

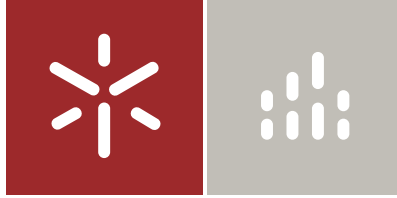


Universidade do Minho
Escola de Arquitectura

Amer Obied
Beirut 1975-1990:
Traces of War in Cinema, Architecture, and City

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Dissertação de Mestrado
Ciclo de Estudos Integrados Conducentes ao
Grau de Mestre em Arquitectura

Trabalho efetuado sob a orientação do
Professor Doutor Francisco Ferreira
Professora Doutora Ana Francisca Azevedo

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É AUTORIZADA A REPRODUÇÃO INTEGRAL DESTA TESE/TRABALHO APENAS PARA EFEITOS DE INVESTIGAÇÃO, MEDIANTE DECLARAÇÃO ESCRITA DO INTERESSADO, QUE A TAL SE COMPROMETE;

Universidade do Minho, 05 / 09 / 2019

Assinatura:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, connected strokes. The signature is positioned to the right of the word 'Assinatura:'.

هل أراك
سالمًا مُنعمًا و غانمًا مكرمًا

مَوطِنِي

Will I ever see you,
Safe, Blessed, Victorious, Honoured

My Homeland

*To my father Nasser, my mother Ramouz,
and my sisters Dana and Rita.*

Beirut 1975-1990:
Traces of War in Cinema, Architecture, and the City.

Acknowledgement

In my proudest moment, I find myself standing on the shoulders of many great people, ones who believed in me even when I did not, and made me who I am;

To my parents and my sisters, I dedicate this work, as well as every other work from the heart, to them;

To my family in Syria, Lebanon, and Canada; to my friends in Syria, Portugal, and everywhere; to all the great people I have met in Guimarães and in Portugal;

To the University of Minho and the School of Architecture EAUM; to all my professors, on the top of the list: Professor Doutor João Rosmaninho and Professor Doutor Andre Fontes, their influence on my architectural character is greater than to be written down;

To Professor Doutor Francisco Ferreira, my thesis supervisor and mentor. Firstly, as I owe him my passion for Cinema as an Architectural discipline, which eventually resulted in this dissertation. Secondly, for his welcoming state of mind to the challenge of working on Beirut. Through the ups and downs, his guidance made every moment of hard work absolutely worthy;

To Professora Doutora Ana Francisca de Azevedo, my co-supervisor. Her strong-willed passion had never failed to remind me that I am “a cultural translator”, a responsibility I never took lightly;

My final thanks are for the scholarship programme which had brought me to Portugal: Erasmus Mundus; and the scholarship programme which had helped me along the rest of way till the moment I would finish my degree and after: The Global Platform for Syrian Students. I will be forever grateful for the opportunities and their trust.

Thanks to all these people, now, here I stand.

Durante a Guerra Civil Libanesa, mas também depois, Beirut esteve sujeita à destruição em muitos níveis – socialmente, politicamente, economicamente, psicológica e fisicamente. Por várias razões, o fim da Guerra Civil não levou a nenhum diálogo posterior ou a qualquer especial interpelação do trauma, mas, pelo contrário, levou a sua neutralização, comprometendo, ou até apagando, a sua Memória. Há, apesar de tudo, marcas da guerra que ainda subsistem, e que podemos melhor identificar, julgamos nós, a partir do Cinema Libanês e a partir da Arquitectura.

É neste sentido que o cinema Libanês é utilizado nesta dissertação como um instrumento arquitectónico e como meio privilegiado para interpelar, analisar e revisitar a Guerra, as suas devastações e os seus legados. É também a partir do Cinema que o trabalho pretende recuperar a Arquitectura e o Espaço Urbano de Beirut como personagens importantes na análise dessas devastações e legados. Eventualmente, esta dissertação sugere (mas principalmente gostava que assim fosse) que o papel do cinema – como instrumento de ficção – e o papel da Arquitectura – como instrumento de desejo – são inerentes a um processo de catarse ainda em falta.

Para alcançar esta sugestão (este desejo), a dissertação articula uma selecção de filmes Libaneses realizados entre 1975 e 2010 e, a partir daí, ensaia uma interpretação e uma reconstrução do status e das alterações urbanas e arquitectónicas de Beirut.

Embora o propósito final desta dissertação seja o de compreender a Guerra a partir de uma perspectiva outra, que não a da mera destruição, pretendemos também que incorpore, no limite, uma tentativa de compreensão da complexidade humana capaz de criar Destruição, Cinema e Arquitectura, no mesmo lugar e ao mesmo tempo.

Abstract

During the Lebanese Civil War, and even after, Beirut was subject to devastation on many levels - social, political, economic, physical, and psychological. For more reasons than one, the end of the Civil War did not lead to any national dialogue or addressing of the trauma, but it slowly neutralised the Civil War by compromising or even erasing its Memory. Nevertheless, there are traces of the war still lingering on, mainly to be noticed, we believe, in Lebanese Cinema and in Architecture.

It is in this sense that Lebanese Cinema is used in this dissertation as an architectural instrument and a primary means to address, assess, and revisit the war, its devastations, but mainly its legacies. It is also through Cinema that the work aims at recovering Beirut's Architecture and Urban Space as important characters on the assessment of those devastations and legacies. Eventually, this dissertation suggests (but mostly wishes for it) that the role of Cinema -as an instrument of fiction- and the role of Architecture -as an instrument of desire- are both inherent to a missing and due process of Catharsis.

To reach this suggestion (this wish), this dissertation brings to the fore a selection of Lebanese films from 1975 to 2010, and through them, interprets and reconstructs Beirut's urban and architectural status and changes before, during and after the war.

Whereas the ultimate purpose of this dissertation is to comprehend war from a perspective other than mere destruction, it is, ultimately, an attempt to understand the human complexity that creates Destruction, Cinema, and Architecture, all in the same place and all at the same time.

Table of Contents

Aknowledgement	ix
Resumo	x
Abstract	xi
Table of Contents	xiii
Table of Figures and Sequences	xv
Prologue	1
ACT I: Spaces - Construction	13
Reality	15
Perception	25
Representation	31
ACT II: War - Destruction	45
City	47
Architecture	59
Memory	71
ACT III: Traces - Emotion	81
Scars	83
Scares	97
Catharsis	105
Epilogue	115
Bibliography	119
Filmography	125
International	126
Lebanese	127
Figures' references	129

Table of Figures and Sequences

Fig. No. 1: Diagram: Syllabi	xix
Fig. No. 2: Diagram: Dissertation Structure	xx
Fig. No. 3: Diagram: Filmography timeline	8
Fig. No. 4: Map: Beirut and the Architectural subjects	9
Fig. No. 5: Diagram: Pre-war timeline	14
Seq. No. 1: Stills from <i>Beirut, Oh Beirut</i> (00:00:09-00:01:32)	18
Seq. No. 2: Stills from <i>Beirut, Oh Beirut</i> (00:10:45-00:10:58)	19
Fig. No. 6: Photograph: Place Charles de Gaulle	20
Fig. No. 7: Photograph: Place de l’Etoile	21
Fig. No. 8: Advertisement material: The Holiday Inn Hotel flyer, 1974	23
Seq. No. 3: Stills From <i>West Beyrouth</i> (00:03:40-00:07:30)	26
Seq. No. 4: Stills from <i>In the Shadow of the City</i> (00:24:23-00:27:56)	28
Seq. No. 5: Stills from <i>West Beyrouth</i> (00:00:20-00:01:27)	28
Seq. No. 6: Stills from <i>West Beyrouth</i> (00:05:35-00:07:30)	29
Fig. No. 9: Photograph: Aerial view the Holiday Inn on fire, 1975	31
Fig. No. 10: Photograph: The Holiday Inn on fire, 1975	32
Fig. No. 11: Propaganda material: The fall of The Holiday Inn, 1976	33
Fig. No. 12: The interior of The Holiday Inn during the Battle of the Hotels, 1976	34/35
Fig. No. 13: Cinematic Section: <i>West Beyrouth</i> and <i>the Holiday Inn</i> on 13 April 1975	38
Seq. No. 7: Stills from <i>In the Shadow of the City</i> (00:30:25-00:31:17)	44
Seq. No. 8: Stills from <i>Beirut the Encounter</i>	45
Seq. No. 9: Stills from <i>Little Wars</i> (first) 01:32:59/01:19:05 (last)	45
Seq. No. 10: Stills from <i>Stray Bullet</i> (00:24:12-00:29:03/00:41:42- 00:44:10)	46
Fig. No. 14: Photograph: The remnants of the Green Line in downtown Beirut	47
Fig. No. 15: Photograph: the sheer destruction in Beirut, 1990s	47

