UMAM D&R converted it into a cultural center for film screenings, art exhibitions, and public discussions.

apologizes for all that he “did during the civil war in the name of Lebanon, or the Cause, or Christianity,” and “for thinking that my comrades and I were always right in the name of a Cause.” He then says, “I forgave, a long time ago, everyone who harmed me, my family, or my people, directly or indirectly, during the horrible civil war.” In his view, “this is the only way to be born again, prepared for the post-war period, a period of building and rebuilding, and most importantly, to atone for what was done in the war.” He asks people not to “think this stance is a sign of weakness. It’s a stance of responsibility.” He ends by saying, “I hope my call is understood as Lebanon’s only exit from its predicament so that people are purified of their hatreds, resentments, and sufferings of the past.” As the first chapter in the documentary, this sets the standard against which the rest of the testimonies can be evaluated. It establishes the value of individual responsibility and of admitting fault, but also the difficulty of doing so. In the discussion that followed his reading of the letter, Chaftari said, “believe me, it wasn’t easy. It’s very difficult to stand in front of the mirror and admit you were mistaken. I considered it more difficult than the war itself. It was more difficult than the entire war I was involved in.

Following this is a chapter entitled, *yawmiyyat al-khatf al-‘adi* (Diary of a Routine Kidnapping). It features the testimony of a man referred to only by his initials: A.Z. The introductory text to this chapter explains that A.Z. was a fighter and security officer in several Palestinian organizations and later in the Amal Movement, and it tells the viewer that he was not integrated into the security or administrative apparatuses of the state after the war ended. As a result, it states, “Today, A.Z. represents a typical unemployed ‘veteran’ of the Lebanese civil wars.” His precarious post-war position is highlighted, and made even more acute, when only the back of his body becomes visible on the screen.

Facing away from the camera, with his face hidden, Slim asks him to discuss the topic of kidnapping. He begins by explaining, “when I kidnapped people, I believed that I was saving one of my own from the other side. We didn’t kidnap to kill, hurt, or torture. It was our hostages in exchange for theirs.” Slim then asks him about the many people who were killed, rather than traded, and A.Z. tells him that only *al-amr* (the Command) had the power to decide who would be exchanged, and who would be killed. Not getting the information he is after, Slim asks A.Z. to tell him about the things that he saw or heard, but didn’t do himself. After some hesitation, A.Z. admits that some people weren’t handed over to the Command. Some of the guys would stop people and, if they were Christian, kill them and dump their bodies. Slim urges him to go on, giving rise to the following exchange:

L.S. How did they kill them?

A.Z. They shot them and threw them in garbage dumps. I mean, it was easy for them. Without any reason, only because of his ID, because he was Christian.

L.S. Tell me more. How did they kill?

A.Z. They’d throw him against the wall and shoot him.

L.S. Were there other ways of killing?

A.Z. Other than shooting, no. At least to my knowledge. It only took a few bullets.

L.S. He was killed. Then what?

A.Z. They’d dump him in the garbage.

L.S. There weren’t any garbage men at that point.

A.Z. They used to dump him somewhere. They’d get rid of him. Not necessarily in the garbage, but somewhere. That was it.

L.S. Do you remember places where people were dumped?

A.Z. In Barbir.

L.S. Where?

A.Z. Near the Barbir Bridge. There, and down by the Holiday Inn as well. The guys used to dump bodies there.

L.S. Where else?

A.Z. Along the Kafaat demarcation line.

L.S. Near where exactly?

A.Z. In no man’s land.

L.S. What did you move the body in? A Jeep?

A.Z. No. They’d take the person there alive for execution. They didn’t bother or tire themselves. Dragging a corpse around is too much trouble. Once we had a case during an internal fight between Amal and the PSP. We were interrogating

somebody. Suddenly, one of our guys woke up. He knew what a bastard our captive was. He glared at him, pulled his gun out right in front of us, and shot him in the head. Shot him in the head. He died on the spot. We weren't upset because he killed him. We were upset because he killed him inside our premises. We could have killed him elsewhere. Why here? It's only trouble. It was only a burden. Killing him elsewhere is less of a hassle. You don't bother. Moving a corpse is annoying, messy, and bloody. This is what we were worried about. This happened during internal fighting, not between East and West Beirut. So, we had to drag the corpse and dump it somewhere.

This exchange brings the brutal violence of the war into view, and it also makes possible the collection of valuable information on the locations where bodies may be located, and how they were killed. Through the collection of such testimonies, UMAM D&R has been able to create a map of all the potential mass gravesites in the country, which is being used to support the legal efforts described in the last chapter.¹³ As the interview continues, Slim asks A.Z. how he feels about the suffering he caused others, and about whether he would be willing to do anything to help them:

L.S. Do you think about those who were kidnapped and didn't come home?

A.Z. It was a period I'm really sorry for because today I'm convinced it's wrong. Whoever it is should come home. Whatever he's done, he has to come back home. I'm sorry. But I don't regret it because there's nothing I can do.

L.S. If you might have information that could help a family to learn the whereabouts of a lost one ...

A.Z. Yes, sure I would help, if it's still possible, I would help.

L.S. I have one last question. How many kidnapped didn't come back?

A.Z. That requires statistics ... it requires statistics. For those who haven't come home, I don't think even superpowers can give that answer.

Despite the fact that he doesn't regret his actions, which include kidnapping, torture, and possibly murder, A.Z. acknowledges that he is sorry for the pain he caused and now sees that it was wrong. While he is by no means a figure with whom most Lebanese could identify, his testimony confronts the viewer with the violent and bloody realities of the war from the

¹³ These maps are now being used by Amnesty International, the International Center for Transitional Justice, and other international organizations to advocate for the excavation of mass graves, and to prove that crimes against humanity were perpetrated in Lebanon.

standpoint of someone who participated in the violence, and is now willing to talk about what he witnessed. This presents the audience with the figure of a reformed fighter. Although he often shirks direct responsibility in his narrative, the very fact that he is willing to speak truthfully establishes him as a figure that has separated himself from the past and is willing to make amends for his past actions, setting up an important contrast against which the next two testimonies can be evaluated.

The next chapter, entitled *lata sa'atu mandam* (Regret is not Enough), features the testimony of Elias Atallah. Atallah was a senior member of the Lebanese Communist Party military apparatus during the war, and also served as a Member of Parliament from 2005 until 2009.¹⁴ In his testimony, he distances himself from the ruthless sectarian violence that characterized A.Z.'s testimony, and marred some of the worst parts of the war. As he explains it:

I entered the war, but always, always, always I distanced myself from what I was doing. It really troubled me to see faces because then I couldn't kill. Shelling from a distance is easy, but seeing a face would paralyze me. It was impossible to kill. Sometimes you need to erase faces from your memory so that you can continue fighting. You erase faces. You depersonalize the other. Until you forget those you know. That's how I could fight. It's how the fighting drags you in. Of course, there are convictions in the war. I also had convictions. I had the conviction that the war could create changes, that it would achieve the goals I was striving for. I realized too late that war was not the right way, and even called into question most of its goals.

Through this narrative framing, he establishes himself as a moral figure who was dragged into the war by his political ideals, not by an enthusiasm for violence. Not only was his participation motivated by higher convictions, but it was also limited to shelling, which he establishes as being on a different order from the brutal violence of those who "killed with their hands."

When he is asked if he regrets his actions, Atallah responds, "I don't like the notion of regret. I don't even like the word. I prefer the phrase 'lessons learned.' It's harsher than regret."

¹⁴ In 2004, he helped to form a reformist offshoot of the Lebanese Communist Party called the Democratic Left Movement, which is the party he represented in Parliament from 2005-2009.

For him, “regret is not enough. You need a greater punishment. You need to go beyond remorse. You need to learn.” This position shares much in common with the one proposed by Frangieh at the beginning of this chapter. When Slim tries to push him on the issue of individual responsibility, he also takes a similar position, saying: “I am convinced that most Lebanese participated in the war. Whether by bearing arms, or remaining silent, or standing on the balcony, or standing on the sidelines, all participated in their own way.” With the threat of a new war on the horizon, he then went on: “We have now to resist the return of violence and civil war. If anybody can do something now, let him act. Otherwise, he’ll be unforgiven. No one is justified in remaining silent, even if acting makes them the first victim.” The similarities between Atallah and Frangieh’s statements are striking. Atallah does not engage in the difficult task of truth telling, and he doesn’t accept personal responsibility. While he may not speak about violence in the same cold and detached manner as A.Z., or be responsible for killing anyone with his hands, this creates a figure of the politician that stands out against the previous two.

This final chapter is entitled *akrah bi arba’* (I Hate Times 4). It presents the testimony of a fighter referred to only as M.H. According to the text introducing his testimony, M.H. fought with the Amal Movement, but “his war disabilities forced him to retire prematurely and resentfully.” In the video, he appears with a ski mask over his face, and a cane between his legs.

In the beginning of his testimony, a great deal of time and attention is paid to how old M.H. was when he began military training. After Slim finally establishes that he was 12 years old, he is asked why he decided to take up arms. He explained, “We [the Shi’a] were really humiliated. How could you suffer in silence? Your existence was at stake, your very existence. You want to live, after all. This forces you to carry arms, there is no other way. Your existence is at stake.” When this explanation is placed in relation to the one articulated by Atallah, the

contrast becomes immediately apparent. Fighters such as M.H. were motivated to enter the war not by political ideals, but by the idea that they had to defend their families, their communities, and their very existence. M.H. is later asked to describe his experiences in the War of the Camps,¹⁵ at which point the consequences of this discourse are made clear. After describing the injuries he sustained in the battles, which were fought in the Palestinian refugee camps, Slim says, “I feel you’re not telling me everything,” eventually leading to the following exchange:

L.S. Did you ever think that inside the camps there were not only fighters?

M.H. Look, most of the civilians left. In Shatila, there were no civilians. There were only the fighters. And if there were civilians left, there were very few. You could count them on your fingers. But there were civilians in Bourj al-Barajneh. There were civilians. But not a lot of them, only some families. The majority were fighters.

L.S. But I’m asking you ...

M.H. Me? Did I think there were civilians? So what if there were civilians? They were killing our civilians, they might kill my mother, my sister, my neighbor, my people. Even if there were civilians, it didn’t matter. Sometimes they’d tell us not to fire, that there were civilians. But this was war. War. The guy in front was your enemy. If I’m his enemy, then he is mine. So what if there were civilians? How would it matter? He hates me. He may kill me, may slaughter me.

The ease with which he can justify the killing of civilians serves not only as a picture of the horrors that fear based narratives can breed, but also as an indictment of the system that gave rise to them. While M.H. could be viewed as an example of the uneducated, backward militiaman analyzed by Hourani in feature films, the initial framing of the testimony places his actions inside a larger system, showing that he was only a child when he began fighting.

However, it is also made clear that his way of thinking has not changed. After discussing the War of the Camps, he is asked to recount his second injury, which he sustained in the War of

¹⁵ The War of the Camps was fought in 1985-1986, when the Palestinian refugee camps were attacked by the Amal Movement. According to M.H., the Palestinians posed a real danger to the Shi’a. As he explains it, “They went out of their camps to shoot at civilians. They shot at civilians, even at old women and young children. They wanted to regain their status in Lebanon, like before ‘82. We didn’t accept that. We prepared ourselves and attacked them in the camps.”

the Brothers, fought between Hizbollah and Amal.¹⁶ This injury left him partially paralyzed and blind, and he is asked how he feels about Hizbollah now. He ends the documentary saying, “Look, let me tell you something. We may share political objectives today, but when it comes to me personally, I hate four things in life, and I’m free to hate whatever I want. Four things: paralysis, blindness, Hizbollah, and the Palestinians.” This final statement helps to create a picture of M.H. as a person who was raised in a culture of violence, and still lives a life consumed by blame, hatred and resentment, which not only prevents him from taking any responsibility for his actions, but also from even seeing them as wrong.

When these testimonies are combined, they highlight the variations that exist between the former fighters, not only through the level of remorse they express, but also through their position in the militia hierarchy, and their positions in society now. Together, these variations serve to establish a new figure against which the moral and political community can be performed. It is not inconsequential that this figure is personified by means of the testimony of a political leader, Elias Atallah. Although M.K.’s testimony was the most vicious and hate-filled account, he is also the most damaged, physically and psychologically, and the most disenfranchised, socially and politically, of the fighters presented. As such, he also serves as an indictment against the political leaders who used and abandoned him. In one way or another, all of the testimonies draw attention to the role that political leaders played in planning, directing, and mobilizing support for the battles, massacres, liquidations, and disappearances detailed by everyone except for Atallah, or to the way fighters like A.Z. and M.K. were abandoned after the war. In the editing of the testimonies, Slim and Borgmann are careful to include segments that draw attention to the systems of command, and to the ways many of the fighters were drawn into the war as children, and later abandoned by the political leaders. This gives rise to a figure of the

¹⁶ The War of the Brothers was fought between Hizbollah and Amal in Beirut in early 1988.

former fighter as both victim and victimizer. While the crimes committed by the fighters are not ignored, and could even be said to be hyper-emphasized, fighters like M.K. and A.Z. are also presented as victims of social and political manipulation.

One of the most interesting parts of M.H.'s testimony was a statement that he made about the camera. After being pushed by Slim to tell him more, he says:

Well, cameras are frightening. Even during the battles, if we'd see a journalist with a camera, we'd hassle and beat him up. I don't know, cameras are frightening. We don't like them. Fighters don't like being filmed. Look, I may tell you everything. You can take notes, or use a computer. I'd tell you everything, tell you things. But I don't like cameras, I don't like pictures. I don't like talking to the camera. I don't know, it's scary. When we saw journalists or TV crews coming to film, or even a normal camera, we would scare them away. Even a regular camera, not video. We'd scare them off. I might tell you everything, about the battles, the liquidations, everything. I might go into detail, but with this camera, I don't know.

The inclusion of this segment makes clear the power relationship forged between the fighter and the filmmaker. Susan Sontag has remarked, "there is something predatory in the act of taking a picture. To photograph people is to violate them, by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed" (1977: 14). M.H. seems to be aware of this, and doesn't want to give the power of his own symbolic possession to someone else. Yet, for some reason, he does. His testimony becomes part of the historical record, which can be viewed repeatedly, and itself becomes an object for debate and critique. However, what remains hidden is the filmmaker. We hear him speaking, but his image never appears on the screen. Drawing an analogy between photography and Michel Foucault's panoptical model of power relations, Christopher Pinney has commented, "the photographer is invisible behind his camera, while what he sees is rendered completely visible" (1992: 76). In this case, Slim remains invisible beyond the video camera,

serving as a hidden inquisitor who not only makes the former fighters, and their narratives, visible to the public, but also directs and edits the features of their visibility.

The implications of this would later become clear. In addition to collecting video testimonies from former fighters, UMAM D&R commissioned a statistics firm to conduct a survey of former fighters in September 2008. The sample population was comprised of even numbers of combatants from both “camps,” who were asked why they had chosen to fight and how they now perceive the actions they took during the war. The results were first publicized in a limited edition work given to the attendees of the fourth workshop on justice mechanisms in October 2008, and the second edition was published in a book entitled, *bi al-ruh bi al-dam* (with blood and soul). On its website, UMAM D&R announced the publication of the book with the following text:

Contrary to the commonly held notion that the war was waged by the few who sabotaged the lives of the many, a high ranking veteran of the Lebanese war, one who eventually became a member of the Lebanese parliament, Elias Atallah, made the following comments while standing before a camera: “I believe that most Lebanese participated in the war. Some had machine guns in their hands... others participated silently... some participated while standing on their balconies. What I mean is that while the level of participation varied, participation itself was never an issue.”

Obviously, this one-time fighter was referring to moral responsibility rather than direct participation. But by extension, it may be that this veteran was attempting to broaden the scope of responsibility typically recognized in Lebanon in order to shift the focus then being placed on his involvement in the war and that of his peers. Nevertheless, while some played verbal, moral and even academic roles in the conflict, others gave their very “blood and souls.” They fought To the Death.

After capturing Attalah’s words on film, they became possible to reference, and condemn. The fact that he was willing to say “before a camera” that all Lebanese participated in the war is used as evidence that he is trying to shirk responsibility for his own direct participation. However, what is worse is that he is willing to do so in front of a camera, which is implied to mean that he

is not ashamed or embarrassed to make this statement, and is even willing to have it become a part of the historical record. Interestingly, this makes it possible for UMAM D&R to contest his claim, drawing a clear distinction between moral responsibility and direct participation. They define the line between the two not by those who fought, or killed, but by those who gave their “blood and souls.” This draws attention to the role of political loyalties and ideologies in mobilizing the bloodshed, but the critique transcends religious and political divisions, establishing the larger social and political order as the problem, not individual fighters.

Testimony and Transitional Justice

When these testimonies were presented at the workshop on amnesties and prosecutions,¹⁷ the international experts remarked on the legal and historical information they contained, but did not say much more. In the transitional justice framework, this form of public testimony is not considered to be appropriate for “perpetrators.” While victims are encouraged to speak about their suffering, the testimonies of perpetrators are to be directed at a judicial or semi-judicial authority capable of receiving and judging them. This can take place either in a truth commission or in a court of law. In truth commissions, low and mid-level perpetrators are expected to admit to what they did, and encouraged to apologize for it. In so doing, they are said to advance the truth about the past, accountability for past crimes, and public acknowledgment for victims, which allows for both individual and societal reconciliation (Payne 2004, 2008; Posel 2008). However, this is not considered to be enough. As one of the international experts at the justice workshop, David Tolbert,¹⁸ explained, when you have “atrocities and mass crimes to deal with, it

¹⁷ “A War Without Crimes? Amnesties and Prosecutions.” Fourth Workshop in the “What is To Be Done?: Lebanon’s War-Loaded Memory” series. Held in Beirut, Lebanon, October 18-19, 2008.

¹⁸ David Tolbert was the deputy chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the assistant secretary-general and special expert to the United Nations secretary-general on United Nations Assistance to the Khmer Rouge Trials, the assistant secretary-general of the

is essential that the most responsible individuals are prosecuted.” He said, “it is intuitively and morally what we do in our societies for addressing crimes. And it is really a key mechanism to address this problem of the past, and past atrocities. Without some element of prosecutions we cannot reckon with the past.” Although this was never explained further, he later connected this argument to the needs of victims and the concerns of reconciliation, stating:

Unless the victims collectively feel that justice has been done, there’s really no basis for reconciliation. So, we have to find ways to reach the victim... Allowing victims to tell their stories, and to have the feeling that the crimes that were committed against them and their loved ones and their families, were addressed is a very important aspect of international justice. Because just like it’s impossible to build a peaceful society on the basis of war criminals and power, and it’s an important aspect of justice to remove those who have committed those crimes, it is also an important aspect of justice to insure that the victims feel that justice has been done.

The concept of individual responsibility is essential to international justice, shifting the assignment of guilt from lower level combatants to high-ranking leaders and officials, who can be arrested and punished in the name of victims’ justice writ large (Clarke 2010, 2011). However, given the amnesty law that is in place, this is not yet possible in Lebanon. The only way that high-ranking leaders and officials could be held legally accountable would be in an international tribunal, but, according to the ICTJ, even the Special Tribunal is selective in its justice, and continues to marginalize victims (Wierda, Nassar, and Maalouf 2007).

After the workshop on justice mechanisms, the ICTJ decided to add a new, previously unscheduled, workshop to the series. It was held a month later, and focused on the practices and mechanisms of truth seeking.¹⁹ In his presentation, Howard Varney²⁰ explained that in cases

Special Tribunal for Lebanon STL), and was appointed president of the International Center for Transitional Justice in March of 2010.

¹⁹ “Truth Seeking Mechanisms.” Fifth Workshop in the “What is To Be Done?: Lebanon’s War-Loaded Memory” series. Held in Beirut, Lebanon, November 29-30, 2008.

when mass justice is not feasible, there is still a pressing need to combat impunity and “it is this void that truth commissions attempt to address.” The other expert, José Zalaquett,²¹ spoke about the importance of truth-seeking mechanisms to societal reconstruction, arguing that the past needs to be dealt with in order to prevent it from “hovering over the present and compromising the future.” He explained that truth-seeking mechanisms are not legal bodies. Rather, he described them as “moral, ethical bodies” that “take as their basis the establishment of a new moral common ground in society” through a reference to the common language of human rights. In order to “build a new society on the rubble of a breakdown,” he said that it is essential that the country come up with one official record of the truth that “documents the transgression of the specific values that are to become the new moral common ground of the society.” He told the participants that it was for this reason that truth commissions “focus not on who did what, but on the victims, on the rights of others as human beings that were transgressed.” What is arrived at is “a factual truth, not an interpretive truth. It is a truth that can be acknowledged by everyone,” and documents specific criminal violations. For example, how many people were killed, how many were disappeared, and how many were tortured. He ended by saying that “the acknowledgment of the factual truth paves the way towards reconciliation,” which depends on recognition.

²⁰ Howard Varney is the Director of the Truth-Seeking Program for the ICTJ. He has worked with the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation in East Timor, and the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

²¹ José Zalaquett is a Professor of Human Rights at the Law School of the University of Chile. After the 1973 coup in Chile, he headed the Human Rights Department of the Committee for Peace in Chile, later known as the Vicaría de la Solidaridad, a church-sponsored organization that provided legal assistance to thousands of political prisoners and their families in Chile. For this work, he was imprisoned and expelled from Chile in 1976 and not allowed to return until 1986. During his exile, he was closely involved with Amnesty International. In April 1990, he was appointed by the President of Chile to serve on the National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation, a body responsible for a report to the nation about the worst human rights abuses committed during the Pinochet regime (1973 to 1990). At present, he is a member of the International Commission of Jurists and of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Transparency and Public Probity, and a board member of the Chilean chapter of Transparency International. He was also a member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the OAS between 2000 and 2005, and president during the period 2003-2004.

What is apparent in all of these speeches is that transitional justice distinguishes between two clearly opposed groups: victims and perpetrators. It creates a dualistic moral vision that divides survivors of conflict into two categories: victims, who are entitled to justice and reparations, and perpetrators, who are subject to accountability measures and meted out punishment. While this dichotomy may make sense in postauthoritarian contexts, where ordinary citizens can be defined as the victims and state agents the perpetrators, many scholars argue that it doesn't fit the patterns of violence in many conflicts, where the divisions between victims and perpetrators are not always so clear (Theidon 2007; Finnstrom 2008; Shaw 2010; Rowland 2011). As the preceding discussion highlights, this is the case in Lebanon, where the line between victims and perpetrators is still very much under debate. Rather than address this, the international experts continually repeated how important it was for victims to speak. In the transitional justice framework, victims are given redress through public testimony. It is taken for granted that a natural connection exists between speaking, remembering and healing. According to Rosalind Shaw, the genealogy of this idea can be traced back to the development of confessional practices in the medieval church, Enlightenment concepts of the power of language to overcome violence, legal technologies of evidence and witnessing, psychoanalytic ideas about the dangers of repressed memories, and Western therapeutic concepts of the efficacy of verbally processing traumatic events. She argues that all of these strands converged in the development of transitional justice, which views the verbal recounting of memory as a transformative process for reclaiming peace and healing from past violence (2007a). The act of giving public testimony is said to enable individuals to speak about their trauma, inventory the effects it has had on their lives, and to receive redress through the public dissemination of their narratives to a community of empathetic witnesses who can offer acknowledgment and validation. Together, this is said to

bring about a cathartic release that will result in both individual and social healing, with victims becoming the foundation for moral and social reconstruction (Minow 2000; Borneman 2002; Hayner 2002; Humphrey 2003; Feldman 2004).