Fig. No. 16: Map: The fragmentation in Beirut during the war, 1975-1990	48/49
Fig. No. 17: Photograph: Wedding picture in East Beirut, 1989	50
Fig. No. 18: Photograph: Two Christian militiamen during a Battle near the Green Line, 1980	50
Fig. No. 19: Photograph: Part of the Green Line, 1990	51
Fig. No. 20: Photograph: The Green Line with the vegetation taking over, 1982	52
Fig. No. 21: Photograph: View from street Georges-Picot, 1969	53
Fig. No. 22: Photograph: Pedestrians and cars crossing the “Barbir-Museum checkpoint” on the Green Line during a ceasefire, 1989	54
Seq. No. 11: Stills from <i>Little Wars</i> (01:45:41-01:50:36)	55
Seq. No. 12: Stills from <i>In the Shadow of the City</i> (00:04:02-00:05:26)	56
Seq. No. 13: Stills from <i>In the Shadow of the City</i> (00:44:20-00:46:24)	57
Seq. No. 14: Stills from <i>Out of Life</i>	58
Seq. No. 15: Stills from <i>West Beyrouth</i> (0:01:30-00:07:30)	59
Fig. No. 23: Photograph: The Holiday Inn showing its destruction, 1990	60
Fig. No. 24: Photograph: Part of the Green Line showing The Holiday Inn in the background, 1978	61
Fig. No. 25: Photograph: Beirut between destruction and coping, 1982	62
Fig. No. 26: Photograph: Beirut between destruction and coping, 1977	63
Fig. No. 27: Photograph: Beirut between destruction and coping, 1977	63
Fig. No. 28: Photograph: Beirut between destruction and coping, 1978	63
Fig. No. 29: Photograph: Beirut between destruction and coping, 1991	63
Fig. No. 30: Photograph: Beirut between destruction and coping, 1991	64
Seq. No. 16: Stills from <i>Out of Life</i> (1:00:02-01:02:49)	66
Seq. No. 17: Stills from <i>Beirut the Encounter</i>	66

Seq. No. 18: Stills from <i>West Beyrouth</i> (00:03:40-00:05:35)	67
Seq. No. 19: Stills from <i>West Beyrouth</i> (01:35:30-01:40:51)	67
Seq. No. 20: Stills from <i>The Dream</i>	68
Fig. No. 31: Cinematic Section: <i>West Beyrouth</i> and <i>the Holiday Inn</i> during the war	70
Seq. No. 21: Stills from <i>In the Shadow of the City</i> (00:01:32-00:04:01)	78
Seq. No. 22: Stills from <i>West Beyrouth</i> (00:53:27-00:53:53)	79
Fig. No. 32: Diagram: Downtown Beirut's urban morphology between 1841-2017	80
Fig. No. 33: Orthophotograph: Downtown Beirut, 2017	81
Fig. No. 34: Orthophotograph: Downtown Beirut, 1982	81
Fig. No. 35: Photograph: street vendor in Martyrs' Square selling posters of the same place in the late sixties,1990s	82/83
Fig. No. 36: Photograph: Martyr's square in destruction, 1992 ..	84
Fig. No. 37: Photograph: Martyr's square in destruction, 1992 ..	84
Fig. No. 38: Photograph: Martyr's square after reconstruction	85
Fig. No. 39: Photograph: Martyr's square after reconstruction, general view showing Cinema City on the left	85
Fig. No. 40: Photograph: Contemporary Beirut showing the Holiday Inn Hotel amongst post-war high rises	86
Fig. No. 41: Photograph: General view over Beirut showing Al- Murr tower and The Holiday Inn. 1974	86
Seq. No. 23: Stills from <i>Stray Bullet</i>	89
Seq. No. 24: Stills from <i>West Beyrouth</i> (00:05:35-00:07:30/ 01:23:33)	90
Fig. No. 42: Photograph: Rare photograph of the actual bus of 13.04.1975	91
Fig. No. 43: Collage: The bus	91
Fig. No. 44: Collage: The Green Line	92/93
Fig. No. 45: Photograph: The exterior of B-018 Music Club, built in 1998	98
Fig. No. 46: Photograph: The exterior of B-018 Music Club	98
Fig. No. 47: Photograph: The interior of B-018 Music Club	98
Fig. No. 48: Photomontage: Proposal of intervention in Cinema City, 2004	99
Fig. No. 49: Photomontage: Proposal of intervention in Cinema	

City, 2004	99
Fig. No. 50: Photograph: Plot #1282, built in 2017	100
Fig. No. 51: Photograph: Plot #1282's view over Beirut	100
Fig. No. 52: Cinematic Section: <i>West Beyrouth</i> and <i>the Holiday Inn</i> after the war	102
Fig. No. 53: Timeline: Cinematic-architectural timeline	107

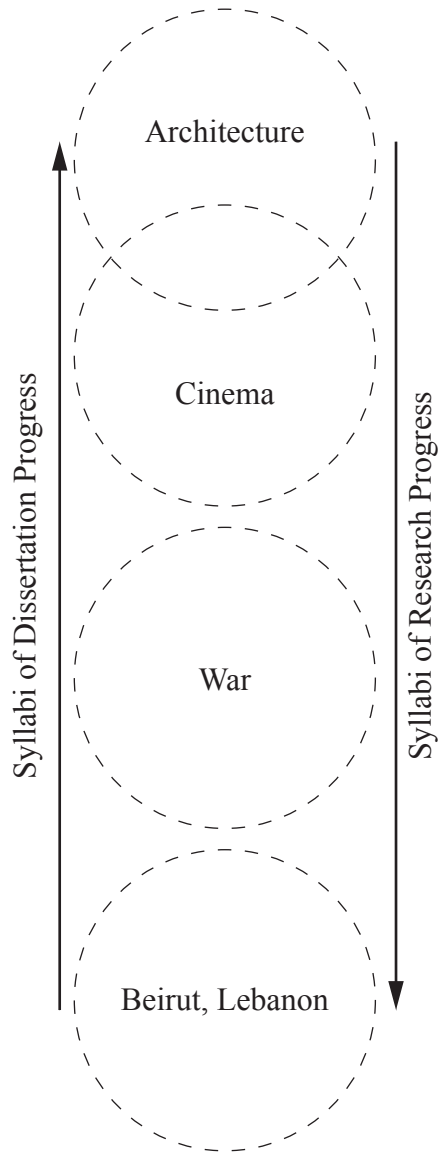


Figure No. 1: Diagram: Syllabi.

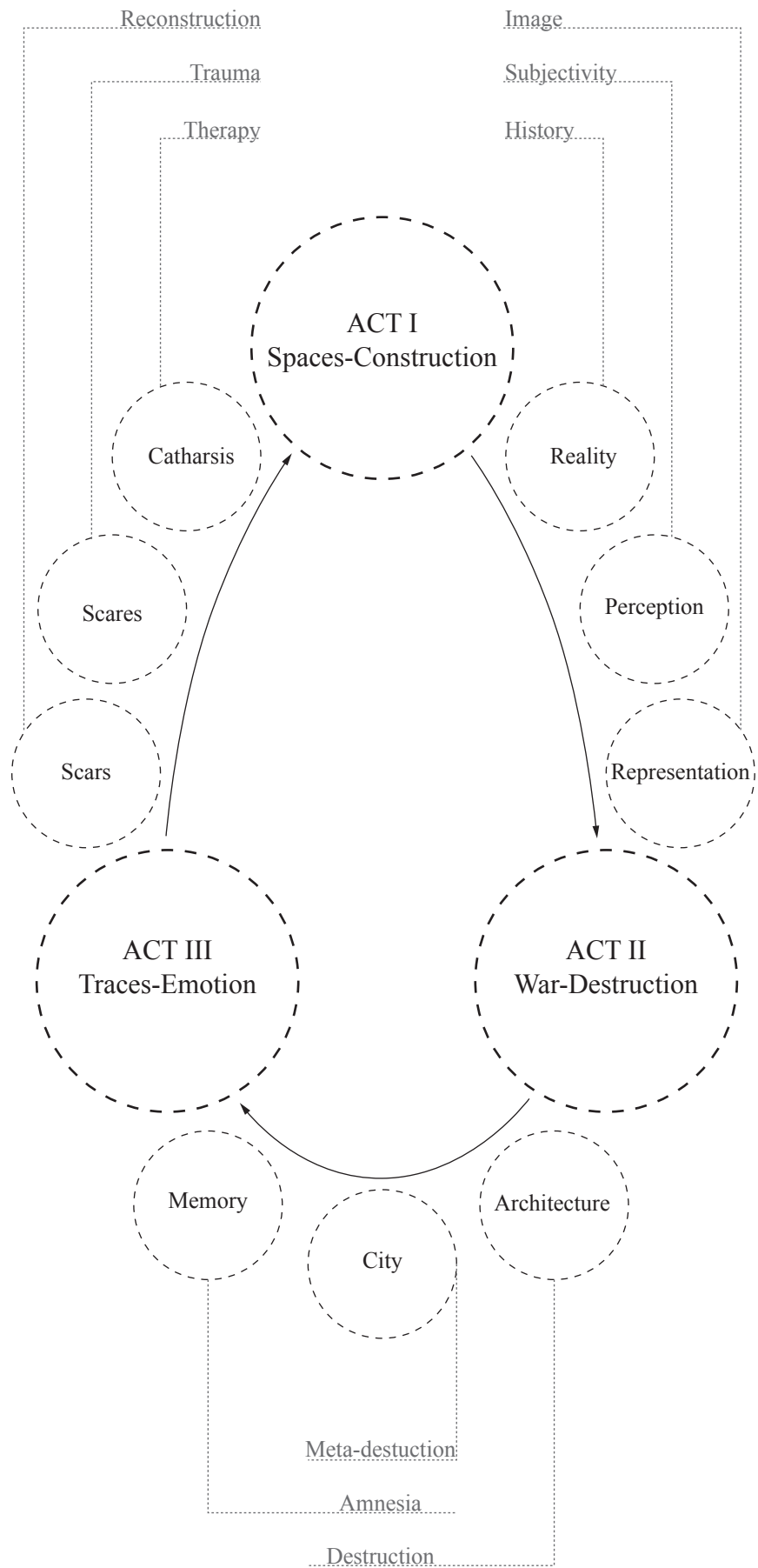


Figure No. 2: Diagram: Dissertation Structure.