Despite the fact that the issue of victimhood is still up for debate in Lebanon, the moderator of the workshop told the participants, “when victims start speaking, there is a beginning point for something new.” In the next workshop, experts from South Africa and Iraq were brought in to demonstrate new strategies of bringing victims’ stories forward through public archiving projects.²² Not long afterwards, the ICTJ partnered with UMAM D&R and Saint Joseph University’s Modern Arab World Research Center to create a pilot project entitled “Talking between Generations: A Wartime Diary.”²³ The project was aimed at young people, who were taught how to collect oral histories relating to the war on video. In consultation with the Ministry of Education, the pilot project was implemented in twelve Beirut public and private schools beginning in February 2011. As it was explained to me in the planning stages, its aim was to develop awareness among the young generation about the negative repercussions of political violence, and to encourage them to learn from the pain and suffering of their elders. It was hoped that by engaging young people in a process aimed at capturing the stories of what life was like during the war, they would be able to understand the consequences of violence, and how it impacts the past, present, and future. It was also hoped that this would help to encourage a process of shared understanding that would focus attention on the struggles that all Lebanese faced during the war, instead of the political and military aspects.

²² Lest the Past Escapes Us.” Sixth Workshop in the “What is To Be Done?: Lebanon’s War-Loaded Memory” series. Held in Beirut, Lebanon, February 7-8, 2009.

²³ The pilot project is one part of a larger initiative funded by the European Union and the Embassy of Switzerland in Lebanon, entitled “Lebanon’s Unaddressed Legacy: The Missing and the Families’ Right to Know.”

In April 2012, the project was made public on a website entitled, *badna na 'aref* (we want to know).²⁴ The website presents more than 100 summaries of recorded interviews with people who experienced the war first-hand, along with complete access to many of the testimonies in their original form. The testimonies speak to all matter of subjects ranging from sharing electricity lines with neighbors, waiting in line for water, dodging sniper bullets on the way to school, waiting anxiously for children to come home, being confined to certain parts of the city or being forced to move to another one, losing loved ones in liquidations, assassinations, and massacres, and the overall feeling that, as one grandmother put it, “the beginning of the war was the end of the world.” The website was developed as an interactive resource that would be built upon over time, and open to anyone who wanted to interact with the testimonies. The website also offers an explanation of the pilot project, an overview of the training sessions conducted with the students and instructors involved, and a general profile of the participating schools and individuals. The ICTJ hopes that more schools will use the project within their own curricula, which will not only continue expanding the archive, but also foster more communication on the hardships inflicted by the civil war between the generations.

In this project, there is a noticeable shift not only in the types of stories being collected, but also in the people who are being asked to provide testimony, the method by which their testimonies are being collected, and the context in which they are presented. The focus in on the way the war affected ordinary people’s lives by disrupting their education, confining their movement to particular parts of the city, forcing them to sleep in bomb shelters and dodge sniper bullets, destroying their homes, and generally instilling fear into all aspects of daily life. The people collecting these stories are young people who didn’t experience the war first-hand. Through the act of collecting the testimonies from those who did, they can not only learn about

²⁴ <http://www.badnanaaref.org/index.php/home/2>

the war, but also forge a personal relationship to it through the transmission of memory and affect, which is considered one of the most significant aspects of traumatic testimony. One consequence of this is that UMAM D&R is moved to an advisory role. It is responsible for conducting training sessions, managing the website, and organizing public events, but not for collecting the testimonies. The act of collecting the testimonies is itself considered to be transformative, as well as their dissemination. It is also important that the testimonies are made available in their unedited form on the internet, making them available to anyone who wishes to view them. This expands the community of witnesses indefinitely, calling on those who view the testimonies not to deliberate over the issues they raise, but to empathize with the stories of pain and suffering they present.

Conclusion

The fighters' testimonies analyzed in this chapter serve as more than evidentiary proof that crimes were perpetrated during the Lebanese civil war. In the contemporary age, testimony has become a discursive genre that forges new moral and political subjects, and establishes new objects of moral concern and political engagement. As such, the power of these testimonies extends beyond the abuses they reveal, or the silences they expose. They are articulated by former fighters who have agreed to come forward and speak about their involvement in the war while being interviewed in front of a video camera. This makes it possible for their testimonies to be edited, and shown outside of their original context to unknown receiving publics. While human rights and humanitarian activists often use the narrative genre of video testimony in an attempt to create moral spaces through which ethical obligations to victims can be mobilized on the basis of a shared humanity, these testimonies elicit a more complicated set of sentiments. In her study of what she calls "unsettling accounts," Leigh Payne argues that instead of promoting

reconciliation, perpetrator testimonies disturb and provoke audiences, leading to contentious public debate over the narratives and interpretations put forward. Although such forms of public speech are often said to threaten peace and democracy, she advances a “conflictual dialogic approach to democracy in deeply divided societies” (2008: 3). While my concern is not with democracy building, I find her approach to perpetrator testimony useful for shedding light on the type of deliberative process being encouraged in Lebanon around the screening of video testimonies with former fighters. The testimonies are used to stimulate active public debate and contestation around specific notions of responsibility, agency, motivation, and intentionality, carrying the debate described at the beginning of this chapter to a wider audience.

In both sets of testimonies, a complex figure of the militia fighter as both victim and victimizer emerges. It is most prominent in relation to female fighters, who are presented as victims of an abusive patriarchal order, but it is also evident in relation to the lower-ranking male combatants, who were motivated to pick up arms by divisive religious and political narratives, and later abandoned after the war came to an end. This sets in place a larger social and political critique, serving as a call for increased social responsibility on behalf of the nation, and its citizens. This is also the site where transitional justice experts intervene, stressing the need for victims to begin speaking about their memories of pain and suffering from the war. While their efforts in this domain are still limited, what I wish to highlight is that they shift the focus onto issues of pain and suffering that can later be linked to specific human and humanitarian rights violations. Not only does this cut off the possibility for contentious debate around the issue of how to build a new moral and political community through an engagement with former fighters, but it also establishes as the site of concern the violation of specific human and humanitarian rights. This redirects the issue of collective responsibility to the needs and concerns of victims,

who are very clearly delineated from perpetrators. As the case of the relatives discussed in the last chapter demonstrates, once victimhood is defined in terms of legal violations, political activity can be channeled into the legal domain, and focused on issues of truth, accountability, and redress. In the next chapter, I return to the issue of history discussed in the first chapter. I examine how traumatic testimony is used to construct historical narratives of past violations that can be judged by those who are said to be beyond it, focusing again on what is excluded, in this case through the turn to history and memorialization.

CHAPTER FOUR

Memorializing the Ruins



Figure 4: The repaired Martyrs' Statue in downtown Beirut. Photo by Shea McManus.

Let the dead pass on. Let them depart and with them be gentle, “give them a little encouragement and help them build their little ship of death... like departing mariners, lovingly.”¹ These words resonate with the quietude of a model sociality that congregates around the dying like ship-builders do around the hulk of a ship; a sociality busied by preparations for a last voyage and therefore intimately concerned with the mortality of the living as with the lives of those it calls dead. More importantly, these words exude a sort of lucidity impossible to grasp or factually experience in societies that linger amidst the remnants of its own internecine violence; namely in societies that mourn in the presence of the corpse. To mourn in the presence of the corpse transposes living into a temporality governed by waiting and re-arranges social existence into a huddled living defined by uneasy contiguity.

Mounted on the wall of the exhibition space, this text comprises one element of Walid Sadek's installation piece, *Mourning in the Presence of the Corpse* (2007). On the ground is positioned a platform with stacks of papers arranged in neat piles, and hung high on the wall

¹ Quote from D.H Lawrence, “All Souls' Day.”

above is a tiny pencil drawing. The drawing strings together the story of a family funeral, Sigmund Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia," and an account of the removal of the Martyrs' Statue (pictured above) from downtown Beirut for restorations. According to Sadek, the installation aims to stimulate a conversation with the viewer on whether the work of mourning can be initiated in a society still living amidst the remnants and consequences of past violence or, as he puts it, "in the presence of the corpse."

Like Mroué's performance piece described in the first chapter, Sadek's installation doesn't provide the viewer with any answers. Instead, it attempts to stimulate thought and reflection on the work of mourning. This is initiated by Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia." In this essay, Freud lays out two responses to "the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one" (1917: 243). The first response is mourning. For Freud, this is the "normal" process of working through the experience of grief using the labors of memory. It requires that "each single one of the memories and expectations in which the libido is bound to the object is brought up and hypercathected, and the detachment of the libido is accomplished as a result" (245). This eventually enables the actual absence to be converted into an imaginary presence, and the emotional attachment to the lost person or ideal reinvested in a new object. Opposed to this is the "pathological" process that Freud called melancholia. Unlike the mourner, the melancholic remains sunken in the loss that he or she has experienced and, in a self-destructive loyalty to the lost person or object, internalizes it into his or her own ego. As a result, the lost object continues to exist, but as part of the melancholic subject, who can no longer clearly define the borders between his or her own subjectivity and the lost object that now exists within it.

By employing this framework as a means through which to reflect on the Lebanese postwar context, Sadek draws attention to three different ways of dealing with loss. One option is to shut it out, as the official discourses of the state have done. Another is to cling to it obsessively, and allow the past to take over the present as a form of melancholia. And the third is to acknowledge the loss, go through the process of mourning, and eventually reinvest emotional attachment in a new object or ideal. For Sadek, the latter is how loss is handled in a “model sociality,” where the dead are sent lovingly into the sea, and it becomes possible to live amongst the traces of the past without being bound to them. In Lebanon, this isn’t possible because the objects of unfinished violence linger on, unprocessed and unmourned. So, the question becomes how to begin the work of mourning and escape the melancholic present. It is in this regard that the memorial in Martyrs’ Square becomes important. In the installation, Freud’s “Mourning and Melancholia” is connected to a family funeral on the one side, and to the Martyrs’ Statue on the other, becoming a bridge through which to think about mourning and melancholia, and apply them to postwar Lebanon. Erected in 1960, the statue was built to commemorate Lebanese executed by the Ottomans in 1916 for their involvement in a nationalist uprising. During the civil war, the statue was badly damaged, and, in 1997, Hariri announced that it was going to be taken away for restorations. To many, the statue had become an unofficial memorial to the civil war, and a martyr itself. They didn’t want to see its bullet holes erased and covered over, like the rest of the historical references to the war in downtown Beirut. The decision was finally made to restore the statue, but to keep the bullets holes and the missing left arm on one of the figures. The repairs were finished in under a year, but the statue sat in an empty lot until 2004, when it was finally returned to the square in the midst of a standoff between Hariri and Lahoud. While it retained the structural damages sustained during the war, its pedestal was repaired, and the statue

was given a new finish, transforming it into a cleaned up version of what it once was (Makdisi 1997; Volk 2010). In the installation, Sadek uses this story to construct an opposition between the family funeral and the removal and restoration of the statue, raising the question of how to begin the work of mourning in a society where the dead are never laid to rest, but continually brought back to life, and manipulated for political uses in the present.

This is but one example of how the issue of memorialization is used to provoke thought and reflection in Lebanon. In this chapter, I explore how artists use the lack of an official museum or memorial of the war as a mode of critique through which to render the present problematic. These artists are not trying to build memorials or museums to the war,² but rather to draw attention to their absence. Through art installations and urban interventions staged in and around the central district of Beirut, they seek to highlight specific problems that they perceive to exist, related to this absence, and to provoke or stimulate new ways of thinking, acting, feeling, and remembering the war and its victims. I contend that their work is best conceptualized as a politics of the present. Like the artists whose work has been analyzed by Vikki Bell in Northern Ireland, Lebanese artists seek to bring the past into the present not “in terms of perceived exclusions nor with reference to a past that cannot or will not be erased, but in terms of the present’s inability to be conceived of through a linear conception of time” (2011: 326). While the artists she examines in Northern Ireland “explore the complex temporalities of a present self-consciously attempting to narrate itself away from the present” (326), suggesting that “the task of dealing with the past is flawed wherever the past is conceived of as a history that can be rendered present to be judged by subjects who are thereby placed beyond it” (327), I suggest that artists in Lebanon are endeavoring to explore the complex temporalities of a present self-consciously

² There is one project underway to construct a memorial to the war’s victims. It is being organized by Memory for the Future, but has been in the planning stages since 2005, and has not yet seen any progress.

ignoring a certain aspect of the past. In other words, they are not bringing the past into the present as a means to challenge the war's historicity, but to stimulate new modes of being and remembering.

Peter Osborne has argued that all political struggles revolve around “struggles over the experience of time” (1995: 200). To examine the “politics of time” at work in Lebanon, I begin this chapter with a discussion of the linear conception of modern time and historicity, and the role of memorials and museums in narrating and mapping a nation's historical narrative. Then, I explore two projects that encourage reflection on the absence of such memorial structures in Lebanon: an anti-memorial to the victims of the war and an extended civil war museum in the streets and alleyways of Beirut. I show that these projects work to problematize the present, emphasizing the duty to mark and mourn the sites of memory related to the war both for the sake of its victims and for the next generation. Although certain aspects of these installations coincide with the “new” transitional justice paradigm for memorialization that I will also discuss in this chapter, they aim to provoke and unsettle memory as a means for engaging in the present. This is quite different from the goal of the “new” paradigm, which I argue is to contain the irruptive potential of memory in the present and future through a turn to history and a specific form of museumology. While not fitting its requirements in terms of memorialization, a heritage preservation and museum project is now underway in Beirut, with the support of international organizations such as the ICTJ. I will conclude with an investigation of this project, and a reflection on what this reveals about the larger politics of time at the heart of transitional justice.

Time, History and Memory

According to Reinhart Koselleck, a new experience of historicity and time emerged with the onset of modernity. Until the early eighteenth century, he argues that the future could only be

imagined as a continuation of the experienced past. However, an increasing break between experience and expectation began to take place in the eighteenth-century, leading to what he describes as the temporalization of history, or the idea that history occurred not in, but through, time (2004). This is what is now understood as the modern concept of time and historicity. In the modern conception of time, the past is not viewed as something that provides timeless lessons, but as a series of milestones and precedents against which to evaluate the present and the future. This notion of history played a key role in the modern production of the nation-state, and itself became a “sign of the modern” (Dirks 1990). History bound the nation together as a historical community with a common destiny, providing the constituent bases of a national identity and imaginary. As Andreas Huyssen has commented, “the main concern of nineteenth-century nation-states was to mobilize and monumentalize national and universal pasts so as to legitimize and give meaning to the present and to envision the future: culturally, politically, and socially” (Huyssen 2003: 2).

Nation-states built unified political identities by mobilizing historical narratives of a past marked by glory, triumph, and martyrdom. The representations of this national past were embodied in monolithic, didactic monuments that mapped out the story of a nation’s victories, triumphs, and ennobling events, honored its heroes and leaders, and glorified the martyrdom of those who gave their lives in its name. Built of masonry and bronze, these monuments functioned as the landmarks of the country’s remembered geography and history, anchoring memory in places past with symbolically coded representations that told the story of the nation throughout time (Young 1993; Gillis 1994; Johnson 1995; Winter 1995; Michalski 1998).³ These sites also provided a focus for the performance of rituals of communal remembrance in line with

³ Famous examples of this style of memorialization include the Arc de Triomphe in Paris, the Monument to the Battle of Nations in Leipzig, and the Cenotaph in London.

the historic past of the nation (Connerton 1989). According to Pierre Nora, this collapsed the continuous dimension of time into a set of key dates, locations, and events that he famously defined as “*lieux de mémoire*,” or “sites of memory” (1989). For Nora, memory is attached to sites that are concrete and physical, such as museums, memorials, monuments, and archives, as well as nonmaterial, such as celebrations, spectacles, and rituals. Taking France as his study, he discusses sites of memory ranging from the tricolor flag, the Republican calendar, the Marseillaise, public monuments, Larousse’s Grand Dictionnaire, the Louvre, and the French language itself, and shows that they were part of an institutional process of conservation and remembrance intimately linked to the process of nation-building.

While Nora bemoans the “conquest and eradication of memory by history” (8), the last quarter of the twentieth century has seen a “memory boom” (Winter 2000). Master historical narratives have increasingly been brought into question by social movements using memory as a redemptive discourse through which to speak back to history (Klein 2000). This has not only subverted totalizing varieties of historicism, but also blurred the divide between past and present, bringing the past into the present through the articulation of memories of abuse and trauma that remained painful and present, even after many generations, and demanded reparation (Booth 2006; Torpey 2006; Attwood 2008; Crapanzano 2011). With the “hypertrophy of memory” (Huyssen 2003), issues of memory have now become an essential part of public discourse and cultural life. Untold recent and not so recent pasts intervene in the present, giving voice to the anonymous, forgotten actors who had previously been silent or silenced on the margins of history. Articulating these claims are a host of politically-motivated artists, citizens groups, human rights activists, historians, archivists, and forensic anthropologists seeking to overcome the silences and omissions of history, and encourage social responsibility for the past. The labors

of these “memory workers” revive and make public memories of past abuse and trauma, bringing them into the present to create new historical narratives and demands (Labanyi 2001; Bennett 2005; Till 2005; Hoelscher 2008; Bell and Di Paolantonio 2009; Bonilla 2011). But they are not the only ones who are focused on the past. The rise in memory activism has been accompanied by a growing concern with acknowledging culpability for historic wrongs, and an escalation in official apologies for violations committed in the past (Barkan 2001; Sundar 2004; Hazan 2010).

In the case of Lebanon, I contend that artists seek not to bring attention to a historic injustice that will not be erased but, rather, to the erasure of history, and the denial of memory and mourning. This erasure is most visible in the urban landscape, where there is a notable lack of *lieux de mémoire* pertaining to the civil war. Most sites of memory related to violence, conflict, and division have either been painstakingly and faithfully restored to their pre-war appearance, or torn down and replaced by a pastiche of old architectural styles to recreate the feeling of pre-war Beirut. The entire downtown district was subjected to what Saree Makdisi describes as the spectacle of authenticity. He writes:

[H]istory here is not what actually happened, but what *looks like* it happened. In such usage, history itself has been fully absorbed into the visual field, and it has become the spectacle par excellence ... The spectacle here has assumed for itself, and hence has eliminated, the very function of time; it has taken on the tasks and duties of history: of a history cleansed not merely of pain, but of all kinds of other feelings as well; in short, it has produced a prosthetic history. In their place, new, prosthetic, feelings will be engineered to take the place of the old; new feelings to accompany this sense of spectacular history (2006: 212).

While historic buildings and archaeological ruins were reworked as objects of touristic consumption, the historic sites and structures related to the civil war were destroyed or left to lie dormant, in eminent danger of collapse. When combined with the absence of an official history, the refusal of many in the older generations to speak about the war, and the spectacularization of history in downtown Beirut, these sites of muted and confused history have no clear linear

historical narrative in which to be placed. But this doesn't mean that the memories of past pain and violence attached to them have been forgotten. As I will illustrate below, artists are endeavoring to reanimate the obscured sites of memory related to the war in and around downtown Beirut, finding new ways of bringing the memories attached to them into relationship with the political projects of the present. By no means limited to the two projects I describe below, I have chosen these projects because they self-consciously draw on the language of memorials and museums in the reanimation of particular sites of memory. For that reason, they provide a means through which to reflect on issues of time, memory, and history in Lebanon, which I will later connect to the work of transitional justice organizations in the country.

An Anti-Memorial to the War

The first project I wish to discuss was created by the Feel Collective, which describes itself as a “multi-disciplinary group of cultural activists working to infuse their social environment with new thinking patterns.”⁴ The Collective developed a contextual installation for Martyrs' Square (*sahat al-shuhada*),⁵ entitled *Silent Square*. The spokesperson for the Collective is Alfred Tarazi, a visual artist and graphic designer who grew up in Beirut during the 1980s. When I spoke to him, he explained that the Collective envisioned its installation as a way to call attention to the lack of a national memorial to the victims of the war, and as a demand that the authorities and citizens of Lebanon face up to “the duty to map and re-write the war through the names of the victims and to imagine a memorial to pay them a last tribute.” According to Tarazi, such initiatives are hindered by the “large degree of indifference within Lebanese society.” In his

⁴ The collective refers to itself in English. However, it is a play on words between “feel” in English and “fil” (elephant) in Arabic. There is a saying in Arabic, “you have a memory like an elephant,” which means that someone remembers everything. Taken together, this can be interpreted to mean that they are giving voice to an experience of being overwhelmed by both memory and emotion.

⁵ Martyrs' Square lies at the heart of downtown Beirut, and was the site of public demonstrations during the “Independence Intifada.” It has also become the final resting site for former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri, and those who died with him.

view, people in Lebanon don't care if their fellow citizens are killed, unless they are from the same religious or political community. And, even then, they rarely mourn their deaths. Instead, they celebrate and glorify them through grand martyr statues, and celebrations that often begin to resemble carnivals.

In an attempt to shock Lebanese out of their indifference for one another and encourage a new way of thinking, the Feel Collective designed what it termed an "anti-memorial." This connects the piece to a longer anti-memorial, or counter-memorial, tradition that emerged in West Germany during the 1980s. Anti-memorial makers aim to question the ethics and aesthetics of traditional memorials, which they accuse of closing off the meaning of historical events and displacing the work of memory. They argue that memory should not be petrified in monumental pieces of memorial art that aim to console viewers through redemptive interpretations of tragic events. The goal of their work "is not to console but to provoke; not to remain fixed but to change; not to be everlasting but to disappear; not to be ignored by its passersby but to demand interaction; not to remain pristine but to invite its own violation and desecration; not to accept graciously the burden of memory but to throw it back at the town's feet" (Young 1993: 30).

The idea for the Feel Collective's anti-memorial grew out of a project that the group designed after the assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri in 2005. Amidst the explosions, threats, fear, and ongoing assassinations that marked this period, Tarazi says that the walls of Beirut were adorned with posters of "martyred" leaders, much as they had been during the civil war. When this happens, he says, "people become immune" to the images. They stop paying attention to the posters, but they nonetheless reinforce old factional narratives and spatial divisions. The posters are "all over the city and every faction uses the same mode of representation." In response to the posters, which it saw as signs that the war was not yet part of the past, the Collective began

working on a project that would challenge people to think about the painful experience of death for ordinary victims. Instead of celebrating the country's leaders with honorific posters, it developed a mode of representation that would "denounce the atrocity of the crimes that had been committed." It did so through the creation of clay figures of human busts. In the busts, the artists attempted to capture "the moment of agony, the moment at which victims of wars, political assassinations and terrorism, gave through their tortured flesh their final breath." The Collective saw the busts as a way to break away from the traditional representation of martyrs and martyrdom. Unlike the posters, they "are not realistic representations of people. They are roughly executed busts whose main attributes are the holes of their eyes and mouth tearing apart the whiteness of the clay. They are not meant to represent the grandeur and sacrificial values of martyrdom, but the human suffering of the victims."

While it was making the busts, and hanging images of them around the city next to the martyr posters, tensions continued to escalate, and members of the Collective began to fear a return to war. As Tarazi explained, "The problem about the war in Lebanon is its recurrence, the re-emergence of violence every year or so. Violence is a social habit rooted in our society and it always seems a plausible option to resolve a political crisis." Viewing war as a problem endemic to Lebanese society, the Collective believed that the only way to disrupt the cycle of violence was to intervene in the culture. As a first step towards changing the culture of indifference, and encouraging people to feel concerned about the fate of their fellow citizens, it began to think about building a temporary memorial to commemorate all of the people who had died during the civil war. The memorial was designed for Martyrs' Square, a site chosen in order to "mark the history" of violence that had been erased. The Collective was discouraged by the way this site had been used after the Hariri assassination, and wanted to create a project that would fill the

space with representations of all of the nation's victims, who it asserted needed to be mourned appropriately. As Tarazi explained, it saw this as "a unique opportunity for that space to reabsorb its bloody history and project itself into a sustainable future."

The installation was designed to work on two spatial levels. On the ground level, two hundred thousand metal sticks would be placed throughout the square and in the surrounding area, representing the number of victims killed during the civil war. They would fill the surface area of the square, and function as indicators of the people who had died in the violence. Each stick would carry on its top a little piece of red cloth and a red LED light. The red light would only be activated after a name or photo of a victim was affixed to it, and it was given a name. The rods would be spaced evenly over the entire square, except in the center. The absence of rods in the center of the square was meant to draw people's attention to a large hole dug next to the Martyrs' statue. This area would form the center of the installation, and its underground level. Inside the hole, more than 2,000 white busts would "appear to be floating, stuck in a moment of everlasting agony." They would not be visible from the surface level of the square. Viewers would only see a descending ramp going into the ground. If they decided to go down the ramp, they would enter the hole and find themselves in the middle of an arena with thousands of screaming busts staring down at them from the spectator seats. This arrangement was designed to reverse the normal relationship between actor and spectator. As the brochure for the memorial explains, "the victims are no longer the actors whose agony can be witnessed through the media. In this arena, they are placed along a circular grid on different heights as if they were all spectators in an invisible theatre." The Collective envisioned the dug out hole as a mass grave. All the soil deterred to make the grave would be used to cover the current statue. For the duration of the installation, it would remain buried under the rubble of the past, and all that would be seen

is the expanse of sticks marking the dead. In the absence of this symbol, the brochure states, “the whole square becomes a large anti-monument to which any Lebanese could relate.”

The goal of the installation was to make history become tangible, to make it become a landscape, an experience, and an event. As Tarazi explained, “It is not a structure to be celebrated, it is a landscape to be immersed in.” The overwhelming quantity of metal rods was meant to create a disturbing optical illusion that would make people think about the number of people who had been killed in the war, and their relation to the site. However, audience members were also asked to do more; they were asked to engage themselves with the installation. The Collective originally planned to create a landscape of sticks that people would walk through and contemplate, but it realized that this would not challenge their apathy and indifference. As a result, it chose to involve people with the installation. It said that the mere action of deciding whether or not to go down the ramp, to step into the arena, or to appropriate a stick requires an active decision. In its view, this is something that is essential in the Lebanese context because it forces people to see that they have a choice. They can choose to forget, or they can choose to commemorate the people who have died, and remember.

Although *Silent Square* never came to fruition, the Feel Collective did employ many of the same ideas and concepts in an installation it staged in April 2011 entitled *In a Sea of Oblivion*. The installation was held in the Dome, a large, bullet-scarred, abandoned cement cinema near Martyrs’ Square. On each of the walls of the installation space, a grid of red crosses was printed to represent all those who died during the war, much like the sticks envisioned for the previous project. Transposed on top of the grid were black and white images from photographs taken during the civil war. The images displayed many of the horrors of the conflict, and the suffering experienced as a result. In one, a woman in a bloodstained t-shirt runs

screaming with dead bodies behind her, in another a woman wails and appears to be mourning the death of those behind her, and in yet another a group of militia youth stare out nonchalantly at those passing by. Visitors to the installation were asked to write the names of their friends and family members who died or disappeared in the war onto the red crosses, making this a temporary memorial to the victims of the war. In some of the rooms, the screaming busts were placed on the floor in the middle of the space and illuminated with bright white lights that drew out the shadows of their agony. In others, colorful beds of flowers were arranged to represent the spaces where mass graves might lie, but could be anywhere. Upstairs, a video was projected onto the huge, curving concrete screen of the old cinema. In it, the Dome was digitally transplanted on top of the sea outside of Beirut. On the beach, black hooded figures stare out over the waves with their backs to the viewer. Each figure is slowly swaying as if it is lost in a moment of mourning, and an eerie rumbling is playing in the background.



Figure 5: *In a Sea of Oblivion*, installation by the Feel Collective, exhibited in Beirut, April 2011.
Source: The Feel Collective.

In each of its projects, the Feel Collective aims to overwhelm audience members, surrounding them with the sensory experience of the number of people who were killed during the war. Instead of focusing on heroic martyrs, they center on victims, and emphasize the pain and suffering of the war through abstract and nameless figures. The photographs serve to link these abstract representations to images of the violent past, but even they are decontextualized. They have been cut out of their original frames and appear to be floating in space among the crosses and figures of the dead. When all of these elements are combined, they overwhelm the memory-laden space with a dizzying array of objects and images that privilege sensuous experience over narration. As a result, the past is experienced only as a “bloc of sensations” (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 164). Instead of creating a break between what has come before and the present, this highlights suffering as a timeless experience. It is precisely this experience that the Feel Collective seeks to intensify in order to provoke a shift in the way people think about, and respond to, suffering and death in the present. Although it uses the language of anti-memorials, I suggest that these projects are better understood as artistic practices that endeavor to present the viewer with what Deleuze calls “sensuous signs” (1972: 164). These are signs that cannot be recognized or perceived through cognition. They act on the senses. According to Deleuze, bodies register the experiences that arise in response to these stimuli, but not on a conscious level. It is only when our mind considers the sensations that our body has registered that they reach what could be called the state of conscious thought. Deleuze considers it the task of art to produce signs that push us outside of our habits of perception and recognition, and argues that the act of thinking that emerges from this encounter is inherently creative, proceeding in response to the unexpected stimuli, not before. Because of the force of their intensity, he considers them “the genesis of the act of thinking within thought itself” (162), a form of thought

that “undergoes the pressure of signs and comes to life only in order to interpret them” (162). However, this does not quite work here. Not all engagements with art enable the free reign of such unstructured and nondetermined forms of thought. While there are not any specific memories or narratives being proposed, the Feel Collective is self-consciously trying to change the way Lebanese think, feel, and remember through its installations. As Brian Massumi has pointed out, “formed, qualified, situated perceptions and cognitions fulfilling functions of actual connection or blockage are the capture or closing of affect” (2002: 35). The installations created by the Collective stimulate affect, but they also direct it. This is why the reference to memorials is essential, focusing thought and feeling on the victims who need to be honored, named, and memorialized through an appeal to their spectres.

A Civil War Museum in Beirut

The second project I will examine is an urban intervention designed by Mirna Hamady. Unlike the members of the Feel Collective, Hamady did not experience the war first-hand. For her final year project as a student in the graphic design department at the American University of Beirut (AUB), she created a design installation in the streets and alleyways of Beirut, which she termed “an imaginary civil war museum.” Whenever she presents her project, she begins by explaining, “I am part of a postwar generation in Lebanon, but I will refer to my status first as a postmemory individual.” In the museum material, she cites the sociologist Marianne Hirsch as the first to term the concept of postmemory, which is described in the pamphlet as “a state where an individual is not directly immersed in the history of his/her elders yet is incapable of escaping its aftermath.” In her own writing, Hirsch states that “postmemory describes the relationship of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic, experiences that preceded their births but that were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own

right” (2008: 103). In her view, an affective link to the past is passed down between family members through memory, but the inheritors of this memory don’t have a direct connection to the past that it relates to, or to the community or society that experienced it. Hirsch argues that this creates both a sense of responsibility towards the past and a need for inclusion in the larger collectivity. She claims that most postmemory individuals address this through the production of scholarly or artistic work that “strives to *reactivate* and *reembody* more distant social/national and archival/cultural memorial structures by reinvesting them with resonant individual and familial forms of mediation and aesthetic expression” (111).

However, in Lebanon the more distant memorial structures have not been constructed, and thus cannot be reembodyed. On top of that, many in the postwar generation, such as Hamady, express frustration with the lack of memories handed down to them by their parents about the war. In personal conversations, Hamady, and others of similar age, told me that they find themselves searching both for the historical structures with which to understand the war and for the personal memories with which to connect to the past and to those who experienced it (see also Larkin 2010), which explains why Hamady describes herself as a postmemory individual. Many young people who did not live through the war find the battle-scarred city of Beirut as the only place where they can learn about its history. On her walks through the city in search of this history, Hamady wrote in her promotional material that she realized “the dichotomy of Beirut: a space torn between its marred facades and its renovated quarters. While some spaces still lurk in their violent past, others have effaced this layer of history.” As a result, she says that she found herself “clinging to the battered areas, opposing their demolition and promised facelifts.” Although the city “offers no national memorial or museum that embodies the memory of the 15

year civil strife,” she claims, “it is swamped with areas charged with narratives,” which she wants to preserve in order to save the only connection she has to the national past.

For her final project at AUB, she decided to call attention to the importance of these sites through the creation of an extended civil war museum in the city. When I spoke to her about the project, she emphasized that it was not a museum in the traditional sense. It was not embodied in a single building or monument, but encompassed the entire city. Her goal in creating the museum was to urge people to re-question the space around them, and to begin viewing it as an aspect of their history worth remembering. After choosing the museum sites, she placed pink directional signs throughout the city, guiding people to the sites she wanted to be remembered.⁶ On the signs, the words “*mathaf al-harb al-ahliyya*” (civil war museum) were printed, along with an arrow and a distance indicator to the nearest site. The museum was designed as a temporary installation that would stay up until people took the signs down. When she designed it, she wasn’t sure how people would respond, and her objective was simply to put the signs into the city so that people would see them and react how they saw fit. For those people who wanted to participate, they could follow the signs, and add to them. For those who preferred to forget, they could either tear the signs down or pass them by.

At each site, large posters were placed on a wall or building from which the site could be viewed. On the posters was printed a map of the museum, underneath which a note read: “This is an incomplete map. If you want to expand the civil war museum do not hesitate to add the corresponding markings to this map.” Hamady’s goal for the project was to encourage the interactive construction of a museum that would gradually expand further and further into the city, and be built by those who chose to interact with it, and not, as she told me, “by a cabinet

⁶ She chose the color pink because although each war faction was identified by a particular color, none of them used pink. This ensured that her project would not be identified with a specific faction.

minister of Member of Parliament.” The museum would memorialize the places that people wanted to remember, and tell the stories that anyone who wished to participate in the project associated with those places. In this way, she hoped the sites of the museum would turn into communal spaces of dialogue about the past through the sharing of narratives.



Figure 6: *Civil War Museum*, installation by the Mirna Hamady, exhibited in Beirut, May 2009.
Source: Mirna Hamady.

To begin the museum, Hamady chose three sites. One of these sites was the war-ravaged Holiday Inn, a site of heavy fighting during the first phase of the war (in the left corner of the picture above). On the poster, was a text written in her own voice that read:

The battered Holiday Inn building has always fascinated me. It was a solid reminder of the civil war, planted in the area I grew up in. My father tells me stories about his few nights on top of the building, in the hotel’s rotating restaurant. “While having my dinner I would see the entire city, from St. Simon all the way to Jounieh,” he would say.

While field researching one afternoon, I met a man who worked as a taxi driver around the Port area. He was a former militia fighter, who fought with “everyone.” “Who really fought in there,” I ask, “Was it only the Leftist parties?”

He replies: “Of course not ... they used to fight from room to room ... they also pushed each other off the building, from the top, all the way to the bottom.”

This is the image I cling to. I refuse to think of a 5-star restaurant on top of the building. To me it is crude battlefield where the loser would be flung into mid air. I plead for this image to be retained. Renovating the building would be equivalent to tearing it down: it is a physical remnant of the past I am attempting to know.

Unlike a traditional museum, which aims to educate visitors, Hamady’s exhibit narrates her own relation to the museum sites. Since she didn’t experience the war personally, this relation is mediated through the stories she has been told. When she presents them to the viewer, she makes a choice to retain the former fighter’s memory over her father’s. Then, she pleads for the structure to remain as a remnant of the past that she wants to know, but rarely has access to, because those in the government and people like her father chose to relegate memories of the war into what she calls “the realm of oblivion.”

In addition to drawing out memories attached to specific sites, the museum also attempted to create new spaces in order to elicit memories related to checkpoints, car bombs, and mass graves. All three of these issues were difficult to mark because there weren’t any physical traces to work with. As a result, Hamady decided to create signs that would designate and draw attention to absences. For the checkpoints, she created pink signs that read: “*qif hajiz*” (stop, checkpoint). She chose for the site of one of her interventions a street in the neighborhood where she had grown up. Drawing on another conversation with her father, she wrote in the text:

“What went on in our neighborhood? Tell me something you remember,” I would ask my father recurrently. “Too many things happened during the war, eventually you forget,” he would say. “So there were no militias here?” I knew the answer, but my provocations succeeded. “Well, you know the street where the Nawas travel agency is, right? Well, if you stood at the beginning of the street you would see three collinear checkpoints of three different militias.”

The image overwhelmed me. Whenever I would pass by the street, I would plant myself at the beginning of the street and imagine what it would have looked like,

20 years ago. It was an image I could not forget, the idea of marking space, dividing the city in such an orderly fashion while the country was in total chaos.

Using the pink signs, she marked the checkpoints, recreating the image of the street she had constructed in her head. This gave physical form to the memory she had been given, and enabled her to elicit others through the intervention they created. For the sites of car bombings, she created pink crime scene tape on which the words “*mawqa‘ infijar*” (site of an explosion) was written, and demarcated sites of former explosions. For mass graves, she designed large vinyl ground stickers. The placement of the stickers was not site specific because the locations of the mass graves are still not known. In large letters, the stickers asked: “*mawqa‘ maqbara jama‘iyya?*” (site of a mass grave?). Then, a small sentence underneath it read: “We walk over them lightly, and forget about them sometimes. But they are many.”

The aim of the project was to encourage a new way of relating to the traces of the war that still remain in the city, and of remembering and talking about the war. Cognitively, Hamady knows the war is over because she herself never experienced it, but she nonetheless relates to it as an overwhelming presence in the present, and she wants to be handed down memories that will help her to understand it. She looks to the urban landscape as a topography from which she can, as she describes it, “resurface a repressed layer of history,” and elicit new narratives. As Italo Calvino has written, “the city does not tell its own past, but contains it like the lines of a hand, written in the corners of streets, the gratings of the windows, the banisters of the steps, the antennae of the lightening rods, the poles of the flags, every segment marked in turn with scratches, indentations, scrolls” (1974: 11). As I see it, Hamady is attempting to revive the abandoned traces of the war, bringing the past into view in order to make it possible for new narratives on the war to come forward. Much like Walter Benjamin’s historian, she plays the role of a collector, rummaging around in the debris left by the past, and reassembling the fragments in

a new “constellation” (1997: 462). For Benjamin, the task of the historian is not to put the uprooted fragments of the past back into their context, but to decontextualize them, allowing new relationships to be created that render the present problematic through the “telescoping of the past through the present” (471). From the walls, buildings, and streets of Beirut, Hamady’s project draws the past into the present, and confronts those, like her father, who want to forget the war by highlighting its traces. But it also recontextualizes them, weaving a thematic spiral through the urban landscape that reanimates the ruins of the war, and adds new ones. She highlights the experiences of the war connected to battles, militias, checkpoints, car bombs, and mass killings, creating an alternate topography of memory, which she is urging people to not only remember, but valorize, as places worthy of being in a museum.

The “New” Memorial Paradigm

Due to their engagement with memorials and museums, both Tarazi and Hamady were invited to the workshop on memorialization organized by the ICTJ and UMAM D&R.⁷ At the workshop, a packet of background readings was distributed to participants as they entered the conference room. The majority of the articles chosen for inclusion were written by Louis Bickford, a founding staff member of the ICTJ, and the creator of its Memory, Museums, and Memorials program. In them, he maps out a new paradigm of commemoration appropriate for societies emerging from periods of violent conflict and state repression, which the ICTJ disseminated globally through a series of workshops it organized with the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience (ICSC).

⁷ “The War as Memorial and Monument.” Eighth Workshop in the “What is To Be Done?: Lebanon’s War-Loaded Memory” series. Held in Beirut, Lebanon, May 30-31, 2009.

In the opening speech to these workshops, entitled “The Power of Memorials,”⁸ Bickford explains that there has been a shift in the notion of the memorial over the last few decades, “a shift from a physical representation that celebrates the glories of the nation to one that increasingly focuses inward, and with a critical eye.” (2005: 1). He traces the origins of this new commemorative approach to the branch of Holocaust memorialization that sought to create a conversation about why the atrocity happened and were inspired by the imperative to make sure it never happened again. Since then, he argues that a new paradigm of memorialization has emerged that aims not to celebrate the nation, but to focus on the darker side of a nation’s past. In this “new” paradigm, memorials are expected to call attention to the injustices that have been committed, acknowledge those who died and suffered, and make visible the stories and sometimes the names and faces of the victims. In the wake of civil violence and political repression, the overall objective of this commemorative activity is to create a memorial landscape that honors victims of human rights abuses and gives voice to their suffering. Charles Taylor refers to such practices as strategies of “negative commemoration” (quoted in Posel 2008: 123), which he argues help to foster democratic inclusion by coming to terms with the injustices of the past and atoning for the moral violations of the past.

According to Bickford, this is necessary both to diminish feelings of victimization, injustice, and discrimination, and to establish a new collective memory for the nation that recognizes and acknowledges suffering. He said that it is essential that people don’t hold irreconcilable memories about the human rights transgressions that took place in the past, which requires the creation “a landscape of memory that confronts perpetrators and bystanders, that

⁸ This speech was presented at the opening of the “Power of Memorials” conference in South Africa on 20 March 2005. The project was a collaboration between ICTJ and the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, which hosted conferences in “transitional” countries around the world. The text was distributed at the workshop in Beirut.

school children must navigate, and that is itself a text, a narrative, not unlike a final report of a truth commission, that is available to be seen and read by fellow citizens” (2). However, it is not enough simply to memorialize the past. In his view, it is also essential that the memorials that constitute this memoryscape foster dialogue and discussion on the past. This begins with the process of conceiving of and developing the memorials. In order to construct new memorials, he said that citizens need to address and debate the issue of how to represent and commemorate the “tragedy,” which forces them to “look inward” and “critically examine what happened in a horrible time, and why” (2). Traditional memorial forms are not considered to be adequate for this task, or for acknowledging the victims and survivors of mass suffering, whose stories must be told and wounds exposed. They are accused of freezing memory, and of eventually becoming invisible to passersby. In order to ensure that the violations and suffering of the past are never forgotten, transitional justice practitioners assert that new memorial forms are required. While this often includes folk memorials, reconstituted spaces of public memory, memory tours, and commemorative activities, the most prominent form is what has been termed museums of memory and museums of conscience.

The power of these new “memorial museums” (Williams 2007) is seen to depend on the meaningfulness of their location. They are usually built on the site of a previous abuse or atrocity. Whether this is a site of a former torture center or of a mass grave, the goal is to reclaim “wounded places” and transform them into “active places of memory that are more than locations of past events or nodes of national topographies” (Till 2008: 103). As hybrid institutions, they aim both to memorialize the victims, and to provide a critical interpretation of the events that happened. Memorial makers collect, organize, and display the “forensic truths on the past” (ICSC 2008: 6) in emotionally charged tours and displays. In some, visitors are asked

to spend the night in an abandoned prison, in others they are shown the tools used to inflict torture on political dissidents and told accounts of what occurred, and in others they are shown the skulls and anti-mortem data recovered from a genocide, as well as the weapons used to carry out the killing. Included in the exhibitions are narrative accounts from those who experienced the abuses. There is always an emphasis on presenting a multiplicity of perspectives, and on bringing them together in a mutually accepted accommodation that denounces the atrocities, but leaves room for different interpretations. The hope is that this will help make the different perspectives “compatible, or, at least, respectful of each other” (Bickford 2005: 2) through a recognition of shared suffering and violation. The presentation of these unsettling narratives and forensic truths is essential to memorial museums, which aspire to bring diverse people together into a discussion about the past, present, and future. According to the founding Director of the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, Liz Sevcenko, memorial museums aim to not only present the truths of the past, but also to use them “to facilitate critically needed dialogue on contemporary issues” (2010: 20) in order to ensure that the horrors of the past are never repeated.

The international expert invited to guide the workshop on memorials, Lauren Segal, presented an example of a well-known museum of conscience that she helped to design in South Africa. It was built on the site of Johannesburg’s notorious Old Fort Prison Complex, where thousands of people were brutally punished during the apartheid era. Segal described the site as a “destitute, lonely place that had been forgotten in the city but needed desperately to be reclaimed for the history.” In 1995, the justices of the new South African Constitutional Court decided to build the new court building on the site. According to Segal, they chose the place where justice had been most perverted and transformed it into a place of hope in order to show people “that the hope of our country is built on our past, that there is no way of forgetting.” In the building of the

new Constitution Hill complex, a conscious decision was made to preserve as many of the old structures as possible and to create a memorial museum that would document the atrocities that had occurred and tell the stories of those who had been imprisoned there. The site had very few records from which to document the history of injustice and brutality, so the museum designers had to rely on oral histories. They invited former prisoners back to the prison and asked them to recount their memories of the site, reenact the means of torture they had endured, and help design the exhibits. They also asked them to bring back any pictures or memorabilia they still had from the prison, which they combined with the objects they found on the site in the museum's exhibits. Using all of these collected objects and narratives, the designers created permanent exhibitions to document life inside the prison, the ways prisoners organized themselves, the types of corporeal punishment that were used, and the forms of resistance that the prisoners employed. In each of the exhibitions, the testimonies of the former prisoners are used as the central focal point, but the abuses of the past are always placed in critical opposition to the hopes the site now embodies. The museum team recognized that the state of post-apartheid democracy was still fragile, so they didn't create a simple opposition between the past and the present. Instead, they ask visitors to relate the experiences of the past to the present, and to discuss what could be improved. For example, in the 'Who is a Criminal?' exhibition, visitors are shown pictures of former prisoners and asked which one is a criminal. After they learn about how people were criminalized during the apartheid era, they are invited to post written replies to the question and to participate in public debates on relevant matters before the Constitutional Court. The aim of such initiatives is to produce a "living memorial" that will continue to remain relevant in the present through by connecting the past to issues in contemporary society.