Prologue

It takes not only time to heal.

The Lebanese Civil War is one of the most tragic traumas in modern Lebanese and Arabic history. It was unprecedented by its origins, circumstances, occurrences, and consequences. Little did the Lebanese know that an attack on a bus on the 13th of April 1975¹ would break out into a Civil War and set Lebanon on track for one war after the other. In order to comprehend the Lebanese Civil War, it is critical -yet very difficult- to address the extensive Lebanese history in its totality, and to understand the politics in motion. This pursuit of totality is beyond the capacity of a single dissertation. Therefore, many important aspects will not partake in the scope of the investigation. At the same time, the complex and complicated Lebanese history will be abbreviated to, and mirrored by the simplicity of power, as both external and internal. This means, on the one hand, the simplicity of accepting and validating whoever was powerful, for power usually comes from a state of leadership of a religious or sectarian group, together with the force of arms, of course. It also means, the unaccountable use and abuse of said power.

Since it was -in essence- due to a change of socio-politics, the Civil War of 1975 was a clear statement on that the actual conflict was ideological before being physical, and the end of the war was, in fact, an agreement not a victory. This obscure end made it clear that the horrors of the war were to be deemed forgettable and excusable. Nowadays, to revisit the Lebanese Civil War per se seems like a provocation of the collective trauma, an invitation to project it on the contemporary unstable political landscape, and onto the fragile state of peace, or what is called “negative peace” which means the absence of direct violence without promotion of reconciliation and stability². One could argue that the war has never actually ended, but it changed its methods and tools from terror and destruction to censorship and enforced amnesia. Post-war laws (such as the

1 The Bus Massacre (13.04.1975) is recognised as the actual inception of the Lebanese Civil War. The bus was carrying Palestinians to Tal Al-Zaatar, and it was attacked by the militiamen of the radical Christian party *Al-Kataeb*.

2 GHOSN, Faten, KHOURY, Amal - Lebanon after the Civil War: Peace or the Illusion of Peace? Middle East Journal. United States of America, Washington D.C. Vol. 65, n.° 3 (2011), p. 381–397

amnesty law³ and the broadcast laws⁴), in addition to rebuilding schemes which were fashioned to control the narrative, and present a new ‘war-free’ Lebanon.

To some extent, those attempts were successful in neutralising the Memory of the Civil War, thus rendering the Lebanese reality as a state of ambiguity, and the perception of the war both as a daily stress and a distant memory. What remains of the Lebanese Civil War are the remnants of its truth; some have a physical form, such as damage or destruction, while others are non-physical, such as the collective trauma and an undertone of fear. The identification of those remnants is the first approach to understand, assess, and -to some extent- quantify the residual impact of the war on Beirut; the traces of the Civil War— the history and the story of Beirut. Thus, addressing those traces remains -understandably- provocative and hurtful; however, throughout the years of war and after, there was a medium within which the war and its traces were addressed, subjectified and confronted— *Cinema*. In Cinema, reality -any reality- is constructed with the participation of the spectators. This means Cinema becomes more than a mere medium of audiovisual imagery, but an architectural instrument. This argument is evident in numerous cases of international Cinema of war; namely, the filmographies of the Second World War 1939-1945, the Yugoslav Wars 1991-2001, as well as the conflicts of the middle east. Therefore, one objective of this dissertation is to ascend from the recognition of Cinema as an architectural instrument of constructing Realities, and aims to acknowledge, exhibit, and apprehend the existence of the traces of the Civil War in Beirut through its lens, specifically through *Lebanese Cinema*⁵.

Since the 1970s till this present day, Lebanese Cinema -in spite of its modest scale- was successful in depicting the Civil War, as well as its aftermath; the film industry in Lebanon emerged as a manner of documenting the disoriented Lebanese collective Memory. Not only that but it also helped to exhibit the pain, and humanise the opposite ‘other’. This power of Cinema is part of its nature, and arguably, its purpose. For this, to this present day, Cinema became

3 Ibid., p. 390

4 Lebanese Law No 531-modified 382, 1994-96, Article No. 4: This law prohibits the national broadcasting companies (mainly the radio, the newspapers, and television) from addressing the Civil War freely, under the agreement of “allowing the people to heal”.

5 Of course, the subject films of this dissertation are a selection from the Lebanese cinematic production, the criteria of selection are: Being of Lebanese authorship, credibility, popularity, national and international recognition, and availability.

one of the primary instruments for remembering, presenting and representing the Civil War. Furthermore, since Beirut was the main ‘theatre’ of the war, also the main ‘set’ of many films of Lebanese Cinema, it became noticeable and curious how the city was regarded in Cinema as a place of various images; before the war, Beirut was a mere exterior for the plot, only seen with tracking shots, panoramas or bird-eye views, and on the occasions when the streets or buildings are present, they do not seem to have a character nor a role in the advancement of the plot, serving only as a hint of the geographical location. The actual spatial protagonists were the interior spaces where dialogues and monologues were delivered; this can be clearly seen in Maroun Baghdadi’s *Beirut, Oh Beirut* (1975), and it reflects an exclusive approach to the city as a contextual background. Meanwhile, during and after the war, the role of the city was as important as the mere existence within it. Beirut developed its autonomous cinematic character, and began to be part of the plot, if not *the plot*. In other words, Cinema began to include the city in the narrative, and -fundamentally- as a narrative of its own. This change is clear in Borhan Alaouié’s *Beirut the Encounter* (1981), Maroun Baghdadi’s *Little wars* (1982), and Ziad Doueiri’s *West Beyrouth* (1998). In these films, the main characters are [re]exploring the ‘new’ city in continuous motion, and translating the war along their expedition. Thus, utilising the city not as a background, but as an active stage.

While Hollywood seems to attempt to use space as the stage upon which political conflicts are fought, i.e. space as background, Arab Cinemas pay more attention to the way space is part of political conflicts, i.e. space as foreground. ⁶

In this sense, one could argue that the relatability to the city, alongside the emotional charge -in a confrontational manner- is the main reason behind the success of Lebanese Cinema in being an impactful and powerful medium to represent the Civil War. Cinema -and its representation of spaces- is, in fact, an immersive emotional experience, a genuine one, not in spite of its fictionality but because of it. It is true that Lebanese Cinema is burdened with history; however, Cinema is the crossing between history and fiction. Or as Conrad puts

6 KHATIB, Lina - **Filming the Modern Middle East**, op. cit., p. 15

it: *Fiction is history, or it is nothing ... fiction is nearer truth.*⁷ This is not only evident, but heavily emphasised in *West Beyrouth*; the film is an elaborate fictionalisation of the bus massacre and its aftermath in terms of the subjective narrative. But it is also an objective documentation of the changes in Beirut. For these reasons, alongside its importance as a turning point in Lebanese Cinema many others, *West Beyrouth*, and the scene of the bus massacre, in particular, will become the leading cinematic subject of this dissertation.

In the light of understanding Beirut and its involvement in Cinema, it is necessary to understand its urban and architectural assets; it is important to regard Architecture amongst the victims of the war, bearing in mind its natural representativity of one or many societies, ideologies, ethnicities, or religions. It is evident in the politics and patterns of destruction that, during war, the value of Architecture elevates to a higher state of symbolism alongside its functionality. However, this also applies to Architecture within Cinema; the employment of Architecture as a symbol, as well as a context, is fundamental. Architecture became an asset to document the physical transformation of Beirut; the sheer destruction, the division of the city to West and East, and the Green Line⁸ are all easily perceived as direct impacts of war. However, the depiction of Architecture exceeded to more than a visual representation of destruction; it manifested the state of ideological conflict; it expressed relatability and authenticity; and most importantly, it divulged tangible emotional projections onto one or several spaces. Moreover, many are the architectural structures in Beirut that did not only witness the war, but experienced it directly, as is the case of *Beit Beirut (Beirut's House)*, *Cinema City*, *Saint George Hotel*, *Al-Murr tower* and *The Holiday Inn Hotel*. Due to its importance and very direct entanglement in the war, this dissertation will also focus on the last, *The Holiday Inn*, as a principle architectural subject.

This dissertation is to ascend from the hypothesis that the Lebanese Civil War and its aftermath encompass the most impactful series of events on contemporary Beirut, which produced radical changes on its image and on its representation within Cinema and Architecture. This is the main paradigm within which the dissertation will build and justify its arguments. At the same time, it will employ

⁷ CONRAD, Joseph - **Notes on Life and Letters**. United Kingdom, London: Gresham Publishing, 1925, p. 17

⁸ The Green Line was the division line between West and East Beirut; it was regarded as the most dangerous and distracted part of Beirut. Today, it has no clear presence anymore.

Lebanese Cinema as an instrument for revisiting the realities of the Civil War fictionally, metaphorically, and purposefully. In this sense, using it as a filter through which the Civil War can be seen, and through which its impact can be assessed. Needless to say, while it focuses primarily on Architecture and Cinema, this dissertation will import and integrate literature, photography, cartography, and other arts. Ultimately, it aims at achieving a deeper understanding of the relation between War, Cinema, and Architecture, as well as their role in the process of national healing.

The organisation of the dissertation emerged as a result of pairing the timeline of Lebanese Cinema with the timeline of the Civil War; while it focuses on the very first day of the war (13th of April 1975), it also acknowledges a distinction between three important phases of the war: the before, the during and the after. Therefore, it is essential to address those three distinct phases of the *same spaces* in accordance with their respective circumstances. Moreover, the concept of three parts or ‘acts’ embeds as well a cinematic structure; from the first act where the protagonist is introduced and the plot is set up, through the second act where there is a confrontation or a process, to the third act where there is a sort of resolution. Per these notes, the dissertation will be organised as three acts, each including three chapters.

The first Act, **Spaces - Construction**, includes the chapters Reality, Perception, and Representation. After building on the existing literature of the Civil War, the general objective is to reach a contextualisation of Lebanon through the Lebanese cinematic and architectural representations, before and during the early years of the Civil War. It refers to Maroun Baghdadi’s *Beirut, Oh Beirut* (1975), and *Little Wars* (1982), as well as *In the Shadow of the City* (2000) by Jean Khalil Chamoun, and Ziad Doueiri’s *West Beyrouth* (1998). The first chapter “Reality” is an *objective* introduction to Beirut and the Civil War particularly, by Exhibiting the Lebanese predicament and the inception of the Civil War in various ways: historically, geographically, politically, and culturally. In contrast, The second chapter “Perception” aims to address the *subjective* state of the people and their interpretation of reality; it addresses the civil tension that would later escalate into Civil War. The third chapter “Representation” talks about the *creation* of images of Beirut in Cinema while addressing the projection of the strife on Beirut and the changing image of the city.

The second Act, **War - Destruction**, has the chapters City, Architecture, and Memory. It underlines a general theme of *critical analysis* of the cinematic productions and assessing the changes in Lebanon and the cinematic representations of Beirut during the Civil War. It is based on *West Beyrouth* (1998) by Ziad Doueiri, *Beirut the Encounter* (1981) by Borhan Alaouié, *Stray Bullet* (2010) by Georges Hachem, Maroun Baghdadi's *Beirut, Oh Beirut* (1975), *Little Wars* (1982) and *Out of Life* (1991), as well as *The Dream* (1987)⁹ by Muhammad Malas and *In the Shadow of the City* (2000) by Jean Khalil Chamoun. The first chapter "City" aims to extract the impact on Beirut as a city and its division into West and East Beirut by the Green Line. The second chapter "Architecture" assesses the impact on the Architecture of Beirut; it categorises the various uses of Architecture within Cinema to reflect the state of war. The third chapter "Memory" addresses the impact of Cinema on the Lebanese collective Memory; it addresses the role of Cinema as a document of war, and an asset of remembrance.

The third Act, **Traces - Emotion**, is the destination of the dissertation. Within its chapters Scars, Scares, and Catharsis, it focuses on post-war Cinema and its tendency to revisit the war, proposing, consequently, the role of Cinema in the process of post-war healing and reconciliation through the capacity of Architecture in producing complex emotional experiences. In this sense, it quotes from the films: *In the Shadows of the City* (2000) by Jean Khalil Chamoun, and *Stray Bullet* (2010) by Georges Hachem, as well as Ziad Doueiri's *West Beyrouth* (1998) and ultimately *Coming Back to Life* (2019). The first chapter "Scars" assesses the use of physical spaces in Beirut through Cinema, vis-à-vis the aftermaths of the Civil War. It also seeks to identify the physical traces of the war in Cinema. The second chapter "Scares" tackles the non-physical or metaphysical traces of the war, and divulges the need for, and the emergence of, a retrospective Cinema in order to confront the new reality. The third and last chapter "Catharsis" addresses the emotions in this retrospective Cinema, and connotes the role of Cinema in post-war healing and the process of Catharsis.

This dissertation is a journey from Reality -as an origin- to Catharsis -as a purpose-, through the cinematic and architectural filters, which is indeed an emotionally charged voyage. However, it is important to also address it from an academic perspective alongside

9 The actual footage were shot in 1981.

the emotional one, thus giving it the potential to widen the paradigm of the investigation, and facilitating said journey to other cases besides Lebanon, and above all, by entertaining the possibility of a remedy for war. For it takes effort, strength, will, and reconciliation to heal, not only time.

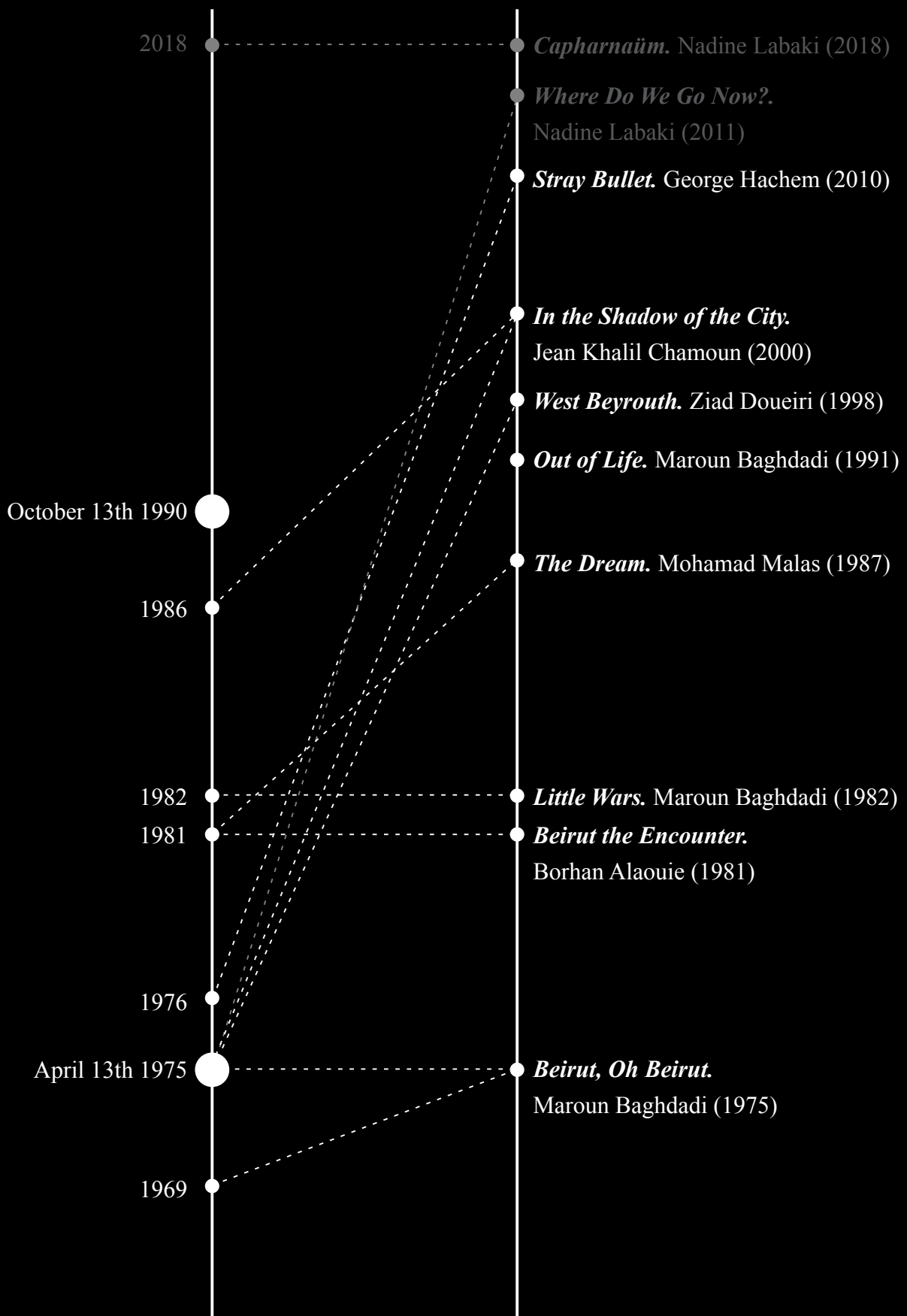


Figure No. 3: Diagram: Filmography timeline.