Memorial museums such as this one have grown exponentially since the 1980s. They include sites such as the Maison des Esclaves in Senegal, the Tuol Sleng Museum of Genocidal Crimes in Cambodia, the Villa Grimaldi Peace Park in Chile, the Perm-36 Memorial Museum of the History of Political Repression of Totalitarianism in Russia, the Liberation War Museum in Bangladesh, and the World Trade Center Memorial in New York City. Such sites have become a prominent feature of the memorial landscape globally, and the chosen form with which to commemorate crimes ranging from genocide to state repression to terrorism. As memorials, they aspire to remember and honor the victims of human rights abuse and atrocity. As museums, they are devoted to the acquisition, conservation, study, exhibition, and educational interpretation of objects of historical value (Williams 2007). While these hybrid institutions claim to keep memory of the past alive in the present, I argue that they also work to contain the disruptive potentiality of memory. Through a turn to museumology, they take the past out of the domain of lived experience and separate it from the present by organizing and presenting it in exhibits and displays.

Berber Bevernage argues that the discourse of history is “introduced into the field of transitional justice not *despite* an already overabundant memory but *because* of it” (2010: 113). Based on the idea that the past cannot simply be left behind, truth commissions seek to bring closure to old wounds for the sake of the nation’s future. While the memories of past atrocities are not expected to be forgotten, the goal is to remove their “sting” (Tutu 1999) through public hearings that give victims the opportunity to narrate their experiences of pain and suffering. As I discussed in the previous chapter, the act of giving public testimony is thought to bring about a cathartic release that will result in both individual and social healing and allow victims to become engaged in the future-oriented process of nation building. After the hearings are over,

the private individual memories of victims of past trauma are transformed into shared public knowledge and compiled as an official report, creating a historical record of the period of impunity and its atrocities that becomes the basis of the political legitimacy and authority of the successor state (Humphrey 2003). Bevernage argues that the discourse of history is used to exorcise “the past and its ghosts” (124), creating a present that is free of the haunting past, and thus of the disruptive potential of memory in the present.⁹ He connects this to the modern conception of time, suggesting that truth commissions “aim at the restoration, or creation, of a modern consciousness of time” which is characterized by a “modernist disjuncture between past and present” (2010: 116).

I propose that memorial museums aim to further this temporal disjuncture between the past and the present. Their designers view the effectiveness of truth commissions in preventing future human rights abuses as “fragile and temporary” (CPP: 4) unless it is supported by the construction of new memorial spaces that commemorate victims and promote the continuation of memory and dialogue. This was made clear in Segal’s presentation on South Africa. She said that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) created an important public forum where the injustices of the past could be brought into the public realm. In her opinion, this was essential for the creation of a “baseline truth” about the past, but it didn’t go far enough. The TRC put stories and storytelling at the heart of the national agenda, and it provided a platform for stories of pain and violation to be brought out in a formal institutionalized way. However, it excluded many categories of victims from testifying, which left a lot of open wounds in the society. As a result, the nation was far from reconciled at the end of the process. She asserted that it is in this “gap between truth and reconciliation” that memorialization work comes into play. It continues

⁹ Bevernage relates this to the figure of Derrida’s coroner, who certifies death in order to inflict it: “to declare death only in order to put it to death” (1994: 48).

the work of truth commissions by collecting more testimonies, which can help to heal and empower those who have not yet been given a voice in the public domain. Their testimonies are arranged and presented in exhibitions that create bridges between communities, and thus further the goal of reconciliation. While these projects claim to be continuing the work of memory, I would like to suggest that they also aim to diffuse it. Instead of containing its irruptive potential through the production of a written history, they do so through the construction of a “fact-laden learning environment” (Di Paolantonio 2010). Memorial museums contain the scattered fragments of the past in a realist and pedagogically redemptive form of remembrance that serves both to represent the horrors of the past as a dark moment in the nation’s history, and to provide visitors with a morally and temporally removed perspective from which to judge it (MacClear 1999; Simon 2005). In the transitional justice framework, this is seen to be essential not only to reinforce the break between past and present, but also to keep the country moving into a future that is qualitatively different from the past.

The War as Heritage

Given its concern with settling memory, rather than provoking it, it is not surprising that the only project that Segal engaged with at the workshop was connected to the preservation of the Barakat Building, which will include a “museum of memory.” Throughout the workshop, Segal referred to herself not as a memory activist, but as a “heritage activist.” The campaign to save this building is being spearheaded by another heritage activist, Lebanese architect Mona Hallak. As Hallak explained, the Barakat building, or the “Yellow House,” as it is more commonly known, was constructed by the renowned Lebanese architect Youssef Aftimos in the 1920s. It has a unique design, which she says marks it as one of the few avant-garde buildings left in Beirut. In a personal conversation, she told me that it reflects the city’s cosmopolitanism

during the 1920s and 1930s, combining Western influences with local skills and techniques. Erected on the corner of Damascus Road and what is today Rue Eliyas Sarkis, the L-shape structure gives every room in the building visual access to the street. Multiple doors, balconies, and huge windows line both the interior and exterior sides of the building and there is an open central space that allows sunlight into every room. The design of the apartments inside the building is also distinctive, blending Ottoman and classical architectural features and ornamentation. In the prewar period, the building was occupied by a diverse combination of families, and housed a vibrant array of businesses. Neighbors remember a shoemaker's store, a music shop, a hairdresser, a pharmacy, an Armenian-owned photography shop and a Bohsali sweet shop. However, when the civil war broke out in 1975, the building found itself positioned directly on the Green Line, and Christian militia forces soon occupied it. Its innovative design features made it an ideal location for snipers, who could shoot people in the front of the building from a well-protected location deep within the recesses of the building's interior. When they occupied the building, the snipers built concrete barricades and wooden sniper shelters, and they left their names and various messages on the walls, which still remain, along with the belongings of many of the former residents.

According to Hallak, the Yellow House's connection to the history of Beirut did not end with the civil war. The history of the building also reflects "how in the 1990s heritage, memory and identity meant nothing; only money" (2008). When real estate prices went up in the 1990s, the building's owners sought to have the building demolished in order to sell the land to developers. As a long-time preservation activist, Hallak saw the building as an architectural masterpiece and an important part of Beirut's cultural memory and history, and decided to fight to save the building. She was active in the resistance to Solidere in the early 1990s, but was not

able to save any of the buildings in the downtown area from being demolished. She remembers thinking at the time, “if we can't keep this building, it seems there is nothing in this country worth keeping” (2008). The owners began demolition of the building in 1997, but she was able to mobilize enough support to stop them on the third day of its destruction. Between 1997 and 2003, she fought to convince the municipality of Beirut that it should expropriate the building and make it into a public space. After seven years of campaigning, the municipality finally passed a legal decree to acquire the building and transform it into a museum. At this point, the building became the site of a new struggle over what and how to remember in the site. The municipality wanted the building to be made into a conventional city history museum going back to Roman times, but activists wanted the museum to tell the story of Beirut’s more recent past and of the war. They thought it was important to preserve the bullet holes and sniper dens, along with the objects recovered from the previous residents. Discussions stalled, and no further action was taken on the project until 2008, when a pact of friendship and cooperation was signed between Beirut and Paris centering on the architectural heritage and the culture of Beirut. Largely as a result of Hallak’s campaigning, the Barakat Building was chosen to symbolize the alliance between the two cities. In April 2010, the President of the Beirut City Council and the Mayor of Paris held a press conference to announce that the Yellow House would be transformed into “Beit Beirut” (House of Beirut), a Museum and Urban Cultural Center that is scheduled to open in 2013.¹⁰

In honor of National Heritage Day, and at the same time as the memorialization workshop, an exhibition was held to display all of the items that will be transferred to the building when it opens as a museum. These items include the “personal archive” of Dr. Najib Chemaly, whose dentist chair, pictures, personal letters, business cards, old liquor bottles, and

¹⁰ <http://www.beitbeirut.org/>

newspapers have been carefully collected and will all be exhibited in the museum, along with clothes and personal items belonging to some of the other prewar residents. In addition, the bullet holes, sniper dens, and bunkers will be retained and included in the museum. In many ways, this project mirrors the efforts of museum developers such as Segal to save spaces of memory and turn them into sites from which to learn about the past. However, this museum does not take as part of its mission the memorialization of victims. When I spoke to her about the project, Hallak told me that she considers the building to be an important piece of Beirut's heritage that is worthy of preservation both because it is one of the last historic buildings remaining in Beirut, and because it retains traces of the war along with traces of the city's more cosmopolitan pre-war past. In this context, the sniper dens and bullet holes are seen to be valuable because they present a part of the city's heritage that has thus far been sidelined by Solidere's restoration efforts. Beit Beirut will conserve this heritage, but it is not envisioned as a civil war museum, or as a space to honor or memorialize the dead. At issue for Hallak and others is how to inscribe the war within a more expansive history of the city, and make it part of the inherited historical past. Instead of skipping over the history of the war and attempting to recreate an idealized vision of the pre-war past in the post-war present, this project provides a way to understand the war as an historical event. As its promotional material explains, it provides tangible proof that "the war was not a dream." But, it also provides a new model for moving beyond the war. The project is seen as "a witness to the rebirth of prewar successful endeavors." It provides evidence that the successful endeavors of the prewar era can flourish in the postwar present, but they require an acknowledgment that the civil war is part of the city's history.

After the workshop, a range of local and international organizations, including the ICTJ, became involved in discussions about the project. They wanted it to be more than just a museum, and advocated for it to also be transformed into a space for memory, exchange,

debates and exhibitions. In the final plans, it was decided that the first floor of Beit Beirut would house the museum. On the other floors, there will be a restaurant, a boutique selling replicas of museum pieces, an auditorium for conferences and debates, a space for workshops on history and memory, and an 800-square-meter exhibition space. Like many of the “memorial museums” discussed at the workshop, and on evidence globally, this museum will not get in the way of neo-liberal capitalist development, but will actually contribute to it by creating another tourist destination and meeting site that retains memories of the war, but also settles them as belonging to the historical past.

Conclusion

The diversity of projects discussed in this chapter reflects the variety of ways artists relate to history, time, and memory in Lebanon. The Feel Collective fears that the war is not yet over and seeks to change the patterns and habits that perpetuate violence through intense affective encounters designed to highlight the timeless experience of suffering, and the duty to remember and honor the victims in order to bring it to an end. Hamady did not experience the war personally, but feels haunted and overwhelmed by its unacknowledged presence and wants to understand its history. She hopes that by reembodying the spaces of the city that retain its narratives, she will be able to encourage others to view them as sites worthy of remembering, and discussing. While very different, these projects share in common a view of Beirut as a city “haunted with landscapes that simultaneously embody presences and absences, voids and ruins, intentional forgetting and painful remembering” (Till 2005: 8). In a place where time feels out of joint, they are trying to pry the cracks in these haunted landscapes open, and force people to confront the specters and ruins of the past. This renders the present problematic not in relation to a linear conception of time that seeks to “constrain the sentiments and identifications of those in the present” (Bell 2011: 326), but in relation to a linear conception of time that was suspended

and has not yet come out of arrest, leaving the civil war unaccounted for temporally and spatially. While artists such as Tarazi and Hamady use the language of memorialization in their work, their aim is to stimulate new ways of thinking, acting, feeling, and remembering in the present.

Although some of their themes might coincide with the new paradigm for memorialization favored by transitional justice practitioners, their mode of critical questioning does not. They explore the complex temporalities of the present, but do not endeavor to settle the past in a historical narrative or topography that separates it from the present and future. From the silence that greeted their presentations in the workshop, and the active support provided to Beit Beirut, I would like to suggest that the “new” paradigm for memorialization is not only an attempt to memorialize the past, but also to suppress conceptions and articulations of time and memory seen as impediments to the forward momentum of democratic progress. Even though Beit Beirut will not serve the dual purpose of museum and memorial, it is the first official project to place the war in history, fixing it in the past, and separating it from the present. While the ultimate goal of transitional justice memorialization is to call attention to the injustices that were committed in the past, and make visible the stories and names of the victims that suffered, another important aspect of memorialization activity is to create a present free of the haunting past. In order to diminish feelings of victimization and injustice, and restore civic trust in state institutions, practitioners claim that this must be undertaken on an official level, giving formal acknowledgment to victims. In the next chapter, I will discuss this concept in more detail, examining what gets left out of transitional justice, and its conception of reconciliation, due to its focus on state institutions and criminal justice.

CHAPTER FIVE

Strategies of Reconciliation

In April 2008, a two-week exhibition by Lebanese artist Nada Sehnaoui was set up in downtown Beirut. Her installation was entitled, *Haven't 15 Years of Hiding in the Toilets Been Enough?* (*alam yakfina al-ikhtiba' 15 sana fi al-hammamat?*). In an interview, she explained that the piece was meant to serve as a stark reminder of the dangers posed by political stalemate and polarized rhetoric. “From 1975 to 1990, the Lebanese people used to hide from the bombings in their toilets, where there were no glass windows. Now, we hear war drums and we may be killing each other again. This is why I am raising the question: have we not had enough?” The toilets were arranged in a near perfect grid pattern in an empty lot close to the old Hotel District, an area of heavy fighting during the early years of the war. Like the installations described in the previous chapter, it was meant to reanimate prior memories attached to the downtown district, which Sehnaoui described as having been destroyed twice: first by the war, and then by reconstruction. The unexpected encounter with 600 bright, white toilets in the busy central district undoubtedly caught people unaware, and she hoped this encounter would help revive memories connected to the act of hiding in the toilets. However, the space of the installation did not produce the sensation of enclosure that most people would connect to their bathrooms. It created a sense of openness, extending the toilets, and the memories attached to them, into the urban fabric of the city.

The toilets were arranged in a huge open space, surrounded by bright lights, and positioned to face a large performance stage. On the stage, the Lebanese Center for Human Rights (LCHR) organized a series of activities in line with the theme of the installation, including music concerts, film screenings, poetry readings, and open discussions about the civil

war with former combatants and others who lived through the war. In these events, the toilets were transformed into podiums for public speech. The private nature of the bathroom act was maintained through the telling of personal memory narratives related to the toilets, but the stories themselves were made public, and magnified under the bright lights. These activities were funded by USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI), which later wrote about the events:

Among the most moving moments during the dialogues were spontaneous testimonials from audience members who had lived through the war. The first-person accounts provided a "healing experience," according to one participant. And a former combatant said, "I was one of those responsible for people hiding in their bathrooms, and for this, I am sorry." A teenager who had learned about the war through the stories told by her parents voiced her commitment to "making sure it doesn't happen again." This sentiment was echoed by youth activists who took to the stage to read a poem emphasizing national solidarity. The discussions initiated at the site continued in the press, as the events received extensive media coverage. Likening the rows and rows of toilets to a cemetery, several articles said the exhibit reminded visitors of the brutality of war and triggered collective memories of a painful chapter in Lebanon's history. Although Sehnaoui deliberately chose an unconventional way to deliver her message, she said, "wars are more shocking than toilets."¹

On one of the nights, two former combatants and enemies, Assaad Chaftari and Muheiddine Shihab, were invited to share their stories of personal transformation and reconciliation with the audience. They were held up as a model, proving that old "chains of hate" can be broken through open dialogue and mutual respect.

In this chapter, I examine these men's stories of personal transformation, and the larger global movement they are connected to. Chaftari is a very visible figure in Lebanon, and is actively involved with many of the issues I have dealt with in this dissertation. Not only was he the key figure in the documentary on former fighters, and the person who proposed the survey of other former fighters, but he also works with the families of the disappeared and other victims groups, attended all of the workshops, and often speaks at public events such as the one

¹ USAID/OTI Lebanon Success Story: "Enough of Hiding in Bathrooms: 600 Toilets Make a Dramatic Point" (April 2008).

described above, and in many other private venues. He is held up as a symbol of remorse, acknowledgment, reconciliation, and truth telling, but stands alone, being the only former militia leader who has apologized for his actions during the war.² What often gets left out, however, is the story of his spiritual conversion, which occurred after he became involved with the Moral Re-Armament (MRA) movement. MRA is a global spiritual movement whose core idea is that changing the world starts with seeking change in oneself. In this chapter, I examine the values and practices of this movement, and how both Chaftari and Shihab relate to them. After presenting their stories of personal transformation, I analyze how they use them to reach out to others in an effort to pursue larger societal change. I also explore the less public dimensions of MRA's reconciliation work, paying particular attention to one of its key concepts: forgiveness. A central premise of MRA is that one must reconcile with oneself and the past in order to be able to reconcile with others and change the world, which depends on forgiveness. I conclude with an examination of how this notion creates problems for the concept of reconciliation put forward in the transitional justice paradigm, which endeavors to achieve reconciliation through the cultivation of civic trust in state institutions. I use this as an opportunity to reflect on what is excluded from transitional justice, and how this leads to the marginalization not only of one of the most active proponents for dealing with the past in Lebanon, but also the personal and the religious.

² In 2008, Samir Geagea, who took leadership of the Lebanese Forces in 1986, issued a public apology. In it, he asked for forgiveness from God and from those his faction had harmed during the war. But his apology is not considered to be equivalent to Chaftari's, and is heavily criticized in Lebanon, because he then went on to say that all of his mistakes were made in the course of "*wajib watani*" (national duty) and had been unavoidable.

Moral Re-Armament

Assaad Chaftari and Muheiddine Shihab are connected to a global movement previously known as the Oxford Group, then Moral Re-Armament, and now as Initiatives of Change. It was begun by the American Lutheran minister Frank Buchman. In 1908, Buchman was in charge of a home for boys in the poorest part of Philadelphia. The directors cut down on the amount of money available to feed the boys and he resigned. According to his biographer, he then became ill, and was consumed by hatred for the six directors, and no medical advice could address his problem. After a conversion experience in a church in Keswick, he realized that he was, as he called, it, “the seventh wrong man.” He wrote letters of apology to the six men, asking for their forgiveness, and claimed that this gave him freedom and made him much more able to help others. At that point, he began preaching the importance of mirroring in your own life the change you wanted to see in the world, and enlisted thousands of adherents to a nondenominational evangelical movement that became known as the Oxford Group (Lean 1985).³ The Oxford Group described itself not as a religion, but as an informal fellowship of people who endeavored to lead a spiritual life under God's guidance. To do this, Buchman advocated taking a moral inventory of one's life and “surrendering” to God. He also urged his followers to devote an hour every morning to listening for God's direction, and from a book on the life of Jesus, he adopted four absolute moral principles: honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, which serve as the foundations of the movement (Walter 1919; Layman 1933; Leon 1939). One of the group's best-

³ The name “Oxford Group” originated in 1929, when a railway porter in South Africa wrote the name on the windows of those compartments reserved by a traveling team of Frank Buchman followers. They were from Oxford, England and in South Africa to promote the movement. The South African press picked up on the name and it stuck (Lean 1985: 138).

known spin-offs is Alcoholics Anonymous, which was established in 1935, and shares many of the same tenets and practices.⁴

When the possibility of war began to loom over Europe in the summer of 1938, Buchman proclaimed a need for worldwide “moral and spiritual re-armament” to combat the forces of world war. He changed the name of the group to Moral Re-Armament (MRA), and sent teams around the globe to spread his program of change. His aim was to provide a “rallying point for positive forces” in every country, and his ideas were taken up in countries throughout Europe. After the war ended, he began to apply the movement’s personal principles to national and international affairs (Buchman 1947; Lean 1985). In 1946, MRA bought and restored a large, derelict hotel in Caux, Switzerland. It used the hotel as a center for reconciliation, bringing together thousands of Europeans, including German Chancellor Adenauer and French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman. Over the next four years more than 3,000 Germans and 2,000 French came to Caux, and Buchman was later decorated for his contribution to European reconciliation by both the German and French governments. The conferences at Caux, and similar ones at Mackinac Island in the United States, also achieved public recognition for their contributions to the reconciliation of Japan with her South-East Asian neighbors, and the peaceful decolonization of several African countries (Luttwak 1994). According to historian Scott Appleby, Caux provided a neutral and secure place, where antagonists could meet at a physical and psychological distance from a conflict zone to discuss their differences and what they held in common. He writes, “transforming attitudes on a person-by-person basis was the goal of such

⁴ In 1935, Alcoholics Anonymous was formed by people who recovered from their alcoholism through a combination of the Oxford Group and medical treatment. Before adopting the name “Alcoholics Anonymous,” it was called “the alcoholic squadron of the Oxford Groups.” The twelve steps of AA are, in part, a derivation of Oxford Group principles, with significant changes. It abandoned the “four absolutes” in favor of the principle of “progress not perfection,” and instead of referring to God, it uses the term “a power greater than ourselves” (Pittman 1988; Mercadante 1996).

forums, which embodied MRA's conviction that peaceful and productive change in hostile relations between nations or ethno-religious groups depends on change in the individuals prosecuting the war; that process, in turn, requires individuals representing each side to listen, carefully and at length, to their counterparts" (1999: 225-226).

More critical commentators tended to emphasize the movement's focus on industrialists, politicians, the wealthy, and the wielders of power. They also sought to highlight the right-wing nature of the movement and its methods, and its simplistic view of the world, especially when its practices became more outwardly propagandistic (Palmer 1979). By the 1950s, casts of plays presenting MRA's ideas were traveling around the world, and more centers were established in Latin America, India, Japan and several countries in Africa. When Buchman died in 1961, the former British political journalist Peter Howard assumed the leadership of MRA, but four years later he died. Without a clearly identified leadership to ensure cohesion, many of MRA's programs became decentralized. Much of its work concentrated on supporting peace-making initiatives in Africa, Asia, and parts of the Middle East. In India, a major international center was developed for the training of people from industry, education and other national sectors. In Britain, some of the work focused on improving industrial relations, and some on the growing multiculturalism of the country's cities. With the collapse of Communism, the rebuilding of democracy in the post-Soviet world became a major focal point of MRA's work in the 1990s, alongside new approaches, such as "Hope in the Cities," which was created to bridge the racial divide in the United States, and "Clean Election" campaigns in Taiwan, Brazil and Kenya.

In 2001, a new name was adopted: Initiatives of Change. Today, Initiatives of Change is an international movement, which is active in 60 countries and formally incorporated in 44. Many of the country teams also changed their names in 2001, but some, such as the one in

Lebanon, preferred to keep the name Moral Re-Armament (*al-tasalluh al-khulqi*).⁵ Each national body is independent and was given the choice to become affiliated to Initiatives of Change International, which was founded in 2002 to bring the autonomous national bodies of the Initiatives of Change movement together. As an NGO, it represents the movement and facilitates its relationships with the United Nations and other international institutions and organizations. It holds Special Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, and Participatory Status at the Council of Europe, and its Office of International Training Services connects the training capacities of the worldwide movement with needs identified by the UN and other international agencies. Its first President was Cornelio Sommaruga, formerly President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, who was succeeded by Mohamed Sahnoun, formerly Senior Advisor to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and, in 2009, Professor Rajmohan Gandhi, the grandson of Mahatma Gandhi, was elected President.

At the core of Initiatives of Change is the “belief that anyone can take significant initiatives to bring transformation where it is needed, by starting the process of change in their own lives - and that there is a transcendent power which can guide and enable that change.”⁶ It is now an informal, international network composed of people from diverse cultures, nationalities, religions and beliefs acting from what is described as an “inner movement of compassion and transformation.”⁷ The movement works on the principle that changes in people's motives, attitudes and behavior are the only sure basis on which wider lasting change in society can be brought about. Marc Gopin, who has studied the movement, suggests that it uses “spiritual awakening to provoke self-examination and transformation of one's relationships. It also involves support for and evocation of a spirit of personal responsibility that recognizes primarily

⁵ Other countries, such as Egypt and Indonesia, also chose to keep the name Moral Re-Armament.

⁶ <http://www.iofc.org/organization>

⁷ <http://www.iofc.org/organization>

one's own part in the failure of one's relationships" (2002: 110). The act of taking responsibility for the part one plays in a conflict, imbalance, tension, grievance, or problem is considered the essential first step to personal transformation. To help with this, the movement puts forward the practice of taking "a daily time of silence" to listen either to one's conscience or to the leading of God to find direction and correction. As aids to identifying the best way forward, it recommends that one seek to apply the absolute moral values of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love to daily life, which requires that one restore for past mistakes, and embrace new behaviors, actions, and motivations. The act of forgiving is essential to this process, releasing the source of grievances that continue cycles of hatred and resentment, making it possible for the "human spirit to be liberated" (Henderson 2003). Sometimes the process of change occurs quickly, and at other times over a more extended period of time. Once achieved, the final step is to share and experience this process of personal transformation with others, which is said to trigger a chain reaction in others, "building relationships of trust across the world's divides."

Stories of Personal Change

When they tell their stories of personal transformation and reconciliation, Chaftari and Shihab always begin by recounting how they used to think about the "other." Chaftari tells audiences he was brought up in an entirely Christian environment, and separated from the Muslims. As he explained to the audience on the toilets:

War began when I was just a little kid at home or at school, hearing odd sayings about the Muslims, who were our brothers, but of a lesser god, who were poor because they were poor minded, who were dirty because they went to wash their hands and feet before entering a mosque, and who were also traitors to Lebanon. They were traitors because they were dreaming of an Arab united country. They were traitors because they were looking towards Palestine to help the Palestinians. They were traitors because they were a danger for the Lebanon I wanted to be.

He is always careful to say that he is not trying to put the blame on his community instead of himself, but at some point he warns, “you stop thinking and you start believing what you hear.” All he knew was the Christian version of the political situation: Lebanon belonged to the Christians, and the Muslims were traitors. Christian youth were told that the Muslims wanted to establish a Muslim state, and oust all the Christians. After the Palestinians arrived with their military power, he says the threat became more tangible. At that point, fear became transformed into hatred, and he, and many like him, picked up weapons to defend their community against enemies who were no longer even viewed as human beings.

Shihab’s story is similar, but from the opposite perspective. He told me, “There is no doubt that hatred towards the ‘other’ exists in our lives. It exists in mosques, churches, the family, the community and the educational system that depicts the world as rotating around a particular community and strives to reshape the world in its own image.” When he was young, he remembers that Muslim youth were told “the Christians intended to slaughter us, throw us into the sea, and found a Christian state similar to Israel and allied with her, to spearhead the war against the Arabs and Muslims.” In a speech delivered to a group of United States senators in Washington DC, he explained how this belief led him to fight:

I was brought up in a society with Islamic majority, and eventually I was influenced by what was going on around me. I listened to my relatives and other family members of what they were saying about the political and military events which was taking place at that time in Lebanon and around, and in the Middle East. I cannot forget how people of my neighborhood were crying in their homes and streets after the Arab defeat in the 1967 war. And I cannot forget the speeches of the late Egyptian president, Gamal Abdul Nasser, urging the Arabs to resist and fight back to regain their dignity, calling for a unified Arab world, modern and strong.

Also I remember how Muslims in Lebanon rejoiced and supported the Palestinian revolution. We, as Lebanon Muslims, were stuck to the Arab causes and wanted to contribute towards to the struggle to liberate Palestine and to kick out the

imperialism from our lands. This was some of the atmosphere which influenced me.

I can speak from my side and what I used to hear in my Islamic society. There were kinds of accusations against the Lebanese Christians. They are collaborators with the West, especially with France, their beloved mothers, agents to Israel. And the worst accusations were that they wanted to eliminate Lebanon and establish a Christian country in the Arab world, exactly like the Jews did in Palestine. They wanted to kick out Muslims from Lebanon, replacing them by the Arab Christians from Jordan, Syria, Iraq, et cetera.

There was a list of doubts and mistrust towards the Lebanese Christians. In brief, Muslims imagined Christians as an obstacle in our way to fulfill our dream. We considered them agents, collaborators with the old and the new Crusaders, and all kinds and colors of colonialists afterwards. We hated the Christians to a degree that Muslim schools taught the English language just because Christian schools taught French.

I want each of you to imagine how deep of a hatred we carried in our hearts towards Christians. Imagine me in my early age of 18 and holding all these thoughts and hatred toward the other. What could I do in the face of all that, especially if I had a chance to carry a weapon and take part in the fighting? I participated in the war when it began in 1975 with 23 young men in my neighborhood. I joined the Independent Nasserite Movement militia in Beirut,⁸ which was well known for its solid confrontation with Christians in the beginning and with the Israelis later. I will not keep a secret of how I felt that day when the war broke out and a chance came to get rid of those Christian traitors.

I personally took part in the major battles which took place in Lebanon between 1975 until 1985. I fought the Christians and Israelis when they invaded Lebanon in the year 1978 and in the year 1982, the multinational forces in 1983. And I'm sorry to say, maybe it is rude, the American forces when they were among the multinational forces. But I am sorry to you, it is rude. I know that. But this was a fact.

It was a fierce and bloody war. Enough to mention that from the number of 23 friends in the same neighborhood who went to the battlefields, only three survived. I am one of them.⁹

By recounting the hate-filled narratives that mobilized each of them to fight, the two men emphasize that the civil war did not begin with the firing of the first bullet, but with the

⁸ Also known as al-Murabitoun. This party espoused the ideals of late Egyptian President, Gamal Abdel al-Nasser, a blend of Socialism and secular pan-Arab nationalism.

⁹ Speech delivered at the Faith and Politics Institute, Washington DC, April 20, 2005.

discourses that made it possible to pick up arms and kill their fellow countrymen in the first place. Mobilized by fear, Chaftari says he became a “killing machine,” with no conception that the other person was even a human being.

He told me, “When the war started I was ready to fight for my Christianity, my Lebanon and the free world. In my mind, I was fighting a Holy War.” Educated as an engineer, he was rapidly promoted and eventually became a senior intelligence officer in the Lebanese Forces.¹⁰ As he explained, “any Muslim, Palestinian or leftist became my enemy. I put their soldiers, their civilians, their children and their elders in the same basket. Retaliating by shelling civilian quarters was then very normal. Kidnapping, arresting, bombing, murdering were normal means for me to fulfill my ‘holy mission.’ I became the policeman, the judge and the executioner.” He often tells audiences that he went to church at the end of every week to confess, but it was futile because he didn’t see killing and torturing his enemies as a sin. On the toilets he admitted, “I did horrible things in the war. I was responsible for horrible bomb operations in civilian quarters, in enemy quarters, in the other side of the city. I was responsible for the shelling of civilian quarters. I was responsible for arresting and deciding the fate of many, many, many human beings. But this didn’t count then. For me, they were not human beings anymore, they were the enemy.”

After recounting the horrors they perpetrated during the war, the two men tell audiences how they began to see their former enemies in a new light. For Chaftari, this began after he was forced to leave the Christian area. In 1985, his group decided for “pragmatic reasons, and only on mathematical calculations,” that the war had reached a dead end, and had to stop. They tried to negotiate a Tripartite Agreement between the three major fighting forces in Lebanon at the time: the Druze, the Shi’a, and the Christians. But the Christians later rejected the results, and his

¹⁰ Chaftari was a top aide to Elie Hobeika, a Lebanese Phalangist and Lebanese Forces militia leader.

group was forced out of power. In a personal conversation, he said, “I can tell you that it was in a few moments that morning on the January 15, 1986, instead of being the hero of the Christians, who were applauding us, we immediately became the traitors.”¹¹ He and his family were forced to flee, and decided to seek refuge in the Christian town of Zahle. Although most of the citizens in Zahle also rejected them, one group received them. They were part of what he later discovered to be Moral Re-Armament (MRA) in Lebanon. When he met them, he says they encouraged him to think about his “very personal life, on many levels.” Before that time, he thought he had been living as a good Christian, but he came to the conclusion that the way he was living was not the right way to live and that he had been fooling himself, and maybe others too. The change started on the personal level, and later enabled him to reconsider what he had done in his public life. In a speech delivered to a MRA group in England, he said:

Through them I discovered two things: firstly, it was no use trying to change the world if I did not start changing my life, and what was in my heart; and secondly: if one listens, God speaks, and if one obeys, God acts. Unsatisfied with my whole world, I decided to start with inner personal change on more than one level. It is a long process that will never end. I discovered that my behavior, what I thought to be perfect Christian behavior, was very far from God. I let God enter into my life and everything started to change. I had to reconcile with God and myself before reconciling with others. I also had to forgive before asking for forgiveness.¹²

During one of our conversations, I asked Chaftari to explain his transformation in more detail. He told me that he had always thought that he was doing his best as a Christian. His killing was motivated by a Christian faith, so he always had a clear conscience during the war. But when he heard this group speak about God’s plan for the world, and they asked him to think about whether he was part of this plan, he went back and scrutinized everything he had done during the

¹¹ The Tripartite Agreement was intended to end the Lebanese conflict. In December 1985, the various Christian militias, the Shi’ite Amal Movement and the Druze Progressive Socialist Party met in Damascus reaching agreement on political reforms as well as special relations with Syria. However on January 15, 1986, President Amine Gemayel and Samir Geagea organized a coup against Hobeika thus rendering the agreement null and void.

¹² Speech delivered at Westminster Cathedral Hall, London, April 23, 2002.

war. At this point, he realized that what he had thought of as the good cause, which was the Christian cause, was not true, that he had been fighting a fight that was not asked for by God. This led him to realize that he had done some horrible things in the name of his faith, and that he had a lot of things to correct in his life. Referring to the four moral absolutes at the heart of the movement, he told me, “I had gone really very far from honesty because I was trying to hide from listening to God. On the purity level, I had a lot of things to do really, and I had been selfish a lot of times, a long period of my life. But my greatest sin was on the level of love, love of the other, and this is where I really felt that I had gone too far from God, too far from my religion, which asked me to love the other, not to kill him. And this is where change started, and I don’t think that it will ever stop.”

In Zahle, he started joining in the multi-faith dialogue meetings that the MRA team was organizing. This enabled him to encounter Muslims and to discover “the human being in them that I had forgotten throughout the civil war.” He realized that the Muslims he was meeting had their own families, dreams, and expectations. Although they often did not have the same political opinions, he found that he was able to accept them the way they were, not the way he wanted them to be. This enabled him to see that they did not have to become similar or agree on everything, but simply to “know, respect and love each other.” He decided to get rid of his “prejudices, jokes and contemptuous attitude towards the Muslims,” and to get to know them as people. Then, after what he describes as “a long and painful fight with myself,” he was driven to write a public letter of apology to all of his war victims, not only for what he had done, but also for not practicing true Christianity. However, he made sure to tell me that it was “not only a letter of apology, it was also a letter of forgiveness because I said in it that I had forgiven those who had harmed me, and my community, and my family.” When I asked him whether one of his

aims was to ask forgiveness from others, he told me that it “cannot be a condition.” He had asked himself for forgiveness, and he had asked God, but forgiveness is a personal decision, and it requires that a person not have hatred in his or her heart. This is why he chose to visit his victims and their families personally. He said that it is important to personally acknowledge that you hurt someone. For him, this is essential both so that the other person will not “go meet his God with hatred in his heart,” and so that “he won't go to God with hatred in his heart because of you.” He knows that he can't change what he did, but he has taken it upon himself to do everything that he can to “alleviate at least some of the pain I have caused and the destruction that I have caused in my country.” While making his apology was one of the most difficult things he has ever done, he told me “it was only one thing among hundreds that you don't know about.”

Shihab's story of transformation is quite different. He admits that there were times when he began to question what he was doing during the war. The moment he most remembers was when he and his men had driven the Christian militias out of a neighborhood. He found a dead, old man that they had killed before pulling out, “tied to a chair and riddled with bullets.” He says, “I stood in front of the dead body that seemed to be gazing at me with glassy eyes. I felt that he was talking to me. It was the first time that I cared for a dead body. I untied it and called a military ambulance to take it decently to a morgue.” While such experiences stuck with him, he says that he could not change himself. He thinks this was both because his comrades would have mocked him for being a coward, and because the events were going too fast for anyone to stop and think seriously about what was happening. But after the war came to end, he began to ask himself if the ideas about Christians and Christianity that he had been taught were actually right. He and his friend decided to start visiting Christian areas, and to meet the Christians whom they had only ever seen as enemies, dead enemies, captives, or hostages. He admits:

In our hearts, we wanted to hear from the Christians we met negative answers, and wanted to hear any bad thoughts about Muslims. Do you know why? Because negative answers would relax us and would justify the atrocities we shed against them. We needed badly this justification to ourselves, and in this way we would feel that what we had done was a reaction to their actions. But God wanted something else. God wanted us to meet good-hearted Christians who were eager to meet and talk to us.

Through these visits, the two men realized that the Christians were not different from Muslims in many of their living styles, thinking, ambitions, hopes, customs, and habits. Some were rich, others were poor, and some had the same stereotypes about Muslims that they had about Christians. Realizing that the main problem was ignorance, and the absence of dialogue, Shihab began what he calls his “*aml musalaha*” (reconciliation work).

As he explained it, the first element of this work was to “reread the Qur’an and understand it.” After doing so, he says that he realized he had been manipulated into believing that fighting and killing Christians was a sacred imposed war, and that this actually violated the principle that war was only to be fought for self-defense. Following on from this, the second element of his reconciliation work was to try to convince other Muslims that their ideas about Christians and Christianity were wrong. He wanted to do something to help people overcome their alienation and hatred, and to promote dialogue instead of violence. In 1992, he established a social committee that organized inter-faith visits, lectures, and conferences. He said that it had many failures because “tolerance, openness, and dialogue were not popular at that time,” but this only increased his determination. He decided to run for public office, and to take a Christian candidate on his ticket. Even though he didn’t think any Muslim would vote for a Christian, he wanted his ticket to be a model of co-existence for all Lebanon. They won the elections, and he became a *mukhtar* in West Beirut. In 2000, the committee was introduced to Moral Re-Armament. According to Shihab, this was one of the most important junctures in the history of

the committee because “we felt that we were not working alone in Lebanon.” The next year, he went to Caux, and he says, “the ambience of openness and forgiveness there immensely helped the healing process in my heart.” This was the first time he got up on stage beside Chaftari and apologized to those who were hurt by his involvement in the war.

Since that time, the two men have been traveling throughout Lebanon, and the world, to speak about forgiveness and reconciliation. Inside Lebanon, they rarely talk about Moral Re-Armament. They tell audiences what drove them to pick up arms, how they later realized that they had been misled, and what their feelings are now. Chaftari often expresses deep sorrow. For example, at one public gathering, he ended by saying, “Somewhere deep, deep, deep in my heart, it’s an injury that will never cease bleeding. I die every time I think about those I have killed, and there a lot of them, believe me ... there are a lot of them.” In this same appearance, Shihab concluded by saying, “We are the generation who fought each other, and we are very regretful, sad, and terribly sorry. We ask for pardon for everything wrong we did against Lebanon.” By sharing their stories of personal transformation and reconciliation, they hope to serve as an example, and stimulate the process of change in others, but they view this as a personal choice.

One Heart at a Time

It is for this reason that most of their work takes place on a personal basis. According to Chaftari, the group works “one heart at a time.” He told me that they go visit people and “talk about a change that should occur in the person in order to change the families where we live, the communities, the societies, the workplaces, the nations, and the world maybe.” This should all start within the individual or else change won't occur. He said that he sometimes talks about his military experience and sometimes about his private life or about other things he has started to change and still needs to change within himself to be a better person. Referencing Frank

Buchman, he once explained that he preached until his death that “people should be on God's side, not on evil's side and that each of us has that choice. We have to decide if we will be part of the healing side of our community or part of the sick side.” After this, he suggested that I try an exercise at home. He told me to take four pieces of paper and write absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness, and absolute love on them. Then, he told me to write where I stand in relation to each of the standards. On the subject of absolute honesty, he warned that if I am not completely honest towards myself in the beginning, I won't be able to realize what is wrong and work to improve it. But it is also important to be honest with others and with God, or an absolute power. In relation to purity, he explained that I need to be pure in the way I think and the way I deal with people, which he thinks of as a purity of intention. Through this exercise, he told me that I would discover that I have a lot to do and, as I continue to go back to these sheets of paper, I would be able to cross out where I was, which will help me reach to a higher level. The absolute is never attainable since it is not human, but he told me that it is something that one must always strive for by trying to improve oneself.

This exchange showed me how the process of personal change is directed, but it was through a chance event that happened afterwards that I learned how it is spread “one heart at a time.” As Chaftari and I were drinking our tea, Marwan Hamadeh got up and left the café. Hamadeh is a former Minister of Parliament who resigned his post in protest over the Syrian-backed three-year extension of President Emile Lahoud's term. Afterwards, he helped to push for UN Resolution 1559, which was adopted in September 2004, and called for the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon and the disarmament of all militias, including Hizbollah. A few weeks later, he was injured in a car bomb explosion that killed his driver and injured his bodyguard. The explosion is considered to have been the beginning of the series of

assassinations of Lebanese politicians and journalists that later included the assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri. Chaftari and Hamadeh used to be enemies during the war, but they met at the Tripartite Agreement negotiations in 1985, with Chaftari representing the Christian forces, and Hamadeh representing the Druze forces. Since that time, Chaftari told me that he has had great respect for Hamadeh. But he is worried that part of him is now full of hatred and bitterness. He had gone over to speak with him when he first entered the café, but it wasn't until after Hamadeh left that he told me what he had said. Since the explosion, Chaftari thinks that Hamadeh has been acting as if he survived for an earthly mission - to liberate Lebanon - and he wanted to give him a chance to think about whether God actually had a higher mission for him. He asked him if he had ever thought about why he was not killed during the assassination attempt. Reminding him that he had six assassination attempts against his own life during the war years, he suggested that maybe God also had a higher mission for him. Afterwards, he told him that he would set up a time to talk to him about doing something else to start becoming a positive power, not a negative power.

This shows how people who identify with the movement spread their message. They speak on a personal basis about change, and provide the tools through which it is to be achieved. The process is never considered to be complete, but is guided by the daily practice of listening for the next steps forward. It starts on a personal level, and then extends outward. Chaftari told me, "you look around and let God lead you to what needs to be done in the world." This is what led him to write the apology letter, but every person finds for himself or herself the right course of action. For two women, one Christian and the other Muslim, this led to the creation of Linaltaki (let us meet). One of them became involved with MRA during the war, but the other recounted a specific event that led her to the group. She was driving through the Dahiya one

day,¹³ and saw people rushing into the cafés to look at the television. Everybody looked overwhelmed and distraught. But then, she says, “I drove away for five minutes, and realized that people there were going about their business, having not heard the latest news. So I wondered, how many Lebanons are there? How can people who live side by side be so far apart in terms of their concerns and preoccupations?” She asked herself if she had made the effort “to reach out to the other side, to try and understand their fears and concerns,” and realized that she had not. The two women eventually crossed paths in a MRA meeting. When I asked them about it, one of them said about the other, “she was there with her heart wide open ... she always welcomed my suggestions to try and deepen the dialogue between us.” They decided to expand their personal dialogue to a larger group of women, and went to Caux for training in the formation of a “Peace Circle.” Used by MRA groups around the world, Peace Circles are described as “small, localized community gatherings of women who together work through material especially designed to deepen their friendship and understanding of each other and their peace creating capabilities.”¹⁴

They invited women from different religious and cultural backgrounds to join the circle, which meets every month. Each gathering is organized around a theme, and follows a specific framework. For example, in a session on forgiveness, which I attended, we watched a film about Madame Irène Laure. Her apology is often held up by MRA members as “one of the most dramatic examples of the power of a simple appeal of forgiveness” (Montville 1991: 161). The story of her personal transformation was told in this film. Laure had been in the French Resistance during World War II. Her experiences in the resistance, and the torturing of her own son, gave her a passionate hatred for Germans. After the war, she witnessed the opening of a

¹³ The southern Shi‘i suburbs of Beirut are referred to as the Dahiya.

¹⁴ <http://www.iofc.org/creators-of-peace-how>

mass grave in which she saw the mutilated bodies of some of her comrades, and the film says that she “longed for the total destruction of Germany.” She later entered the French Constituent Assembly and became a leader of the socialist women of her country. As such, she was invited to attend the second Caux conference, which was held in 1947. When she arrived, she was shocked to find Germans there. Every time a German would speak, she would leave the hall. She finally decided to pack her bags and go home, but then she ran into Frank Buchman, who asked her, “How can you expect to rebuild Europe if you reject the German people?” She retired to her room and thought about whether she could give up her hatred for the sake of the new Europe. When she came out a few days later, she asked to be given the opportunity to speak to the conference. She addressed the 600 people in the hall, including the Germans, saying, “I have so hated Germany that I wanted to see her erased from the map of Europe. But I have seen here that my hatred is wrong. I am sorry and I wish to ask the forgiveness of all the Germans present.” Following her appeal for forgiveness, a German woman stepped up from the hall and took her hand. Laure is quoted in the film saying, “At that moment I knew that I was going to give the rest of my life to take this message of forgiveness and reconciliation to the world.” In 1948, she and her husband traveled to Germany. For eleven weeks, they crisscrossed the country, addressing meetings and state parliaments. In each, she repeated her apology, and many officers, politicians, and young former Nazis apologized to her in return.

After this film was shown, we were asked to name the characteristics of a peacemaker in what was referred to as a “peace circle” (*da'irat al-salam*) The five Christian and five Muslim women that had gathered for the meeting that day called out characteristics and the moderator wrote them down on a large pad on an easel in the front of the room. After this, we were asked to write down and then answer two questions: 1) Have I ever been wounded on the basis of my

sect, religion, gender, race, or other category of difference? 2) To what degree is this category important to me? Two Christian women told stories about times when they felt wounded by other Christians on the basis of their sect, and how hurt this had made them feel. Then, the moderator called on me. Following the other two women, I somehow felt obliged to discuss an event related to religion. I told the group about the problems I faced when I went to Northern Ireland to meet my extended family for the first time, and was not treated warmly due to my father's conversion from Catholicism to Protestantism. I said that this was the first time religion was made into a significant category of identification for me, but while saying this, I realized that the experience of recounting this story had also transformed it. I was being asked to connect a feeling of being hurt to my religion, which is not how I had thought about this event previously, which had long since been resolved. However, I soon realized that not all of the women would feel the pressure to address the question in the same way I had. After I spoke, a Muslim woman told the group that she had never felt wounded based on her sect or religion, and that Islam was the most important aspect of her self. Three other Muslim women said they felt the same way. The last one talked about how hard it is to be treated differently because she is Iranian and not Lebanese. For her, Islam is the most important aspect of her self, but she doesn't think that others really feel the same way or they wouldn't treat her like an outsider. After each woman had a chance to speak, the discussion was brought to a close. When I talked to the two organizers later, they explained that the purpose of the circle was not to address the specific harms, but to draw attention to fact that everyone in the circle shared the experience of having been harmed. Despite the fact that this didn't happen, the goal was to draw attention to the issue of difference, emphasizing the need for the women to become active peacemakers in their own lives.