Post-war Catharsis

War Witnesses

Architectural Narratives

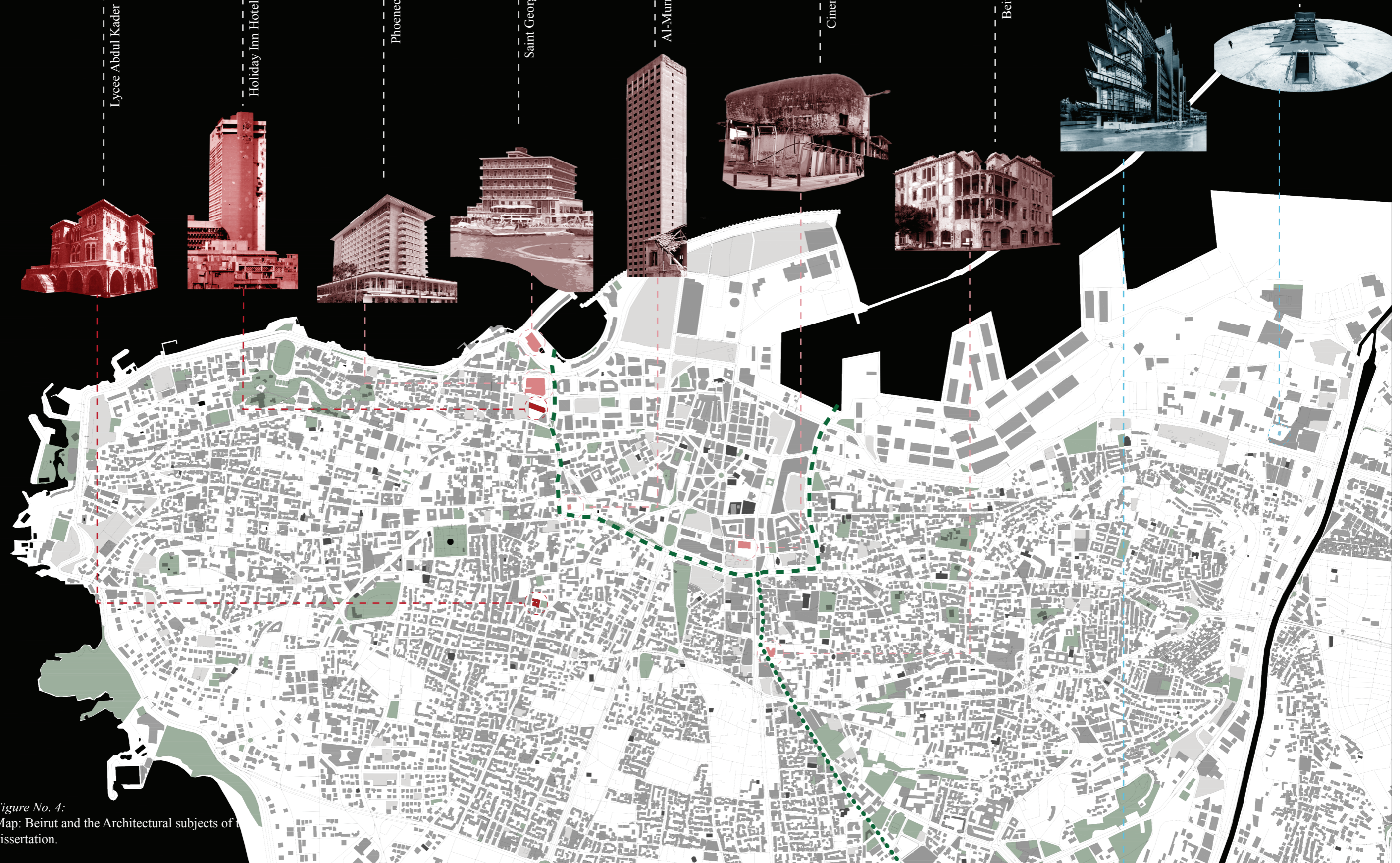


Figure No. 4:
Map: Beirut and the Architectural subjects of the dissertation.

Beirut 1975-1990:
Traces of War in Cinema, Architecture, and the City.



An aerial map of a city, likely in the Middle East, is shown in a light gray tone. A white diagonal line runs from the top left towards the center. A white rectangular box highlights a specific area in the center-right of the map. The text is overlaid on this map.

ACT I: Spaces - Construction

Much of the political debate on the Middle East revolves around space. Space in this context is not only part of people's identity, but also a dynamic tool often utilized to define the identity of nations.

— Lina Khatib, *Filming the Modern Middle East*.

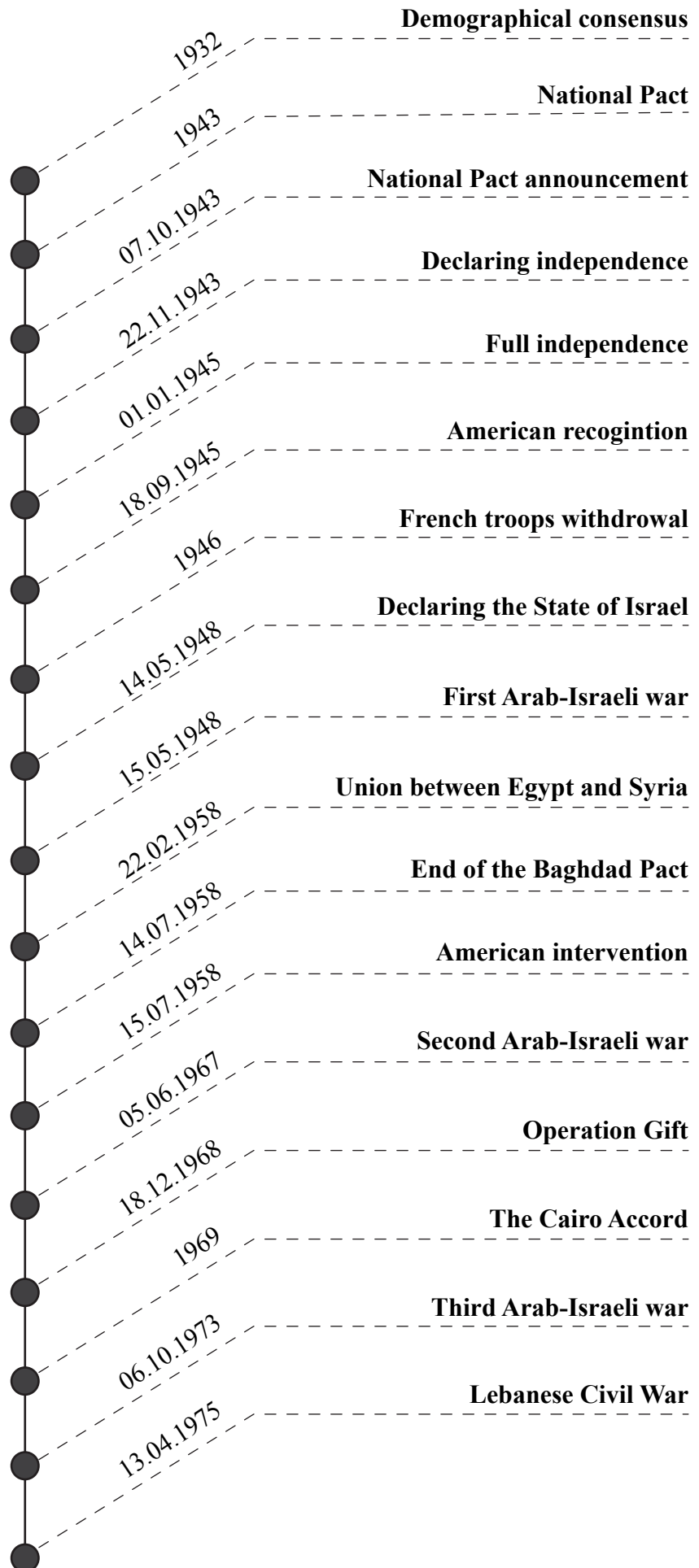


Figure No. 5: Diagram: Pre-war timeline.

Reality

This is no longer Reality: it is simply Life.

— Fernando Pessoa, *The Book of the Disquiet*.

Zeina: The past doesn't provoke war, war provokes the past, and brings it to the present.

— Borhan Alaouié, *Beirut the Encounter*.

On the 13th of April 1975, a bus trip turned into a massacre; a massacre became war. Nevertheless, the Lebanese Civil War was not a mere sudden event, nor was it an armed proliferation. It was, in fact, the inevitable consequence of a chaotic diversity— the price Lebanon had to pay.

After 26 years of political struggles, Lebanon marched towards its independence on the 22nd of November 1943 from the French mandate, and it was recognised as an independent country shortly after, on the 1st of January 1945. However, its international recognition was not anything but political; the French were intentionally delaying the departure of their troops to use them as leverage, and force the Lebanese to sign economic and political treaties which would leave Lebanon in the French hemisphere.¹ The American ended this scheme, and on the 18th of September 1945, the United States of America recognised Lebanon as a “fully sovereign and independent country”². The same recognition from the Soviet Union followed on the very next day. The French were forced to give up those treaties, and their troops were set to leave Lebanon in 1946. Since then, there was a certain particularity to Lebanon in the eyes of both the West and the East, and there would be continuous attempts to take control of Lebanon in the following years.

The Lebanese were swift to start taking control of their country, and they began by recognising the geopolitical importance of Lebanon, in addition to its sectarian differences, a dangerous and challenging remnant of the French and beforehand Ottoman presence

1 TRABOULSI, Fawwaz - **A History of Modern Lebanon From the Imarah to the Taef Accords**. Lebanon, Beirut: Riad El-Rayyes, 2008, p. 190-191

2 Ibid., p. 191

in Lebanon. Therefore, in 1943, before the independence, there was a verbal agreement between the Maronite leader Bshara Al-Khoury and the Sunni leader Riyad Al-Solh. This agreement was later called the National Pact, and was announced to the parliament on the 7th of October 1943 by Al-Solh himself. The most important point of this pact was the assertion of Lebanon being a sovereign, independent and neutral country. Also, it presented a confessional political structure with a distribution of power on sectarian basis; the president of the country would be a Maronite Christian, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim, and the president of the National Assembly (Parliament) a Shi'a Muslim³.

Moreover, the remaining positions in the political structure should reflect the ratio of 6:5 (six Christians to five Muslims) according to the 1932 consensus. This pact was of a high level of importance as it was seen as the safety net for the new post-mandate political system. However, most of its points remained 'verbal' and were never fully incorporated within the constitution of 1943. This gap between the National Pact and the constitution was the first domino piece ready to fall, eventually leading to the worst case scenario— a Civil War.

The second piece of the domino was the establishment and announcement of the state of Israel on the 14th of May 1948, followed by the first Arab-Israeli war on the very next day, the 15th of May 1948. The war was won by Israel, and the Arab armies faced their first failure. However, it was, in fact, more than a mere lost war; it was the beginning of a new era for the Middle East, as it embedded the tone of war against 'the new common enemy'. Furthermore, it started the Palestinian exodus to several refugee camps in Palestine, Syria, Jordan, and most importantly Lebanon, which would be very impactful later on.

With this being said, and in spite of the tensions and wars, Beirut and Lebanon as a whole were living their golden age, the former was a real haven for tourism and luxury. This was evident by the rapid urbanisation and massive tourism industry, where the construction and inauguration of international hotels did indeed reflect the vision of the new country. This vision constituted Lebanon to be a touristic and economic destination, and promoted Beirut as a Western city model in a Middle Eastern environment. Hence, it was no coincidence for Beirut to be called 'the Paris of the East'. This approximation came to be due to embracing the remnants of the French mandate, i.e. the use of French as a widely spoken language, the use of an opened economy, the visual similarities between Beirut

3 GHOSN, Faten, op. cit., p. 382

and the European cities, so on and so forth. The premise of that golden age was based on the three pillars of the 1943 National Pact: Lebanon's Independence, Sovereignty, and Neutrality. But how could a country small in size and poor in resources keep away from the regional polarising political landscapes? The answer is: it could not. Although the National Pact manifested a method of sustaining peace in Lebanon, the pact never addressed the political affiliation of the numerous parties and sects, and surprisingly, nor did the constitution.

The Constitution -by itself- stands on political schizophrenia. It reinforces the political, legal, and civil equality to all the Lebanese as citizens. At the same time, it builds the foundations to a political, legal, and civil inequality to all the Lebanese as members of religious groups with obvious hierarchy and fixed shares of both the political system and the public sector.⁴

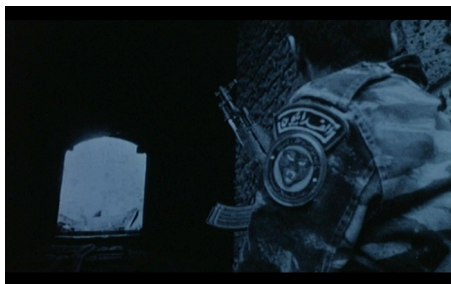
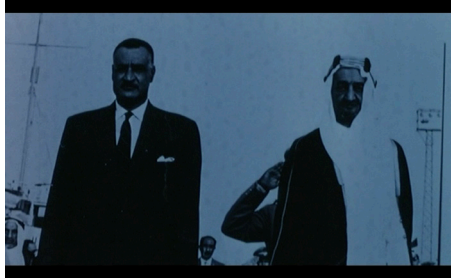
Hassles were first introduced when Lebanon was caught up in the Arabic political currents; namely, the aftermath of the Suez crisis⁵; the Lebanese president at the time, Camille Cham'oun, displayed a clear tendency towards the Western camp (Europe and the United States of America), which became evident when he refused to cut the diplomatic ties with France and Britain after the Suez crisis. In addition, Cham'oun expressed some affiliation to the Baghdad Pact⁶, a pact which the president of Egypt Jamal Abdel Nasser coined as 'the threat to the Arabic nationalism'. This created a tension between president Cham'oun and the Nationalist party in Lebanon.

In 1958, there were two major changes in the region; the first was the declaration of the United Arab Republic (the union between Syria and Egypt) on the 22nd of February of that year, which had the support of the Lebanese nationalists. In return, the union would give them the political cover and reason to revolt against the president and his 'western affiliation', leading to violence and armed clashes. The second was Iraq's withdrawal from the Baghdad Pact on the 14th

4 TRABOULSI, Fawwaz, op. cit., p 186 (Freely translated from Arabic by author)

5 The Suez crisis or the Tripartite Aggression 1956 was the war between Israel, Britain, and France against Egypt, due to Abdel Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal.

6 The Baghdad Pact 1955 (also known as CENTO) was a treaty between the United Kingdom, Pakistan, Iran, and Iraq. It is coined as "the least successful pact in the Cold War". However, the primary purpose of this pact was to create a barrier against the communist ideology.



Sequence No. 1:
Stills from *Beirut, Oh Beirut*.
00:00:09-00:01:32

of July due to the change of its regime. This rapid shift of regional political influential power, as well as the escalating Lebanese internal tension, led the United States of America to intervene on the very next day of Iraq's withdrawal; on the 15th of July 1958, the US army deployed 14000 troopers and its 6th fleet to Lebanon. They took control of Beirut's airport and port, thus enacting Eisenhower's promise to *intervene in the countries under the threat of becoming communist*⁷. The American presence, of course, managed to intimidate the nationalistic opposition. Surprisingly, however, it also forced president Cham'oun to resign, to be replaced by a new president Fou'ad Shihab, with Jamal Abdel Nasser's blessing and approval. With the acknowledgement of the impossibility to fully enact the National Pact and its three pillars, it was clear that Lebanon was -slowly but surely- exiting its golden age.

*"Lebanon is a country which must be kept completely still politically in order to prevent communal self-centeredness and mutual distrust from turning into active and angry contention."*⁸

The second Arab-Israeli war on the 5th of June 1967 was yet another defeat on the Arabic side, leading to the expansion of Israeli geography to include parts of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. The interior of Lebanon would be the new front line, and the Palestinian armed militias were operating within the Lebanese interior, also in Beirut. Therefore, the Lebanese-Palestinian confrontation was not only inevitable, but sometimes even out of control. One example of this is the destruction of the Middle East Airline fleet in Beirut's airport on the 18th of December 1968 by the Israeli Commandos (code called Operation Gift), as a response for an attack by the Palestinians, which, of course, lead to more tension between the Lebanese and the Palestinians. The Cairo 1969 Accord⁹ came to resolve these conflicts; the Lebanese army gave up its jurisdiction over a part of the south, where the Palestinians would operate freely.

7 MAYER, Michael S. - **The Eisenhower Years**. United States of America, New York: Infobase Publishing, 2009.

8 SHILS, Edward - The Prospect for Lebanese Civility. In BINDER, Leonard - **Politics in Lebanon**. 1^a ed. United States of America, New York: Wiley, 1966, p. 1-11

9 COBBAN, Helena - **The Palestinian Liberation Organisation: People, Power and Politics**. United States of America: Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 76:

The Cairo Accord was the agreement between the Palestinians, the Lebanese, and the Egyptians to distribute military jurisdictions in Lebanon.

What made things worse for Lebanon was the third Arab-Israeli war on the 6th of October 1973, where Syria made a truce with Israel, and Egypt signed the accord of Camp David¹⁰. This left Lebanon as the only active front line of the war— a very fragile one. These devastations were the introduction to the Civil War, and perhaps this is why Maroun Baghdadi chose to begin *Beirut, Oh Beirut* (1975) with photographs from The Cairo Accord (Sequence No. 1), and Operation Gift (Sequence No. 2); although the film was not on a high level of sophistication, it divulged the inner conflicts within people, and their complicated relationship with Beirut, or in the matter of fact, their isolation from it.

The above-stated brief history of Lebanon divulges that Lebanon accommodated two parallel realities: the first was the aspiration for a unified, prosperous country, with a great and cosmopolitan capital. The built environment continued to follow the French master urban plans for Beirut. Hence, the reason of the similarities between post-mandate Beirut and Paris. One example is ‘Place de l’Etoile’ which -according to a study by BaselStudio¹¹- resembled conventional European urban planning. The other is *Hotel Saint George*, the first modern building in Beirut, which, although built after the independence, was, in fact, influenced by French modernism¹². A few years later, *The Holiday Inn* by the French modernist architect André Wogenscky. Not to mention all the other concrete buildings, as this building material was, in fact, introduced by the French.

The other reality was the accumulating tension, polarisation, and violence; the country was a ticking bomb, or as Jonathan Dimbleby described: *This place is waiting to blow, all it needs is a spark*¹³. A spark finally came; the Sunday morning of the 13th of April 1975 was no ordinary one; an unidentified car attacked a church in the Christian quarter of Ain Al-Rummaneh. Some say it was an assassination attempt of Pierre Al-Jmayyel, the leader of Al-Kataeb, the right-wing Christian party. Later on the same day, Al-Kataeb attacked a bus carrying Palestinian passengers through Ain Al-Rummaneh. A bus turned into a massacre; a massacre became war.



Sequence No. 2:
Stills from *Beirut, Oh Beirut*.
00:10:45-00:10:58

10 The accord of Camp David was a peace and recognition accord between Egypt and Israel; it was signed in 1978 after twelve years of secret negotiations.