The meetings always end with what was called “sharing time” (*musharakat al-awqat*) The women are broken into two groups, and asked to arrange their chairs in a small circle. Then, they are asked to speak one at a time about an issue facing them in our life. In one of the meetings, a Christian woman spoke at length about how badly she had been treated by her grandmother when she was young, and how much it continues to affect her today. One of the Muslim women told her that sometimes we have to “go through bad to get to the good, and that the important thing is to keep ourselves clean (*nazif*) for Allah so that we can experience the good.” The moderator stopped her, saying it was “sharing time,” and that no one is supposed to respond to the stories being told by others. She asked her why this was so, and the moderator answered simply that it was “their time.” Inside the circle, the discussions are supposed to focus on the women’s life experiences, but this showed me that the real emphasis is placed on listening. The women are asked to listen and show compassion for each other’s struggles and concerns, not their own. The goal of this activity was best articulated by one of the group’s founders, who told me: “I have learned to step into the shoes of my Christian friends, to see the beauty in things whenever they see it, to share their joy and grief, to find a spiritual connection that is based on faith.” As her words suggest, the concern is not with interfaith dialogue, but with listening to others, and being open to their concerns as fellow human beings, and as friends.

Garden of Forgiveness

Although change starts on personal level, this is a global movement. Chaftari and Shihab travel around the world sharing their stories with others, women in peace circles travel to visit each other in their respective countries, there are youth exchanges between countries every summer, and other MRA teams come to Lebanon to share their stories. For example, in March 2009, Pastor James Wuye and Imam Muhammad Ashafa from Nigeria toured the country. They

led opposing, armed militias in Nigeria's civil war, and are now co-directors of the Muslim-Christian Interfaith Mediation Centre. They came to Lebanon for the Arabic premiere of *The Imam and the Pastor*, which tells the story of how they made their transition, forgiving one another and building a successful grass-roots conflict resolution initiative. The official premiere was held under the patronage of the President of the Republic, and was attended by over 600 spiritual and religious leaders, politicians, reporters, students, and members of the public. It received extensive press coverage, and the two men were later interviewed for Lebanon's most watched talk show *Kalam al-Nas* (Talk of the People). In a much less publicized part of their trip, they visited the site of another local initiative in Lebanon, which is itself growing into a global movement: *Hadiqat as-Samah* (The Garden of Forgiveness).

Alexandra Asseily developed the idea for the Garden of Forgiveness in January 1998, and her husband, George, asked Solidere to build it into the redevelopment plan for downtown Beirut. The company agreed, and she chose a site for the Garden close to Martyrs' Square, the termination of the wartime Green Line, at the heart of the city's historic core. The plot of land is surrounded by three mosques and three churches, and is rich in archaeological history dating back 5,000 years. She said that she decided on this particular site because it had always been a meeting point for Lebanon's many communities. As such, it offers a neutral location with a "multi-communal history," and establishes "a physical and conceptual link" between the places of worship surrounding it. Given the layers of history and cultural pluralism upon which it rests, she thought it was an ideal site for people "to learn about their heritage, and about each other." Solidere agreed to finance the project, and hired American landscape artist Kathryn Gustafson and architect Neil Porter to design the garden. It is still incomplete, but when I sat down with Asseily, she showed me the plans. Tree-lined walkways, water fountains, sculptures, and

benches will fill the Garden, and the ruins of past civilizations will also be carefully preserved. The goal is to combine elements of Lebanon's natural landscape with the city's historic layers, creating a space that emphasizes the themes of understanding, forgiveness, and unity.

Asseily envisions the Garden as a place sheltered from the bustle of the city. By being both serene and regenerative, she hopes it will "encourage calm and gentle reflection and individual introspection." As she explained it, her goal is "to induce, not preach, the concept of forgiveness." While the motive and theme of the Garden will be made clear through aphorisms and reflective sayings, she wants each person to be able to draw something different from it. When I was speaking with Asseily, I was reminded of something Chaftari had told me when he was talking about his first experience with silent time. He told me that he always tried to keep himself in a noisy, crowded place in order not to stay by himself and think because it was "too heavy and difficult." He later went on to say that in Lebanon, Christians and Muslims are living together this way now. The Garden of Forgiveness is seen to provide a space away from all of this. Asseily told me that "coming to terms with the cruelties of war is compounded by the distractions of a modern city. Such diversions drain our attention span and disengage us from contemplation." For her, introspection and reflection are essential to reconstruction and rehabilitation. Without it, she told me "the impressive projects underway may well be eclipsed by the same forces which razed their predecessors."

Asseily is a psychotherapist, and together with her husband founded the Centre for Lebanese Studies, which is affiliated to the Middle East Centre at St Antony's College, Oxford. In her writings, she is concerned with the issue of why conflicts repeat in cycles across generations, and how pent-up grievances provide the source for renewed conflict. She argues:

Current as well as past, or more historic, conflicts affect us psychologically as individuals and in our relationships, especially with loved ones (not just 'others')

or enemies). They shape our beliefs and patterns of behavior. This contributes to our propensity to participate in the next wave of strife or pass it on to the next generation thereby creating a cycle of violence. Thus, each one of us plays some role in this cycle - either actively or passively. We each therefore bear some responsibility in it. The responsibility becomes clearer when, through our beliefs and behaviour, we pass on traumas and grievances to our children. Similarly, we can see ourselves as receivers of inherited patterns and traumas from conflicts rooted before our time (2007: 90).

In her view, the only way to break free of these inherited patterns and defuse the emotional charges that perpetuate violence is to take responsibility for the active or passive role we play in propagating a conflict, become aware of the behaviors and beliefs that reinforce that role, and release the source of the grievances. Central to this process is the concept of forgiveness. She writes, “the only thing that will bring us closer to lasting peace is a different way of facing our memories than we have used before. This requires leveraging the formidable power to change in the human heart in order to forgive” (103).

Although there is no consensual definition of forgiveness, she uses the one proposed by Enright and Coyle, who contend, “in genuine forgiveness, one who has suffered an unjust injury chooses to abandon his or her right to resentment and retaliation, and instead offers mercy to the offender” (1998: 140). For them, forgiveness begins with hurt and pain. The injured person has a moral right to anger and resentment, but chooses to give up this right and desire for revenge. Instead he or she shows compassion, benevolence and love to the offender. What is important about this notion of forgiveness to Asseily is that it stresses the importance of the forgiver’s free and unconditional choice to forgive, and the notion of personal change. However, she views forgiveness in slightly different terms. She writes:

Where I differ with some of the above is that I find that the term ‘offers mercy to the offender’ can seem patronising. I think of forgiveness as a self healing process, which results in benefits for one and all. Forgiveness therefore is ultimately an act of self preservation, not a gift to be bestowed on others by us (or by others on us), but received as a grace by surrendering our pain and offered to

ourselves and others, and even to events beyond our control, with a willing and open heart. Our freedom comes when we realise that in order to thrive and survive and to break out of our prisons of resentments and hate, we do not have another choice but to forgive and live our true purposes – fully alive (104).

Drawing on the theologian Lewis Smedes, she stresses that forgiveness is to be distinguished from pardoning, condoning, excusing, forgetting and denying, and that it does not mean that one surrenders their right to justice (1996). For her, forgiveness is an act of self-preservation that begins with a choice to become free of the burdens of anger, guilt, fear and hate. It is an internal journey that requires being willing to take responsibility for finding a way out of old grievances, “even when we wish to blame others and feel we have a right to do so” (108). Although it is very difficult, and requires courage, she argues it is the only approach capable of breaking “the age-old cycle of violence and counter-violence so endemic to Lebanon” (107). According to Asseily, “as we begin to address our own cycle of fear, anger and guilt, we also create a new momentum of transformation around ourselves, in the lives we touch and within our group or community. We can build on this momentum to create new avenues that help us to reinforce and accelerate the process of healing and through that to break the cycles of violence. Each one of us is therefore a vital part of the whole. We are all responsible as individuals in creating a new and viable and peaceful Lebanon” (110).

These ideas are what motivated her to initiate the Garden, which she envisions as a “place to nurture and encourage forgiveness.” Based on this model, Gardens of Forgiveness have also begun to expand globally. In November 2005, Chaftari and Shehab were invited to meet with a group of New Yorkers who had lost members of their immediate family in 9/11, and were interested in building a Garden of Forgiveness at the former World Trade Center site. Both men told the visitors their stories of personal transformation. In his talk, Shehab described an event from 1983, when he was about to kill two US prisoners captured after a US ship, the *New Jersey*,

shelled West Beirut. The bombardment had absolutely terrified his mother, but she pleaded with him not to kill the prisoners, and he exchanged them instead. According to Asseily, an American CEO that was part of the group went up to him afterwards and said, “I was stationed aboard one of the US navy ships off the coast. I want to ask your forgiveness – not for my hate, but for my indifference at that time to the suffering of your mother and the people of Beirut.” An American woman who had lost her son, a New York firefighter, is also said to have come up to him in tears. She hugged him and said, “Now, I am able to really forgive” (Henderson 2007). Although the World Trade Center project never took off, the priest in charge of relief ministries at Ground Zero, who spearheaded the project, later expanded it into a Gardens of Forgiveness network, proposing that gardens serve as “vehicles through which to raise awareness about the power of forgiveness” worldwide, promoting conflict transformation and healing one garden at a time.¹⁵

Forgiveness and Reconciliation

As I discussed in the previous chapter, one of the most striking features of the politics of late modernity is the increasing role that the past plays in the present. Nancy Scheper-Hughes describes the preoccupation with the past as a “romance with remorse and with reparation, memory, and healing” (1999: 156). Connected to this, many writers have commented on the growing role of apologies at the political level. They cite, among others, Prime Minister Blair’s apology for the Irish Famine, US President Clinton’s apology for the African slave trade, and the Pope’s apology for the failure of the Catholic Church to stand up to Nazism in World War II (Trouillot 2000; Barkan and Karn 2006; Gibney et al. 2008; Lind 2010). In this section, I examine how reconciliation, apology, and acknowledgment are conceptualized of in the transitional justice field, along with what is carefully excluded from it: forgiveness.

¹⁵ For more on the Gardens for Forgiveness network, see <http://forgivetogive.org/>

Transitional justice practitioners see reconciliation as an important aspect of dealing with the past. However, unlike the concept of reconciliation described above, their view draws on the liberal human rights tradition. In this tradition, perpetrators are to be punished and victims vindicated. According to Daniel Philpott, it is part retributivist, insisting that military and political leaders receive the punishment they deserve, and part consequentialist, stressing the value of punishment for rehabilitation, deterrence, and establishing new political orders based in the rule of law. He contrasts this to religiously based arguments for reconciliation, which are grounded in a form of restorative justice. He writes:

In all of these traditions, reconciliation means, broadly, restoration of a broken relationship to a state of right relationship. But relationship in what sense? In the liberal human rights paradigm, right relationship means that citizens come to respect and recognize one another's human rights and deliberative capacities. Religious concepts differ. They may well endorse these dimensions of right relationship, but they also envision a fuller restoration, involving apology, forgiveness, empathetic acknowledgment of suffering and the transformation of enmity between both groups and individuals. These restorations are intrinsically important, increasing human flourishing, but important also for leavening, diluting and sometimes transforming the emotions of hatred, resentment and revenge that frustrate stable and just political orders, sometimes for several generations (2007a: 97).

The distinctions between the two paradigms are most evident in their way of thinking about justice. As Philpott points out, “restorative justice, like religious reconciliation, might well encompass punishment, reparations and the restoration of human rights and citizenship, but it also includes other restorative practices like apology, repentance, acknowledgment and the overcoming of hatred, as well as perhaps the most distinctive, innovative and controversial practice that the religious traditions have to offer—forgiveness” (98).

While some scholars in the liberal tradition have attempted to incorporate a form of political forgiveness (Minow 1998; Digeser 2001; Govier 2002, 2006; Amstutz 2005; Daly and Sarkin 2007) into transitional justice, Philpott (2006) details three issues that restorative justice

and religious reconciliation raise for proponents of the liberal human rights paradigm. The first of these is the issue of punishment. Fearing that forgiveness means amnesty, they argue that reconciliation cannot be a substitute for justice. The second issue is that of government interference in decisions that are properly personal. Religious perspectives call for “forgiveness, apology, and other practices that involve transformation of the heart” (Philpott 2007b: 22), which are said to violate the freedom of the individual, and the distinction between the private and the public. Third is the role of religion in politics. Liberal human rights advocates argue that religious language in the public domain undermines public reason, contradicting liberalism’s spirit of openness.

In order to contend with these issues, Pablo de Grieff, the Director of Research at ICTJ, and the recently appointed UN Special Rapporteur on Transitional Justice, has proposed a set of criteria for a “defensible conception of reconciliation” (2008: 120). For him, this conception of reconciliation is one that must be applied on the civic or political level, not on the level of the individual. He specifies that it is not to be used as a substitute for justice, and should not transfer responsibilities from perpetrators to victims. It also should not place an emphasis on wiping the slate clean, or on a “turn of mind” that “requires exceptional virtue amounting to sainthood” (121). While he states, “the religious origins of a conception of reconciliation do not disqualify it,” it is important to find a conception that can be “articulated in terms that do not depend on any particular set of religious beliefs” (122). Given these constraints, he argues that there are three plausible conceptions. The first views reconciliation as a concept that can be reduced to its essential components: criminal justice, truth telling, reparations, and institutional reforms. The second is a view proposed by many transitional justice practitioners, which focuses on the idea of coexistence. This view is best articulated through a popular document in the field, which states:

At its simplest, [reconciliation] means finding a way to live alongside former enemies – not necessarily to love them, or forgive them, or forget the past in any way, but to coexist with them, to develop the degree of cooperation necessary to share our society with them, so that we all have better lives together than we have had separately (Bloomfield 2003: 12).

While de Greiff agrees that an attitudinal change is required in order for reconciliation to be effective, he thinks this conception is “too loose” (124), and carries “costs” (125). The third view brings the two previous ones together by placing reconciliation in relation to the notion of civic trust. He describes civic trust as a “disposition that can develop among citizens who are strangers to one another, but who are members of the same *political* community” (126). In this view, reconciliation is “the condition under which citizens can trust one another *as citizens*” (126). He favors this view because it makes clear that reconciliation requires an attitudinal change, but it also places the burden of this change on state actors, who are required to take specific concrete steps in order to make institutions and persons trustworthy. He argues that it is only through such actions that citizens can become “committed to the norms and values that motivate their ruling institutions, sufficiently confident that those who operate those institutions do so also on the basis of those norms and values, and sufficiently secure about their fellow citizens’ commitment to abide by these basic norms and values” (126-7). But he also emphasizes that this conception of reconciliation is “scalar,” which means that it leaves room outside its formal, secular institutions for the “deeply personal, religious, or spiritual” (127). As a result, he says that it “does not require, although it may lead to, forgiveness” (127).

De Greiff contends that transitional justice mechanisms are designed to promote civic trust through action. In previous chapters, I highlighted the connections that international experts draw between prosecutions, truth commissions, and reconciliation. Prosecutions are meant to contribute to the reconstitution of trust between citizens and their institutions through the

provision of justice, while truth commissions are used to demonstrate the commitment of political leaders to a new political project, and to the needs of victims. But it is in the domain of reparations that the seriousness of the state's efforts to restore relationships of equality and respect is said to be manifested (de Greiff 2007). In the workshop on reparations,¹⁶ the international expert, Peter Van der Auweraert,¹⁷ explained that reparations provide a measure of recognition to victims that their rights as citizens were violated. They are meant to solidify their status not as victims, but as bearers of rights equal to those of other citizens. As such, the goal of reparations is not to restore victims to their position before the violations, but to provide a reliable indication that the state is committed to respect the equality of rights of all citizens, and to signal its intentions to behave differently in the future. This recognition is not something that can simply be bestowed, but requires the participation of those whom the program seeks to recognize. In some cases, this entails symbolic reparations, such as public apologies, memorials, and public rites and ceremonies, which are usually collective in nature, and, in others, it entails material reparations, such as financial payments or service packages that might include medical, educational, housing, and other forms of assistance.

It was in the context of symbolic reparations that the topic of public apologies were discussed. The most surprising aspect of this session was that Chaftari was not invited to speak. Inside Lebanon, his apology is held up as a model, and it is often remarked upon that he is the only leading militia leader who has apologized for his wrongdoings during the civil war.¹⁸ Since making his apology, Chaftari has also been actively involved with many of the issues addressed

¹⁶ "How to 'Pay' for it? Material and Moral Reparations." Seventh Workshop in the "What is To Be Done?: Lebanon's War-Loaded Memory" series. Held in Beirut, Lebanon, April 25-26, 2009.

¹⁷ Peter Van der Auweraert is the Senior Legal Advisor for the Reparations Program at the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

¹⁸ Even the New York Times has remarked upon this. On April 16, 2010 it ran a major feature on Assaad Chaftari entitled, "10 Years After a Mea Culpa, No Hint of a 'Me, Too.'"

in the workshops, and he was invited to give a presentation in each of them, making this the first (and only) workshop in which he was not invited to address the group formally. Given that his public apology was not delivered in an official capacity, it was not considered applicable to the discussion at hand. In the transitional justice field, public apologies are seen to play a specific role. Practitioners such as de Greiff argue that, “the acceptance of responsibility and the expression of remorse characteristic of apologies may be what some citizens need to make the attitudinal change that allows them to grant their trust to those individuals and institutions who have earned it” (2008: 121). In such cases, apologies are to be given by state officials, and accompanied by specific mechanisms and institutional reforms, whose norms and values they are to affirm. Chaftari’s apology was not meant to be norm-affirming. In fact, it was quite the opposite. It marked a personal transformation, signaling that he had accepted responsibility for his previous actions, made a break with previous ideologies and identities, forgave all those that hurt him, his family, and his community, and was committed to doing everything that he could to remedy the hurt that he had caused. Although his apology is widely considered to be a “premiere” in Lebanon’s history, there is nowhere for it to be placed in the transitional justice framework. As a result, Chaftari was left on the margins, becoming a symbol of that which transitional justice doesn’t want to confront.

Conclusion

Although the concept of reconciliation figures prominently in both transitional and restorative justice, there is no consensus about what the term means or what achieving it would require. Nonetheless, in the study of how transitional justice practitioners attempt to set limits on the concept, a number of important observations can be made. One key point, which many scholars now put forward, is that transitional justice has become “overdetermined by a narrow

legalistic lens” (McEvoy 2007: 413). This is discernable not only in its emphasis on punishment, but also in its state-centric and “top-down” understanding of reconciliation. This does not mean that transitional justice ignores emotions such as hatred, resentment and revenge, but it tends to speak of reconciliation in terms of “interrupting the continuum between hatred and revenge” (Villa-Vicencio 2006: 12), not in terms of practices that “engage the soul” (Philpott 2007: 99) such as apology, forgiveness, and the transformation of enmity.

Such observations have led Philpott to argue that the concept of forgiveness “doesn’t have a lot of status in the international community, including the United Nations, human rights organizations, international lawyers, and diplomats” (2012). While this may generally be true, it is important to recognize that many religious NGOs, such as the one examined in this chapter, are affiliated with the United Nations.¹⁹ These organizations are not marginal, and in fact play an increasingly prominent role in what is referred to as “bottom-up” peacebuilding, promoting non-violent conflict resolution through the transformation of interpersonal relations and individual behaviors (Lefranc 2012). When put together, one sees that international intervention involves a network of religious and international NGOs, which sometimes work together, but often do not. Michael Humphrey argues that this has resulted in reconciliation being “restricted to creating islands of localized peace seeking” (2005: 206). However, at least in the islands created by MRA members, I would like to suggest that they are not localized, but, in fact, linked to extensive global networks. It is in these linked sites that forgiveness seems to be encouraged, both below and outside the formal institutions of transitional justice. Interestingly, it is also in these sites that personal responsibility and compassion for other fellow human beings are most heavily emphasized. This provides a useful point from which to think through the moral sensibility towards victims’ suffering at the heart of transitional justice, where compassion is abstracted

¹⁹ In the last survey conducted, there were 263 UN-affiliated RNGOs (Berger 2003).

from ethical practices, and demonstrated through a collective responsibility to truth, accountability, and redress for past abuses. In the conclusion, I will consider the wider implications of this form of international intervention, which is slowly making its way into more countries in the Middle East, and the wider Global South.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation critically interrogated transitional justice as a form of international intervention in postwar Lebanon. In Lebanon, transitional justice cannot be understood simply as a set of formal mechanisms. Although the UN Security Council mandated the creation of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon in May 2007, it hardly figures in public discourse, except as a highly politicized example of selective justice. Like the general amnesty law passed in 1991, it is accused of reserving truth and justice for the political elite, and of marginalizing the needs and priorities of ordinary victims. Nonetheless, the call for *al-haqiqa* (the truth) that emerged after the Hariri assassination, and eventually led to the establishment of the Special Tribunal, offered a vehicle to expand a campaign for truth, memory, and debate about the civil war that had been developing in Lebanese “civil society” for years. In this dissertation, I endeavored to trace both the issues of concern to the groups and individuals involved with this variegated campaign, and the ways international organizations seek to “help” those “driving and shaping change in their societies.”¹ I demonstrated that international organizations do not simply “assist” groups and individuals to pursue change, but also work to transform and reorient the concepts, practices, and sensibilities through which that change is pursued. Although I am not proposing that international organizations were, or ever will be entirely successful, the study of their interventions provides a lens through which to scrutinize the foundational norms, assumptions, moralities, and sensibilities of transitional justice. In this conclusion, I will consider the moral dispositions towards suffering, modes of political subjectivity, practices of speaking and remembering, and conceptions of guilt and responsibility that have been discussed in this dissertation, and provide some final reflections on the larger implications of this form of

¹ <http://ictj.org/about>

international intervention, which is increasingly used as a means to deal with the threats to international peace and security posed by “failed states” and “small wars” in the Global South.

Since the end of the Cold War, transitional justice has grown into a globally normalized form of intervention following periods of political repression and civil war. At the heart of this intervention is a vision of history that endeavors to redress the harms of the past in order to produce a future characterized by the nonrecurrence of violence, the democratic rule of law, and a culture of human rights. In order to achieve this vision, practitioners contend that a set of judicial and extrajudicial mechanisms need to take account of past crimes, and that the “stain of the crime” must be integrated into the “heart of society” (Hazan 2010: 9). This is accomplished through truth commissions, prosecutions, memory laws, reparation programs, public expressions of repentance, the opening of archives, the rewriting of history books, and the construction of memorials, among other things. When instituted, this has the effect of pathologizing and isolating “transitional” societies, which are forced to reckon with their dark pasts for years on end, absolving other supposedly more stable and established democratic nations from facing history, or their own role in the “atrocities” that were committed. Given this study’s emphasis on how transitional justice seeks to intervene in new contexts, the issue I focused on was how this pathology is constituted. Lebanon is often accused of being stuck in a repetitive cycle of violence and revenge. This idea shares key conceptual links to the psychoanalytic notion of trauma, which is said to lock victims into compulsive structures of repetition. One of the international experts made the connection between the personal and the social explicit. Quoting William Faulkner, he said, “‘The past is never really past.’ That is, the past is prologue. The past is the future. And without addressing the past, whether we are talking in our personal life, but more particularly

societies, a society cannot simply shove the past under the rug. It really must be dealt with.”² Although the notion of trauma is rarely, if ever, mentioned, it is taken for granted that the violence of the past needs to be dealt with in order to prevent it from being repeated in the present or future. Assumed to be a kind of truism, what remains unstated in this assertion is that cultural trauma must also be constructed.

Jeffrey Alexander contends that it is the meanings attributed to events, not the events themselves, that “provide the sense of shock and fear” associated with cultural trauma (2004: 10). The cultural construction of trauma, he argues, begins with a claim to some fundamental injury, which is then transmitted through influential cultural agents such as the mass media and religious, aesthetic, legal, scientific, and state institutions to a wider audience. The projected trauma claim defines the nature of the trauma and the victim, establishes the relation of the trauma to those who only experienced it indirectly, and assigns responsibility (21). While I find troubling his assertion that this model can “fluidly be extended to the experiences of trauma outside of Western societies” (25), it is useful for thinking through how cultural and historical trauma is constructed in the field of transitional justice. In Lebanon, the traumatic event is constituted as the civil war, as well as its aftereffects. Although the precise nature of the trauma is still in the process of being defined, the collection of video testimonies from those who lived through the war provides an insight into how it is being conceptualized. It is viewed as a trauma that extends into all aspects of daily life and was marked by multiple human and humanitarian right violations, making all those who did not pick up arms its victims. The fact that those who lived through the war are now being encouraged to speak about their experiences of pain and suffering through the genre of video testimony helps to clarify how they are being placed in

² “A War Without Crimes? Amnesties and Prosecutions.” Fourth Workshop in the “What is To Be Done?: Lebanon’s War-Loaded Memory” series. Held in Beirut, Lebanon, October 18-19, 2008.

relation to a wider audience. As I discussed in the chapter on testimony, the power of victims' traumatic testimonies is not considered to be legal but empathetic (Humphrey 2003). With so-called normative behavior eroded by years of conflict and violence, victims' testimonies are supposed to engender acknowledgment and collective responsibility, making the moral imperative of humanitarian compassion the new foundation of a burgeoning rule of law.

It is often stated by transitional justice practitioners that change starts when victims begin to speak. Testimonies of suffering are essential to transitional justice, which constructs the individual victim as the foundation for moral and social reconstruction. However, as the case of the relatives of the disappeared demonstrates, there are also specific rules and procedures put in place to regulate and direct victims' speech. Allen Feldman explains this through the concepts of trauma-tropism and nomo-tropism. He contends that transitional justice reorganizes collective memory around a point of prior historical wounding, which he terms a "trauma-tropism" (2002: 236, see also LaCapra 2009).³ Even though this trauma-tropism is initially used to indicate a point "of historical stasis, a punctuation beyond which society cannot narrate itself" (236), he argues that it eventually becomes prescriptive, setting in place new narrative procedures and standards by means of which to relocate and overcome the trauma. He writes:

A set of ethical and governmental prescriptives have been institutionalized in the transnational discourse of human rights that organically links trauma-tropism to nomo-tropism, a curvature towards law, that is, the relocation of trauma, injury, and pain from the individuals and community to institutionalized memory, public culture, legal institutions, and quasi-legal procedures of redress whereby persons and groups - 'victims of human rights violations' - are expected to overcome historical trauma through a repose in lawfulness (2002: 236).

This results not only in the narration of history around a set of legal and quasi-legal concepts, but also in these concepts becoming the approved social grammar for remembering the past. As I

³ This is a term used in botany to describe the "reactive curvature of a plant or an organism resulting from a prior inflicted wound" (Feldman 2002: 236).

discussed in relation to the “new” paradigm for memorialization, transitional justice establishes a framework for understanding the past that places it in a distant yet formative relationship to the interpretation of the present. It is for this reason that contemporary Lebanese art and video activism is often considered to be disruptive, unsettling memory as a means to problematize the present. However, perhaps even more troubling to the normative assumptions of transitional justice is that it often provokes questions that extend beyond the social grammar of law, and beyond the understanding of victimhood grounded in human and humanitarian rights violations.

Transitional justice is based on a clear moral dichotomy between victims and perpetrators. As I discussed in the introduction, it claims to work in the interest of victims, and advances a morality of humanitarianism, at the heart of which is the idea that the suffering of the rights-endowed victim can be alleviated through truth, justice, reparations, and institutional reforms. When there are different notions of victimhood proposed, such as the one which extends victimhood to those who perpetrated violence during the civil war, this dichotomy is challenged, as well as the notion of criminal justice that it gives rise to. The debate over justice is expanded to include forms of pre-conflict injustice that led young, low-ranking male and female fighters to pick up arms, and to forms of post-conflict injustice that led to their continued marginalization and exclusion. The dichotomy between victims and perpetrators is further challenged when victimhood is rejected in favor of taking personal responsibility, as it is by members of the MRA movement. It is here that the inherent tensions between different understandings of morality come to the surface. On the one hand, there is a transcendental morality that stipulates normative principles, and, on the other, there is an ethical morality, which reflects on the ethical practices that must be undertaken to restore right relationship. This is not to say that right relationship is

not important in the transitional justice framework, but it is understood to be dependent on the fostering of civic trust in state institutions and leaders.

The benefit of scrutinizing transitional justice as it makes its way into new national contexts is that it becomes possible to analyze the distinctive concepts, sensibilities, and subjectivities that it seeks to constitute on a practical and discursive level. As I demonstrated, this is accomplished not through an outright imposition of international norms and standards, but by reframing local needs and priorities, and connecting them to global issues, practices, and networks. Although this process is only in its initial stages in Lebanon, it has already spread to several other countries in the region, including Egypt and Tunisia. In these sites, and others throughout the Global South, it encourages a form of social and political activism that critiques the state through the language of human and humanitarian rights violations, and calls for truth, accountability, and redress for past crimes. Like many forms of international intervention, it draws its power and authority from a morality of humanitarianism, and is used to address the perceived threat of failed states, criminal states, and intrastate conflicts to global peace and security (Feldman and Ticktin 2010; Asad 2010; Clarke 2011). While most analyses of the new internationalism focus on the workings of “hard power,” be it military or legal, my concern is with a more diffuse form of power that works through expert knowledge and capacity building to reorient those “shaping change in their societies.” It does so not through coercion or domination, but through a form of power that works through the promise of social and political change that it offers. This is not surprising, given that it offers access to a universalist form of political critique valuable to those who desire social and political change. Yet, by engaging with this promise, local struggles are subjected to the normalizing regimes of international rights discourses. While this provides those who have previously been marginalized with spaces from which to make new

demands for truth, justice, and reparations, the uneven emphasis on legal and political infrastructures as the mechanisms that will secure them closes off other understandings of justice and reconciliation, or at least marginalizes them. By calling for these infrastructures, such claims also help to expand the global dominion of international law and liberal democracy, and may even make further international intervention appear justified, or desirable.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Lebanese Media Consulted

Al-Nahar, 1998-2012
Al-Safir, 1998-2012
Al-Akhbar, 2006-2012
Daily Star, 1998-2012

Literature

Agamben, Giorgio

1998 *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*. Daniel Heller-Roazen, transl. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

1999 *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*. Daniel Heller-Roazen, transl. New York: Zone Books.

Akhavan, Payam

1998 Justice in the Hague, Peace in the Former Yugoslavia? A Commentary on the United Nations War Crimes Tribunals. *Human Rights Quarterly* 20(4): 737-816.

Alexander, Jeffrey

2004 *Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma*. In *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*. Jeffrey Alexander, Ron Eyerman, Bernhard Giesen, Neil J. Smelser, and Piotr Sztompka, eds. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Allen, Lori

2009 *Martyr Bodies in the Media: Human Rights, Aesthetics, and the Politics of Immediation in the Palestinian Intifada*. *American Ethnologist* 36(1): 161–180.

Amnesty International

2011 *Never Forgotten: Lebanon's Missing People*. London.

Amstutz, Mark

2005 *The Healing of Nations: The Promise and Limits of Political Forgiveness*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Appleby, Scott

1999. *The Ambivalence of the Sacred*. Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield.

Aptel, Cécile

2007 Some Innovations in the Statute of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. *Journal of International Criminal Justice* 5: 1107-1124.

Arthur, Paige

2009 How “Transitions” Resahped Human Rights: A Conceptual History of Transitional Justice. *Human Rights Quarterly* 31(2): 321-367.

Asad, Talal

2000 *What Do Human Rights Do? An Anthropological Inquiry*. *Theory and Event* 4(4).

2003 *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

2010 *Thinking About Terrorism and Just War*. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 23(1): 3-24.

- Asseily, Alexandra
2007 Breaking the Cycle of Violence in Lebanon and Beyond. In *Breaking the Cycle: Civil Wars in Lebanon*. Youssef Choueiri, ed. London: Stacey International.
- Assman, Aleida
2006 History, Memory, and the Genre of Testimony. *Poetics Today* 27(2): 261-273.
- Attwood, Bain
2008 In the Age of Testimony: The Stolen Generations Narrative, 'Distance,' and Public History. *Public Culture* 20(1): 75-95.
- Barak, Oren
2007 Don't Mention the War? The Politics of Remembrance and Forgetfulness in Postwar Lebanon. *Middle East Journal* 61(1): 49-70
- Barakat, Halim
1979 The Social Context. In *Lebanon in Crisis: Participants and Issues*. Edward Haley and Lewis Snider, eds. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.
- Barkan, Elazar
2001 The Guilt of Nations: Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Barkan, Elazar and Alexander Karn, eds.
2006 Taking Wrongs Seriously: Apologies and Reconciliation. Stanford University Press.
- Bashshur, Munir
2003 The Deepening of Social and Communal Cleavages in the Lebanese Educational System. In *Lebanon in Limbo*. Theodor Hanf and Nawaf Salam, eds. Baden-Baden, Germany: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft.
2007 History Teaching and History Textbooks in Lebanon. In *Teaching For Tolerance in Muslim Majority Societies*. Recep Kaymackcan and Oddbjorn Leirvik, eds. Istanbul: DEM Press.
- Bass, Gary Jonathan
2000 Stay the Hand of Vengeance: The Politics of War Crimes Tribunals. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Bazzi, Yussef
2005 Nadhar ilayya yāsir 'arafāt wa ibtasam [Yasir Arafat looked at me and smiled]. Beirut: Ashkal Alwan.
- Becherer, Richard
2005 A Matter of Life and Debt: The Untold Costs of Rafiq Hariri's New Beirut. *Journal of Architecture* 10(1):1-42 .
- Bell, Vikki
2011 Contemporary Art and Transitional Justice in Northern Ireland: The Consolation of Form. *Journal of Visual Culture* 10(3): 324-353.
- Bell, Vikki and Mario Di Paolantonio
2009 The Haunted Nomos: Activist-Artists and the (Im)Possible Politics of Memory in Transitional Argentina. *Cultural Politics* 5(2): 149-178.
- Benjamin, Walter
1999 The Arcades Project. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin, transl. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

- 1999 Theses on the Philosophy of History. *In* Illuminations. Harry Zorn, trans. London: Pimlico.
- 1999 The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. *In* Illuminations. Harry Zorn, trans. London: Pimlico.
- Bennett, Jill
2005 Empathic Vision: Affect, Trauma, and Contemporary Art. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Berger, Julia
2003 Religious Non-Governmental Organisations: An Exploratory Analysis. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 14(1): 15-39.
- Bloomfield, David
2003 Reconciliation: An Introduction. *In* Reconciliation After Violent Conflict: A Handbook. David Bloomfield, Teresa Barnes, and Luc Huyse, eds. Stockholm: IDEA.
- Beshara, Soha
2003 Resistance: My Life for Lebanon. New York: Soft Skull Press.
- Bevernage, Berber
2010 Writing the Past Out of the Present: History and the Politics of Time in Transitional Justice. *History Workshop Journal* 69: 111-131.
- Beydoun, Ahmad
2007 Movements of the Past and Deadlocks of the Present. *In* Breaking the Cycle: Civil Wars in Lebanon. Youssef Choueiri, ed. London: Stacey International.
- Bickford, Louis
2005 The Power of Memorials: Human Rights, Justice, and the Struggle for Memory. New York: International Center for Transitional Justice.
- Blaauw, Margriet and Virpi Lähteenmäki
2002 'Denial and Silence' or 'Acknowledgement and Disclosure'. *International Review of the Red Cross* 84(848): 767-783.
- Bonilla, Yarimar
2011 The Past is Made by Walking: Labor Activism and Historical Production in Postcolonial Guadeloupe. *Current Anthropology* 26(3): 313-339.
- Boraine, Alex
2000 A Country Unmasked: Inside South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Borneman, John
2002 Reconciliation After Ethnic Cleansing: Listening, Retribution, Affiliation. *Public Culture* 14(2): 281-304.
2011 Political Crime and the Memory of Loss. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Booth, James
2006 Communities of Memory: On Witness, Identity, and Justice. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Boss, Pauline
1999 Ambiguous Loss: Learning to Live with Unresolved Grief. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

- Brown, Laura
1995 Not Outside the Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma.” In Trauma: Explorations in Memory. Cathy Caruth, ed. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Brown, Wendy
1995 States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Buchman, Frank
1947 Remaking the World. London: Blandford Press.
- Burnet, Jennie
2008 The Injustice of Local Justice: Truth, Reconciliation, and Revenge in Rwanda. *Genocide Studies and Prevention* 3 (2):173–193.
- Buur, Lars
2001 The South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission: A Technique of Nation-State Formation. *In States of Imagination: Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial State*. Thomas Blom Hansen and Finn Stepputat, eds. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Calvino, Italo
1974 Invisible Cities. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.
- Cassin, Barbara
2001 Politics of Memory on Treatments of Hate. *The Public* 8(3): 9-22.
- Castongauy, James
2002 Representing Bosnia: Human Rights Claims and Global Media Culture. *In Truth Claims: Representation and Human Rights*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Choueiri, Youssef
2007 Explaining Civil Wars in Lebanon. *In Breaking the Cycle: Civil Wars in Lebanon*. Youssef Choueiri, ed. London: Stacey International.
- Clarke, Kamari Maxine
2007 Global Justice, Local Controversies: The International Criminal Court and the Sovereignty of Victims. *In Paths to International Justice: Social and Legal Perspectives*. Marie-Bénédicte Dembour and Tobias Kelly, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2009 Fictions of Justice: The International Criminal Court and the Challenge of Legal Pluralism in Sub-Saharan Africa. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2010 Rethinking Africa through its Exclusions: The Politics of Naming Criminal Responsibility. *Anthropological Quarterly* 83(3): 625-652.
2011 The Rule of Law Through Its Economies of Appearances: The Making of the African Warlord. *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 18(1): 7-40.
- Clarke, Kamari Maxine and Mark Goodale, eds.
2010 Fictions of Justice: Law and Power in the Post-Cold War Era. Cambridge University Press.
- Cohen, Stanley
1995 State Crimes of Previous Regimes: Knowledge, Accountability, and the Policing of the Past. *Law & Social Inquiry* 20(1): 7-50
- Connerton, Paul
1989 How Societies Remember. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Coxshall, Wendy
2005 From the Peruvian Reconciliation Commission to Ethnography: Narrative, Relatedness, and Silence. *Political and Legal Anthropology Review (PoLAR)* 20(2): 203-222.
- Crapanzano, Vincent
2011 *The Harkis: The Wound That Never Heals*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Crettol, Monique Crettol and Anne-Marie La Rosa
2006 The Missing and Transitional Justice: The Right to Know and the Fight Against Impunity. *International Review of the Red Cross* 88(862): 355-362.
- Cubilié, Anne.
2005 *Women Witnessing Terror: Testimony and the Cultural Politics of Human Rights*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Daly, Erin and Jeremy Sarkin
2007 *Reconciliation in Divided Societies: Finding Common Ground*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- David, Catherine, ed.
2002 *Tamás: Contemporary Arab Representations*. Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies.
- Dawes, James
2007 *That the World May Know: Bearing Witness to Atrocity*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- de Greiff, Pablo
2007 Addressing the Past: Reparations for Gross Human Rights Abuses. *In Civil War and the Rule of Law: Security, Development, Human Rights*. Agnes Hurwitz, ed. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
2008 The Role of Apologies in National Reconciliation Processes: On Making Trustworthy Institutions Trusted. *In The Age of Apology: Facing Up to the Past*. Mark Gibney, Rhoda Howard-Hassman, Jean-Marc Coicaud, and Niklaus Steiner, eds. Dembour, Marie Bénédicte, and Emily Haslam
2004 Silencing Hearings? Victim-Witnesses at War Crimes Trials. *European Journal of International Law* 15 (1):151-177.
- Deleuze, Gilles
1972 *Proust and Signs*. New York: G. Braziller.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari
1994 *What is Philosophy?* Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell, transl. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Dembour, Marie Bénédicte, and Tobias Kelly, eds.
2007 *Paths to International Justice: Social and Legal Perspectives*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Derrida, Jacques
1994 *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*. Peggy Kamuf, transl. New York and London: Routledge.
1995 *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*. Eric Prenowitz, transl. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

- Dewhurst, Polly
2008 *Transitional Justice and Disappearances: A Briefing Paper*. New York: International Center for Transitional Justice.
- Di Paolantonio, Mario
2011 *Remembrance-Learning, Fostering Nomos and Memorial Artistic Practices*. Philosophy of Education Society Great Britain Annual Conference. Oxford. April 1-3.
- Dirks, Nicholas
1990 *History as a Sign of the Modern*. *Public Culture* 2(2): 25-32. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Digester, Peter
2001 *Political Forgiveness*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Drexler, Elizabeth
2009 *Aceh, Indonesia: Securing the Insecure State*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Duggan, Lisa
2003 *The Twilight of Equality?: Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Eaglestone, Robert
2011 *Reading Perpetrator Testimony*. In *The Future of Memory*. Richard Crownshaw, Jane Elizabeth Kilby, and Antony Rowland, eds. Berghahn Press.
- Ekman, Ulrik and Frederik Tygstrup, eds.
2008 *Witness: Memory, Representation, and the Media in Question*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press.
- el-Hoss, Salim
1994 *Prospective Change in Lebanon*. In *Peace for Lebanon*. Deirdre Collings, ed. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- el-Khazen, Farid
2000 *The Breakdown of the State in Lebanon*. London: I. B. Tauris.
- el-Solh, Raghid
1996 *Lebanon and Arabism: National Identity and State Formation*. London: Centre for Lebanese Studies in association with I. B. Tauris.
- Elster, Jon
2004 *Closing the Books: Transitional Justice in Historical Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Eltringham, Nigel
2004 *Accounting for Horror: Post-Genocide Debates in Rwanda*. London: Pluto Press.
- Enright, Robert and Catherine Coyle
1998 *Researching the Process Model of Forgiveness Within Psychological Interventions*. In *Dimensions of Forgiveness: Psychological Research and Theological Forgiveness*. Everett Worthington, ed. Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press.
- Fassin, Didier
2007 *Humanitarianism as a Politics of Life*. *Public Culture* 19(3): 499-520.
2008 *The Humanitarian Politics of Testimony: Subjectification through Trauma in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. *Cultural Anthropology* 23(3): 531-558.

- 2010 Inequality of Lives, Hierarchies of Humanity: Moral Commitments and Ethical Dilemmas of Humanitarianism. In the Name of Humanity. Ilana Feldman and Miriam Ticktin, eds. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Fassin, Didier and Richard Rechtman
2009 The Empire of Trauma: An Inquiry into the Condition of Victimhood. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Feldman, Allen
2002 Strange Fruit: The South African Truth Commission and the Demonic Economies of Violence. *Social Analysis* 46(3): 234-265.
2004 Memory Theaters, Virtual Witnessing, and the Trauma-Aesthetic. *Biography* 27(1): 163-202.
- Feldman, Ilana
2007 Difficult Distinctions: Refugee Law, Humanitarian Practice, and Political Identification in Gaza. *Cultural Anthropology* 22(1): 129-169.
- Feldman, Ilana and Miriam Ticktin
2010 Introduction: Government and Humanity. *In* In the Name of Humanity: The Government of Threat and Care. Ilana Feldman and Miriam Ticktin, eds. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Felman, Shoshana, and Dori Laub
1992 Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Psychoanalysis, Literature, and History. New York: Routledge.
- Ferme, Mariane
2001 The Underneath of Things: Violence, History, and the Everyday in Sierra Leone. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Ferrándiz, Francisco
2006 The Return of Civil War Ghosts: The Ethnography of Exhumations in Contemporary Spain. *Anthropology Today* 22(3): 7-12.
- Finnstrom, Sverker
2008 Living with Bad Surroundings: War, History, and Everyday Moments in Northern Uganda. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Freud, Sigmund
1917 Mourning and Melancholia. *In* Standard Edition 14: 243-258.
- Frisch, Andrea
2004 The Invention of the Eyewitness: Witnessing and Testimony in Early Modern France. The University of North Carolina Press.
- Gaeta, Paola
2007 To Be (Present) or Not to Be (Present): Trials *In Abstentia* Before the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. *Journal of International Criminal Justice* 5:1165-1174.
- Ghannam, Farha
2002 Remaking the Modern: Space, Relocation, and the Politics of Identity in a Global Cairo. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gibney, Mark, Rhoda Howard-Hassman, Jean-Marc Coicaud, and Niklaus Steiner, eds.
2008 The Age of Apology: Facing Up to the Past. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

- Gillis, John, ed.,
1994 *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identities*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gilsenan, Michael
1996 *Lords of the Lebanese Marches: Violence and Narrative in an Arab Society*. London: I. B. Tauris.
- Givani, Michal
2011 *Witnessing/Testimony*. *Mafté'akh* 2e: 147-169.
- Gledhill, John
1997 *Liberalism, Socio-Economic Rights and the Politics of Identity: From Moral Economy to Indigenous Rights.* *In Human Rights, Culture and Context: Anthropological Perspectives*. Richard Wilson, ed. London: Pluto Press.
- Goldstein, Daniel
2007 *Human Rights as Culprit, Human Rights as Victim: Rights and Security in the State of Exception*. *In The Practice of Human Rights*. Mark Goodale and Sally Engle Merry, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gopin, Marc
2002 *Holy War, Holy Peace: How Religion Can Bring Peace to the Middle East*. Oxford University Press.
- Gordon, Avery
1997 *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Govier, Trudy
2002 *Forgiveness and Revenge*. London: Routledge.
2006 *Taking Wrongs Seriously: Acknowledgment, Reconciliation, and the Politics of Sustainable Peace*. New York: Humanity Books.
- Hanf, Theodor
1993 *Coexistence in Wartime Lebanon: Decline of a State and Rise of a Nation*. London: The Centre for Lebanese Studies in association with I. B. Tauris.
- Hanssen, Jens and Daniel Genberg
2002 *Beirut in Memoriam: A Kaleidoscopic Space out of Focus*. *In Crisis and Memory: Dimensions of Their Relationship in Islam and Adjacent Cultures*. Andreas Pflitsch and Angelika Neuwirth, eds. Beirut: Orient Institut.
- Hatem, Robert
1999 *From Israel to Damascus: The Painful Road of Blood, Betrayal and Deception*. La Mesa, CA: Vanderblumen Publications.
- Haugbolle, Sune
2010 *War and Memory in Lebanon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2012 *The (Little) Militia Man: Memory and Militarized Masculinity in Lebanon*. *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 8(1): 115-139.
- Hayner, Priscilla
2002 *Unspeakable Truths: Facing the Challenge of Truth Commissions*. New York: Routledge.
- Hazan, Pierre
2010 *Judging War, Judging History: Behind Truth and Reconciliation*. Sarah Meyer de Stadelhofen, transl. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