11 TOFFEL, Ludovic; VIMERCATI, Alain - **The French Mandate**. Switzerland, Zurich: the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich, Basel studio 2009. Research project, p. 43-87

12 Ibid., p. 35

13 From an interview with Jonathan Dimbleby. Available on <https://youtu.be/4DTGFcjRrQ4?list=PLWbxYt0EgYk7PSL48XoDPK9WNdGN-N6Dh2&t=368>, 06:08 - 07:16. Accessed in 02.04.2019

Figure No. 6:

Photograph: Place Charles de Gaulle.
Paris, France.





Figure No. 7:

Photograph: Place de l'Etoile after its reconstruction by Solidere. ©Mosbah Assi.

“Around the World and now in Lebanon”

- 500 Rooms.
- Luxurious suites.
- Panoramic restaurant in the 26th floor.
- Swimming pool and barbecue.
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- Conference rooms.
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- NIGHT CLUB نادي ليلي
- صالة للحفلات
- صالات للولائم والمؤتمرات
- تلفزيون في كافة الغرف
- والعديد من اللوازم والكماليات
- ٥٠٠ غرفة
- أجنحة فخمة
- مطعم دوار (في الطابق ٢٦)
- باربيكيو BARBECUE بجانب المبح
- حوض سباحة

مدينة سان شارل - تلفون ٤٤٠٤٠٠ - تلكس: هول إن ٢٠٣٥٠ - برقية: هوليداي إن - ص.ب ٩٢٤٥ - بيروت - لبنان

بيروت - لبنان

Figure No. 8:

Advertisement material: The Holiday Inn
Hotel flyer, August 1973.

Perception

Of course, I know movies aren't about places, they're about stories. If we notice the location, we are not really watching the movie. It's what's up front that counts. Movies bury their traces, choosing for us what to watch, then moving on to something else. They do the work of our voluntary attention, and so we must suppress that faculty as we watch. Our involuntary attention must come to the fore. But what if we watch with our voluntary attention, instead of letting the movies direct us?

— Thom Andersen, *Los Angeles Plays Itself*.

The center of reality is wherever one happens to be, and its circumference is whatever one's imagination can make sense of.

— Margaret Atwood, *Negotiating with the Dead*.

The 13th of April 1975 changed Lebanon. On that day, the perception of Lebanon as a whole, and of Beirut, in particular, changed. The city was beginning to fracture and be reduced to territories.

Before the Civil War, the Lebanese people perceived reality -as a context- mainly through their personal or collective filters, i.e. religious, sectarian, nationalist, partisan, etc. In this sense, subjectivity is a synonym to perception, and the construction of reality depends on the acts of observation or interaction. With the inception of War, however, Reality -as a concept- ceased to be only a subjective perception, but also a survival one, a blurred gaze into the unpredictable. In this sense, the Reality is a fragile construction of fragments of belief, faith, fear, and hope. In War, the perception of reality is indeed subjective, but also fictional, and

to some extents *Cinematic*; fictional in terms of evoking the idea of fiction as what seems to be ‘unreal’, thus, acknowledging it as a conditional reality. Also, cinematic as the warfare presents itself as a cheerless spectacular, where the actors are not aware of the act, and the directors disregard the audience.

Direct vision was now a thing of the past ... the target area had become a Cinema ‘location’, the battlefield a film set out of bounds to civilians¹⁴

It is undeniably true that the Civil War was startling; there were days where the horrors were unimaginably inhuman. But perhaps the most impactful day was the very first; not for merely marking the beginning of the Civil War, but for the fact that the Civil War started with a very ambiguous perception, and without the full understanding of people; on the first few days there was no clear evidence of who committed the massacre or even why. This ambiguity left reality opened to interpretation, and all parties could claim there were -in one way or another- the victims. In other words, the Civil War did not start only because of the bus massacre, but because of how the massacre was perceived. Of course, this ambiguity and its ability to deceive the Reality depended on how the war was being communicated; it fed on the creation of different Realities from -and for- different perceptions. This would eventually lead to a ‘justification’ of violence, as in within those Realities, it would be effortless to convey anyone into an ‘other’, and any other into an enemy.

In the light of this argument, it was not surprising that when the machinery of war began to operate, it was also accommodating within it a mechanism of propaganda; slogans, flags, graffiti, colours, Architecture, and most importantly -since the Lebanese Civil War was one of the earliest televised wars- film and photography. The premise of said propaganda was to use belief as an asset and a proxy to a new Reality. It is remarkable how successful the propaganda was to antagonise and polarise; it came to be an assertion that Reality is created from perception, not the other way around. This is evident in how the city was divided; Beirut started to have a different reality because people believed so, before any physical deformities.

14 VIRILIO, Paul - **War and Cinema: Logistics of Perception**. United Kingdom, London: Verso, 1999, p. 11

Riad: But I am from here.

Militant: Only Christians can cross.

Riad: But we are from Beirut.

Militant: Beirut! Beirut is no more; it is East and West.

Hala: In which Beirut are we then?

Riad: West, I guess.¹⁵

On the other side, there was another kind of mechanism at work, one with similar tools but with a different purpose— Lebanese Cinema. Since its gradual independence from Egyptian Cinema, there had been no clear visual or cultural distinction from television or theatre. Moreover, within Lebanese Cinema itself, there was no clear genre besides musicals. However, and almost with the beginning of the Civil War, Lebanese Cinema emerged with a high potential to address reality through fiction, becoming a subjective means of perception, and later an instrument of representation; in Cinema, spaces become scenes, movements become a montage, and time becomes an asset. The act of constructing a Reality in Cinema becomes parallel to the act of perceiving reality.

Furthermore, and according to Lebanese director Borhan Alaouié, Lebanese Cinema was never a Cinema of theme, but a Cinema of *cause*¹⁶. This distinction is essential as the two concepts are close yet very different; the civil tension was a clear motive behind the cinematic productions, especially after 1975, when the tension escalated to war. Yet Cinema was not really about the war, but about everything else during the war. In this sense, Cinema was not mere films, was not only to be seen; Cinema was a subjectified perception of reality, through the construction of fragments into a plot. This broader understanding of Cinema is critical to understand the political, cultural, and architectural values within Cinema, and through it.

Could space be cinematic without being in a film? The bus route from the southern district of Beirut to Tal Al-Za'tar camp, passing by Ain Al-Rummaneh was a rather ordinary one, till the moment of the incident. The street where the bus passed and was attacked became a scene; the space became a construction of dynamic elements; the attackers, the bus, the passengers and the surroundings, they

¹⁵ DOUEIRI, Ziad - *West Beyrouth (Beirut Al-Gharbiyah)*. Lebanon: Le Sept-Arte, 38 Productions, Douri Films. 1998. (105 min.), 00:16:36 - 00:17:13

¹⁶ From an interview with Borhan Alaouié. Available on <https://youtu.be/kwLWHmlYIP0?t=5302>, 01:28:22 - 01:54:06. Accessed in 24.02.2019



Sequence No. 3:
Stills From *West Beyrouth*.
00:03:40-00:07:30

all matter now. When it was -many years later- depicted by Ziad Doueiri in *West Beyrouth* (1998), he excelled in bringing about the same transformation of the space; in *West Beyrouth*, the viewer sees through Tarek's eyes. When the bus is attacked, the street becomes a scene, the school becomes the stage, and the window is, in fact, the screen. This defines the cinematic Architecture; it is when Architecture and spaces are part of the creation of a moment of fiction— The eye is the camera; the surrounding is the scene, and the plot is the capacity of perception. It is no wonder that Tarek did not seem shocked on the first moment, it was -for him and the viewers- the moment of blurriness between Reality and fiction (Sequence No. 3).

Another example of *Cinematic Architecture* -and one of the elected focuses of this dissertation- is *The Holiday Inn Hotel*. Alongside some other important buildings, such as the *Saint George Hotel*, *Al Murr Tower*, *Cinema City*, and *Beit Beirut*, it still stands as a powerful trace of the war, and with a story to tell. The war -despite being a killing machine- brought these buildings to a new life, and now they have a character and presence. *The Holiday Inn* was built in 1971 and inaugurated in 1974. The towering edifice was a beacon of the Lebanese economic development and a powerful symbol of the Lebanese-American good relations. War, however, redefined this building into a stronghold. The war of 1975 led to what is called 'the battle of the hotels'¹⁷ with *The Holiday Inn* at its centre. Due to its prime height and location, the hotel became a snipers' nest, terrorising the city and its inhabitants. Today it is a concrete skeleton. With the horrors of this transformation, there are evident cinematic qualities to it, that is the inversion of the logic of perception; at first, the building was to be seen mainly as an object; suddenly, it started to see, thus becoming a subject. In this sense, the building as a whole became a weapon through which war was conducted, and in the present time, remembered. Henceforth, could space be cinematic on its own? If space is perceived cinematically, it becomes cinematic.

17 The Battle of the Hotels 1975-1977 was the armed strife Between Al-Murabiton and Al-Kataeb over *Minet Al-Hosn* district, the involved hotels besides *the Holiday Inn* are: *Saint Georges*, *Phoenicia Inter-Continental*, *Melkart*, *Palm Beach*, *Excelsior*, *Normandy* and *the Alcazar*.

Representation

Omar: May, tell me something, what do you think of Beirut?

May: Crazy.

Omar: Very crazy.

— Ziad Doueiri, *West Beyrouth*.