- Henderson, Michael
 2003 Initiatives of Change. *In Positive Approaches to Peacebuilding*. Cynthia Sampson, Mohammed Abu-Nimer, Claudia Liebler, Diana Whitney, eds. Pact Publications.
 2007 How Can We Break the Hold of History? WORLD GOODWILL Seminar: Evoking the Soul of the Nations. London, Thistle Hotel, Victoria, October 10.
- Hinton, Alexander Laban, ed.
 2010 *Transitional Justice: Global Mechanisms and Local Realities after Genocide and Mass Violence*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Hirsch, Marianne
 2008 The Generation of Postmemory. *Poetics Today* 29(1): 103-128.
- Hoelscher, Steven
 2008 Angels of Memory: Photography and Haunting in Guatemala City. *GeoJournal* 73(4): 195-217.
- Hourani, Najib
 2008 The Militiaman Icon—Cinema, Memory, and the Lebanese Civil Wars. *The New Centennial Review* 8(2): 287–307.
- Hudson, Michael
 1988 The Problem of Authoritative Power in Lebanese Politics – Why Consociationalism Failed. *In Lebanon: A History of Conflict and Consensus*. Nadim Shehadi and Dana Haffar-Mills, eds. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Humphrey, Michael
 2003 From Victim to Victimhood: Truth Commissions and Trials as Rituals of Political Transition and Individual Healing. *Australian Journal of Anthropology* 14(2): 171-187.
 2005 Reconciliation and the Therapeutic State. *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 26(3): 203-220.
- Huysen, Andreas
 2003 *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- International Coalition of Sites of Conscience
 2008 *Connecting Past and Present: 2008 Report*. New York: International Coalition of Sites of Conscience.
- International Committee of the Red Cross
 2004 *The Handling of Human Remains and Information on the Dead in Situations Relating to Armed Conflicts or Internal Violence and involving Missing Persons*. 16th Meeting of the Standing Comm. on Disaster Victim Identification, Lyon, France, May 5.
 2007 *Missing Persons: A Hidden Tragedy*. Geneva.
 2009 *Families of Missing Persons: Responding to their Needs*. Geneva.
- Jaquemet, Iolanda
 2009 Fighting Amnesia: Ways to Uncover the Truth about Lebanon's Missing. *International Journal of Transitional Justice*. 3(1): 69-90.
- Johnson, Michael
 2001 *All Honourable Men: The Social Origins of War in Lebanon*. I.B. Tauris.
- Johnson, Nuala
 1995 Cast in Stone: Monuments, Geography and Nationalism. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 13: 51–65.

- Jurdi, Nidal Nabil
2007 The Subject-Matter Jurisdiction of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. *Journal of International Criminal Justice* 5: 1125-1138.
- Kassir, Samir
2002 Ahwal al-dhakira fi Lubnan (The Conditions for Memory in Lebanon). In *Mémoire pour l'avenir, Dhakira lil-ghad, Memory for the Future: Actes du colloque tenu a la maison des nations unies*. Amal Makarem, ed. Beirut: Dar al-Nahar.
- Kennedy, David
2002 The International Human Rights Movement: Part of the Problem? *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 15: 101-125.
- Khalaf, Samir
1994 Culture, Collective Memory, and the Restoration of Civility. *In Peace for Lebanon?* Deirdre Collings, ed. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
1997 From a Geography of Fear to a Culture of Tolerance: Reflections on Protracted Strife and the Restoration of Civility in Lebanon. *In Conflict Resolution in the Arab World*. Paul Salem, ed. Beirut: American University of Beirut.
2002 *Civil and Uncivil Violence: A History of the Internationalization of Communal Conflict in Lebanon*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Khatib, Lina
2008 *Lebanese Cinema: Imagining the Civil War and Beyond*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Klein, Kerwin Lee
2000 On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse. *Representations* 69: 127-150.
- Kleinman, Arthur, Veena Das, Margaret Lock
1997 Introduction. *In Social Suffering*. Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das, Margaret Lock, eds. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Koselleck, Reinhart
2004 *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*. Keith Tribe, trans. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kritz, Neil
1995a *Transitional Justice: How Emerging Democracies Reckon With Former Regimes, Volume 1: General Considerations*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.
1995b *Transitional Justice: How Emerging Democracies Reckon With Former Regimes, Volume 2: Country Studies*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.
- Labanyi, Jo
2001 Coming to Terms with the Ghosts of the Past: History and Spectrality in Contemporary Spanish Culture. *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Literary and Cultural Studies* 1(1).
- LaCapra, Dominick
2009 *History and Its Limits: Human, Animal, Violence*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Lame, Danielle de
2005 *A Hill Among a Thousand: Transformations and Ruptures in Rural Rwanda*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

- Laqueuer, Thomas
2002 The Dead Body and Human Rights. *In* The Body. Sean Sweeney and Ian Hodder, eds. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Larkin, Craig
2010 Remaking Beirut: Contesting Memory, Space, and the Urban Imaginary of Lebanese Youth. *City and Community* 9(4): 414-442.
- Layman with a Notebook
1933 What is the Oxford Group? London: Oxford University Press.
- Lean, Garth
1985 Frank Buchman: A Life. Constable and Company.
- Lefranc, Sandrine
2012 A Critique of Bottom-Up Peacebuilding: Do Peaceful Individuals Make Peaceful Societies? *In* Peacebuilding, Memory and Reconciliation: Bridging Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches. Bruno Charbonneau and Genevieve Parent, eds. Taylor and Francis.
- Leon, Phillip
1939 The Philosophy of Courage, or The Oxford Group Way. London: Oxford University Press.
- Leys, Ruth
2000 Trauma: A Genealogy. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lind, Jennifer
2010 Sorry States: Apologies in International Politics. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Longva, Anh Nga
1997 Walls Built on Sand: Migration, Exclusion, and Society in Kuwait. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Lundy, Patricia and Mark McGovern
2008 Whose Justice? Rethinking Transitional Justice from the Bottom Up. *Journal of Law and Society* 35(2): 265-292.
- Luttwak, Edward
1994 Franco-German Reconciliation: The Overlooked Role of the Moral Re-Armament Movement. *In* Religion: the Missing Dimension of Statecraft. Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, eds. Oxford University Press.
- Maasri, Zeina
2009 Off the Wall: Political Posters of the Lebanese Civil War. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Maclear, Kyo
1999 Beclouded Visions: Hiroshima-Nagasaki and The Art of Witness. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Madlingozi, Tshepo
2010 On Transitional Justice Entrepreneurs and the Production of Victims. *Journal of Human Rights Practice* 2(2): 208-228.
- Makarem, Amal
2002 Introduction. *In* Mémoire pour l'avenir, Dhakira lil-ghad, Memory for the Future: Actes du colloque tenu a la maison des nations unies, ESCWA (Beyrouth). Beirut: Dar an-Nahar.

- Makdisi, Saree
 1997 Laying Claim to Beirut: Urban Narratives and Spatial Identity in the Age of Solidere. *Critical Inquiry* 23(3): 661-705.
 2006 Beirut, A City Without History? *In* Memory and Violence in the Middle East and North Africa. Ussama Makdisi and Paul Silverstein, eds. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Makdisi, Ussama
 2000 The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Malin, Andrea
 1993 Mother Who Won't Disappear. *Human Rights Quarterly* 15: 187-213.
- Malkki, Liisa
 1996 Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization. *Cultural Anthropology* 11(3): 377-404.
- Mamdani, Mahmood
 2002 Amnesty or Impunity? A Preliminary Critique of the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa. *Diacritics* 32(3-4): 33-59.
- Massumi, Brian
 2002 Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation. Durham: Duke University Press.
- McLagen, Meg
 2003 Human Rights, Testimony, and Transnational Publicity. *Public Sentiments: The Scholar and Feminist Online* 2(1). Electronic document, <http://www.barnard.edu/sfonline/ps/mclagan.htm>, accessed May 1, 2011.
 2006 Making Human Rights Claims Public. *American Anthropologist* 108(1): 191-195.
- McEvoy, Kieran
 2007 Beyond Legalism: Towards a Thicker Understanding of Transitional Justice. *Journal of Law and Society* 34(4): 411-440.
- Meister, Robert
 2002 Human Rights and the Politics of Victimhood. *Ethics and International Affairs* 16(2): 91-106.
- Menon, Nivedita
 2004 Recovering Subversion: Feminist Politics Beyond the Law. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
 1996 Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Mercadante, Linda
 1996 Victims and Sinners. Westminster John Knox Press.
- Merry, Sally Engle
 1992 Anthropology, Law, and Transnational Processes. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21: 357-379.
 2006 Transnational Human Rights and Local Activism: Mapping the Middle. *American Anthropologist* 108(1): 38-51.
- Michalski, Serglusz
 1998 Public Monuments. London: Reaktion Books.

- Minow, Martha
1998 *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History After Genocide*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Moghalu, Kingsley Chiedu
2008 *Global Justice: The Politics of War Crimes Trials*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Montville, Joseph
1991 *The Arrow and the Olive Branch: A Case for Track Two Diplomacy*. In *The Psychodynamics of International Relationships*, Vol. II. Vamik Volkan, Demetrios Julius, and Joseph Montville, eds. Boston: Lexington Books.
- Mroué, Rabih
2007 Interview with Rabih Mroué. Downloaded from <http://infocusdialogue.org/> on July 8, 2009.
- Nagel, Caroline
2002 *Reconstructing Space, Re-creating Memory: Sectarian Politics and Urban Development in Post-war Beirut*. *Political Geography* 21(5): 717–25
- Nasr, Salim
2003 *The New Social Map*. In *Lebanon in Limbo*. Theodor Hanf and Nawaf Salam, eds. Baden-Baden, Germany: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft.
- Neier, Aryeh
1999 *Rethinking Truth, Justice, and Guilt after Bosnia and Rwanda*. In *Human Rights in Political Transitions: Gettysburg to Bosnia*. Carla Hesse and Robert Post, eds. New York: Zone Books.
- Nora, Pierre
1989 *Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire*. *Representations* 26: 7-25.
- Orentlicher, Diane
1991 *Settling Accounts: The Duty to Prosecute Human Rights Violations of a Prior Regime*. *Yale Law Journal* 100(8): 2537-2615.
- Osborne, Peter.
1995 *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde*. London and New York: Verso.
- Overy, Richard
2003 *The Nuremberg Trials: International Law in the Making*. In *From Nuremberg to the Hague: The Future of International Criminal Justice*. Phillipe Sands, ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Owen, Roger
1976 *Essays on the Crisis in Lebanon*. London: Ithaca.
- Palmer, Richard
1979 *Moral Re-Armament Drama: Right Wing Theatre in America*. *Theatre Journal*
- Pandolfi, Mariella
2003 *Contract of Mutual (In)Difference: Governance and the Humanitarian Apparatus in Contemporary Albania and Kosovo*. *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 10(1): 369-391.
2008 *Laboratory of Intervention: The Humanitarian Governance of the Postcommunist Balkan Territories*. In *Postcolonial Disorders*. Mary-Jo DelVecchio Good, Sandra Teresa Hyde, Sarah Pinto, and Bryon Good, eds. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- Payne, Leigh
 2004 In Search of Remorse: Confessions by Perpetrators of Past State Violence. *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 9(1): 115-125.
 2008 *Unsettling Accounts: Neither Truth nor Reconciliation in Confessions of State Violence*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Philpott, Daniel
 2006 Beyond Politics as Usual: Is Reconciliation Compatible with Liberalism? *In The Politics of Past Evil: Religion, Reconciliation, and the Dilemmas of Transitional Justice*. Daniel Philpott, ed. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.
 2007a What Religion Brings to Politics of Transitional Justice. *Journal of International Affairs* 61(1): 93-110.
 2007b *Religion, Reconciliation, and Transitional Justice: The State of the Field*. New York: Social Science Research Council Working Papers.
 2012 Political Scientist Daniel Philpott Begins Research on Forgiveness in Uganda. Accessed on March 15, 2012 from <http://politicalscience.nd.edu/news/29027-research-on-forgiveness-begins-in-uganda/>
- Picard, Elizabeth
 1999 *The Demobilization of the Lebanese Militias*. Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies.
- Pinney, Christopher
 1992 *The Parallel Histories of Anthropology and Photography*. *In Anthropology and Photography*. Elizabeth Edwards, ed. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Pittman, Bill
 1988 *AA: The Way it Began*. Glen Abbey Books.
- Posel, Deborah
 2008 History as Confession: The Case of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission. *Public Culture* 20(1): 119-141.
- Postero, Nancy
 2004 Indigenous Responses to Neoliberalism. *In Political and Legal Anthropology Review (POLAR)* 28(1): 73-92.
- Povinelli, Elizabeth
 2002 *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Redfield, Peter
 2005 Doctors, Borders, and Life in Crisis. *Cultural Anthropology* 20(3): 328-361.
 2006 A Less Modest Witness: Collective Advocacy and Motivated Truth in a Medical Humanitarian Movement. *American Ethnologist* 33(1): 3-26.
- Rogers, Sarah
 2007 Out of History: Postwar Art in Beirut. *Art Journal* 66(2): 8-20.
- Roht-Arriaza, Naomi, and Javier Mariezcurrena, eds.
 2006 *Transitional Justice in the Twenty-First Century: Beyond Truth versus Justice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ross, Fiona
 2003 *Bearing Witness: Women and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa*. London: Pluto Press.

- Rotberg, Robert and Dennis and Thompson, eds.
2000 *Truth v. Justice: The Morality of Truth Commissions*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Rowland, Antony
2011 *The Oasis Poets: Perpetrators, Victims, and Soldier Testimony*. *Comparative Literature* 63(4): 366-382.
- Saadeh, Joseph
1989 *Anā al-dahīyah wa-al-jallād anā* [I am the victim and the executioner]. Beirut: Dar al-Jadeed.
- Sader, Helen
1998 *Ancient Beirut: Urban Growth in Light of Recent Excavations*. In *Projecting Beirut: Episodes in the Construction and Reconstruction of a Modern City*. Peter Rowe and Hashim Sarkis, eds. New York: Prestei.
- Safa, Oussama
2006 *Lebanon Springs Forward*. *Journal of Democracy* 17(1): 22-37.
- Saghieh, Nizar
2002 *Dhakirat al-harb fil-nizam al-qanuni al-lubnani* (Memory of the War in the Lebanese Legal System). In *Mémoire pour l'avenir, Dhakira lil-ghad, Memory for the Future: Actes du colloque tenu a la maison des nations unies*. Amal Makarem, ed. Beirut: Dar al-Nahar.
- Salam, Nawaf
2003 *Taif Revisited*. In *Lebanon in Limbo*. Theodor Hanf and Nawaf Salam, eds. Baden-Baden, Germany: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft.
- Salamandra, Christa
2004 *A New Old Damascus: Authenticity and Distinction in Urban Syria*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Salibi, Kamal
1990 *A House of Many Mansions: The History of Lebanon Reconsidered*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Sant Cassia, Paul
2005. *Bodies of Evidence: Burial, Memory, and the Recovery of Missing Persons in Cyprus*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Sawalha, Aseel
2010 *Reconstructing Beirut: Memory and Space in a Postwar Arab City*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Schaffer, Kay and Sidonie Smith
2004 *Human Rights and Narrated Lives: The Ethics of Recognition*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Scheper-Hughes, Nancy
1999 *Un-Doing: Social Suffering and the Politics of Remorse*. In *Remorse and Reparation*. Murray Cox, ed. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Schmitt, Carl
2005 *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*. George Schwab, trans. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Sevcenko, Liz
 2010 Sites of Conscience: new approaches to conflicted memory. *Museum International* 62(1-2): 20-25.
- Shaw, Rosalind
 2007a Memory Frictions: Localizing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Sierra Leone. *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 1(2): 183-207.
 2007b Displacing Violence: Making Pentecostal Memory in Postwar Sierra Leone. *Cultural Anthropology* 22(1):66-93.
 2010 Linking Justice with Reintegration? Ex-Combatants and the Sierra Leone Experiment. *In* *Localizing Transitional Justice: Interventions and Priorities After Mass Violence*. Rosalind Shaw, Lars Waldorf, and Pierre Hazan, eds. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Shaw, Rosalind, Lars Waldorf, and Pierre Hazan, eds.
 2010 *Localizing Transitional Justice: Interventions and Priorities after Mass Violence*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Simon, Roger
 2005 *The Touch of the Past: Remembrance, Learning, And Ethics*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Simic, Olivera
 2009 What Remains of Srebrenica? Motherhood, Transitional Justice, and Yearning for the Truth. *Journal of International Women's Studies* 10(4): 220-236.
- Slyomovics, Susan
 2005 *The Performance of Human Rights in Morocco*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Smedes, Lewis
 1996 *The Art of Forgiving*. Ballantine Books/Random House.
- Sneifer, Régina
 2006 *Alqayt al-silāh* [I put down the weapons]. Beirut: Dar al-Farabi.
- Sontag, Susan
 1977 *On Photography*. New York: Dell.
- Speed, Shannon
 2007 *Rights in Rebellion: Indigenous Struggle and Human Rights in Chiapas*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Stover, Eric and Rachel Shigekane
 2002 The Missing in the Aftermath of War: When Do the Needs of Victims' Families and International War Crimes Tribunals Clash? *International Review of the Red Cross* 84(848): 848-866.
- Stover, Eric, William Haglund, and Margaret Samuels
 2003 Exhumation of Mass Graves in Iraq: Considerations for Forensic Investigations, Humanitarian Needs, and the Demands of Justice. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 290(5): 663-666.
- Suarez-Orozco, Marcelo
 1991 The Heritage of Enduring a 'Dirty War': Psychosocial Aspects of Terror in Argentina, 1976-1983. *Journal of Psychiatry* 18(4): 469-505.
- Sundar, Nandini
 2004 Toward an Anthropology of Culpability. *American Ethnologist* 31(2): 145-163.

- Taylor, Diana
 1997 *Disappearing Acts: Spectacles of Gender and Nationalism in Argentina's "Dirty War."* Durham: Duke University Press.
 2002 "You Are Here": The DNA of Performance. *The Drama Review* 46(1): 149-169.
- Teitel, Ruti
 2000 *Transitional Justice.* New York: Oxford University Press.
 2003 *Transitional Justice Genealogy.* *Harvard Human Rights Journal* 16:69-94.
 2008 Editorial Note – Transitional Justice. *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 2(1): 1-4.
- Theidon, Kimberly
 2007 *Transitional Subjects: The Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Former Combatants in Columbia.* *International Journal of Transitional Justice* 1(1): 66-91.
 2010 *Histories of Innocence: Postwar Stories in Peru.* In *Localizing Transitional Justice: Interventions and Priorities after Mass Violence.* Rosalind Shaw, Lars Waldorf, and Pierre Hazan, eds. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Ticktin, Miriam
 2006 *Where Ethics and Politics Meet: The Violence of Humanitarianism in France.* *American Ethnologist* 33(1): 33-49.
- Till, Karen
 2005 *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
 2008 *Artistic and activist memory-work: Approaching place-based practice.* *Memory Studies* 1(1): 99–113.
- Torpey, John
 2006 *Making Whole What Has Been Smashed: On Reparations Politics.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Traboulsi, Fawwaz
 2007 *A History of Modern Lebanon.* London: Pluto Press.
- Trouillot, Michel-Rolph
 1995 *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History.* Boston: Beacon Press.
 2000 *Abortive Rituals: Historical Apologies in the Global Era.* *Interventions* 2(2): 171-186.
- Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt
 2005 *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connection.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Tueni, Ghassan
 1985 *Une guerre pour les autres.* Paris: J. C. Lattes.
- Tutu, Desmond
 1999 *No Future Without Forgiveness.* New York: Image.
- Villa-Vicencio, Charles
 2006 *The Politics of Reconciliation.* In *Telling the Truths: Truth-Telling and Peace Building.* Tristan Anne Borer, ed. Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press.
- Vivian, Bradford
 2010 *Public Forgetting: The Rhetoric and Politics of Beginning Again.* Pennsylvania State Press.

- Volk, Lucia
2010 *Memorials and Martyrs in Modern Lebanon*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Wagner, Sarah
2008 *To Know Where He Lies: DNA Technology and the Search for Srebrenica's Missing*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Walter, Howard
1919 *Soul Surgery: Some Thoughts on Incisive Personal Work*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Waterson, Roxana
2007 *Trajectories of Memory: Documentary Film and the Transmission of Testimony*. *History and Anthropology* 18(1): 51-73.
- Weine, Stevan
2006 *Testimony After Catastrophe: Narrating the Traumas of Political Violence*. Chicago: Northwestern University Press.
- Weizman, Eyal and Thomas Keenan
2012 *Mengele's Skull: the Advent of A Forensic Aesthetics*. Sternberg Press.
- Westmoreland, Mark
2008 *Crisis of Representation: Experimental Documentary in Post-War Lebanon*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Austin, Texas.
- Wierda, Marieke, Habib Nassar, and Lynn Maalouf
2007 *Early Reflections on Local Perceptions, Legitimacy and Legacy of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon*. *Journal of International Criminal Justice* 5: 1065-1081.
- Wieviorka, Annette
2006 *The Era of the Witness*. Jared Stark, transl. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Williams, Paul
2007 *Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities*. New York: Berg.
- Wilson, Richard Ashby
2001 *The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation in South Africa: Legitimizing the Post-Apartheid State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Winter, Jay
1995 *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
2000 *The Generation of Memory: Reflections on the Memory Boom*. *Contemporary Historical Studies, GHI Bulletin* 27: 69-92.
2011 *Writing History in International Criminal Trials*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yahya, Maya
2007 *Let the Dead be Dead: Communal Imaginaries and National Narratives in the Post-Civil War Reconstruction of Beirut*. In *Urban Imaginaries: Locating the Modern City*. Alev Çinar and Thomas Bender, eds. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Young, James
1993 *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Young, Michael

2000 Resurrecting Lebanon's Disappeared. Beirut: The Lebanese Center for Policy Studies.

Zahar, Marie-Joëlle

2002 Peace by Unconventional Means: Lebanon's Ta'if Agreement. *In Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements*. Stephen John Stedman, Donald Rothchild, Elizabeth Cousens, eds. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.