What we are in fact witnessing at the moment is a multilayered negotiation or competition for the representation and ultimate control of Beirut's spatial and collective identity. Much of Beirut's future image will be largely an outcome of such discrepant claims and representations.

— Samir Khalaf, *Civil and Uncivil Violence in Lebanon*.

It suddenly means more; the epiphany brought by the perception of Cinema and *Cinematic Architecture* is exceptional; Cinema elaborates on the subjective perception of its presented *object*, thus rendering it a *subject*. Furthermore, it possesses the capacity and intention to associate said subject with a state of symbolism; it suddenly means more than what it actually is, or at least what it was before becoming cinematic. In other words, the object becomes the subject, and the subject becomes a *representation*. This 'Cinematic Metamorphosis' is the instrument to address reality with the extent of fiction. However, it is essential to differentiate between two different aspects of cinematic representation: the first is self-representation; in Lebanese Cinema -same as any other kind of Cinema- objects reflect their nature and origin, and characters are primarily individuals, each with a role. Moreover, space is identified as 'place'. In this sense, Beirut must be addressed as a city, at least at first, and Architecture must accommodate functionality in order to -by definition- function.

While this is true and evident, Cinema relies on, and to some extents identifies with, the second aspects of representation: the representation of the unquantifiable. Here, Cinema uses its objects to represent other intangible qualities, external or internal. For



Sequence No. 4:

Stills from *In the Shadow of the City*.

00:24:23-00:27:56



Sequence No. 5: Stills from *West Beyrouth*.

00:00:20-00:01:27

example, Beirut as a city, and its urban assets (i.e. streets, spaces, Architecture, continuity, horizontality, verticality, etc.) are utilised to represent some unquantifiable sociopolitical or economic issues, conflicts, and strifes. The premise is the capability of the city to mirror its inhabitants; before the Civil War, Beirut represented the image of openness and growth, coexistence and cosmopolitanism. With the inception of the Civil War, Beirut represented territoriality and power, the division and the bursting violence. Above all, Architecture was the realisation of Beirut's image.

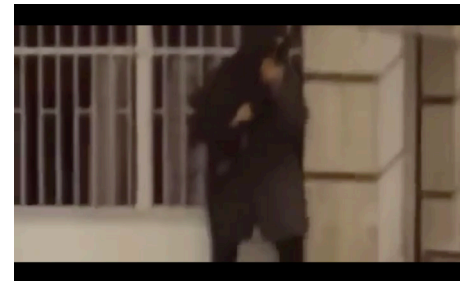
Accordingly, in Cinema, there are two aspects of representation: one that displays a reality as is, and another expresses subjective profoundnesses. Cinema is, in fact, a juxtaposition of the two. This is evident in many films, for example, in *In the Shadow of the City* (2000), Rami slowly discovers that Beirut is a collective representation of several realities, and how one space (Salwa's cafe) engulfs those realities, and the city (Sequence No. 4). He says: *in time, I began to realise how Salawa and the customers were the reflection of Beirut.*¹⁸ Another example is *West Beyrouth* (1998) where the film starts with the 'filming' of an airborne battle in the Beirut sky between two fighter jets; apparently one is Israeli, and the other is Syrian (Sequence No.5). On the ground, there is another battle -a more dangerous one- between patriotic children -namely Tarek- singing the Lebanese national anthem, and the school's principal singing the French national anthem. Last but not least, a new battle is later introduced, a sectarian violence bursting into fire and fury. The viewer sees through Tarek's eyes how the bus massacre happened, yet to understand the reasons and consequences. The location of these scenes is the *lycée Abdul Kader*, which is an actual school (attended by Director Ziad Doueiri). On a first look, the architectural elements are functional and defined by their function, and Tarek is a mere student— each is self-representative. However, with the cinematic construction, the school becomes a representation of the continuation of the French presence, and its physical existence is a battle between the Lebanese identity and the French influence. Moreover, Tarek -as well as being a student- is regarded as the point of view character, thus representing his generation of pre-war Beirut, young, energetic, naïve, and oblivious. When the attack on the bus happens, the school and its architectural elements start to express another dimension; for instance, the window from which Tarek is

18 CHAMOUN, Jean Khalil - *In the Shadows of the City (Tayf Al-Madina)*. Lebanon: Ciné-Sud Promotion, FilmNour Production Company. 2000. (97 min.), 00:24:57 - 00:25:05.

viewing the attack provides the perspective to perceive a counter-shot vis-à-vis the passengers of the bus. At that moment, Tarek sees more -thus knows more- while the passengers and driver are in the dark. Hence, the window per se becomes more than a window; it is a threshold between the interior where reality is perceived as is, and the exterior where Reality is under perpetual construction, also, a screen from which Tarek observes (Sequence No.6).

This duality or juxtaposition of representations is also tangible in *The Holiday Inn*; throughout its existence, it had undergone the same process of *Cinematic Metamorphosis*: from an object, to a subject, to a representation. On the one hand, it was a hotel, a towering edifice of concrete, filled with luxurious rooms and ‘god-like’ views over Beirut. However, from the moment it pierced the Beirut sky in 1971 it had become more than just a building or a mere hotel, it stood out to present an image of the economic growth in Lebanon, a symbol of the progressiveness and openness to foreign investments. Evidently, it was also a representation of power. After its inauguration in 1974, *The Holiday Inn* with its 26 storeys and brutalist exterior was visible from almost every corner in central Beirut, it had, indeed, a powerful presence in the city’s skyline. However, this strong character was becoming a rival to its surroundings, namely the historic *Saint George Hotel* and *Al-Murr tower* (the highest building in Beirut at that time). In a very short time, *The Holiday Inn* was in a battle for dominance over central Beirut, only to be caught up in another battle a year later. On the 25th October 1975, a few months after the Civil War had begun, *The Holiday Inn* and other prestigious hotels in Minet Al-Hosn (the central district of Beirut) were involved in what is called ‘The Battle of the Hotels’ a sub-conflict of significant importance, and horrific outcomes. As one of the most important buildings, *The Holiday Inn* was the centre of the battle, its power and dominance backfiring horribly! One could argue that the factors of making *The Holiday Inn* as powerful and dominant are the same factors of making it a warfare frontline, stronghold, and a leverage. The brutalist concrete design was seen as a thick shell, and the ‘god-like’ view was a haven for snipers. The representation of power and dominance, suddenly turned into a representation of war. Nowadays, and due to its short period, it is quite hard for anyone to remember *The Holiday Inn* as a hotel, war has rendered it a vertical concrete memorial— a representation of the trauma, a trace of war.

There are architectural qualities in Cinema, the same way there are cinematic qualities in Architecture. In the film *West Beyrouth*



Sequence No. 6: Stills from *West Beyrouth*.

00:05:35-00:07:30

and *The Holiday Inn Hotel*, space ceases to be a background, but a foreground— a stage. In this spectrum, it is entirely valid to question the idea of Architecture as a mere victim of war, while it was weaponised during the conflict. *The Holiday Inn* presents a case of a pre-war economic and urban power figure transformed into a trace of a brutal war, it was -and perhaps still is- a victim to some, a weapon to others. Ergo, the representation is not about what to be seen, but how it should be seen; more importantly, how is it depicted after being subjectified. In summation, from spaces to construction, Lebanese Cinema stands as a vivid representation of the Civil War.



Figure No. 9:

Photograph: The Holiday Inn on fire, aerial view. ©AP, December 1975.



Figure No. 10:

Photograph: The Holiday Inn on fire,
December 1975.



“On the 21st of March, Al-Murabitoun destroyed the symbol of Fascism, and swore to continue this path, regardless of the price”

Figure No. 11:

Propaganda material: The fall of The Holiday Inn. 1976. ©Digital Documentation Center @ AUB





Figure No. 12:

The interior of The Holiday Inn during the Battle of the Hotels. ©Don McCullin, 1976.

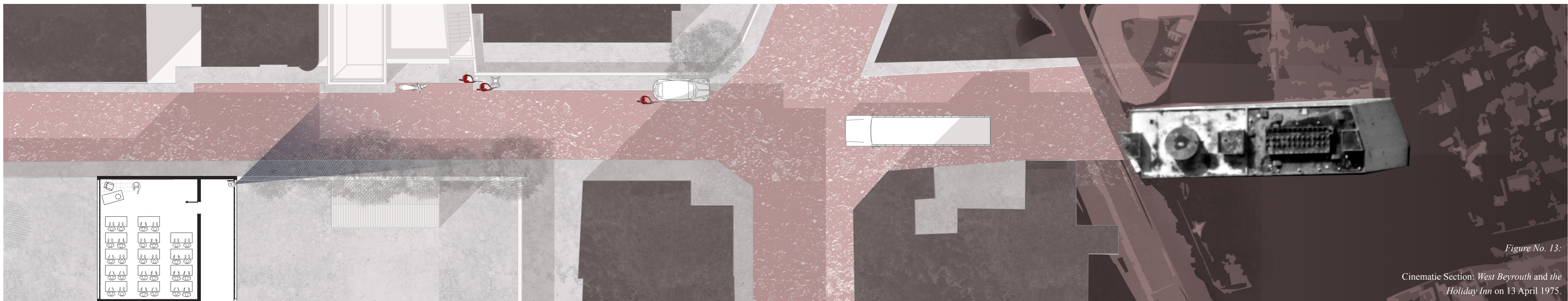


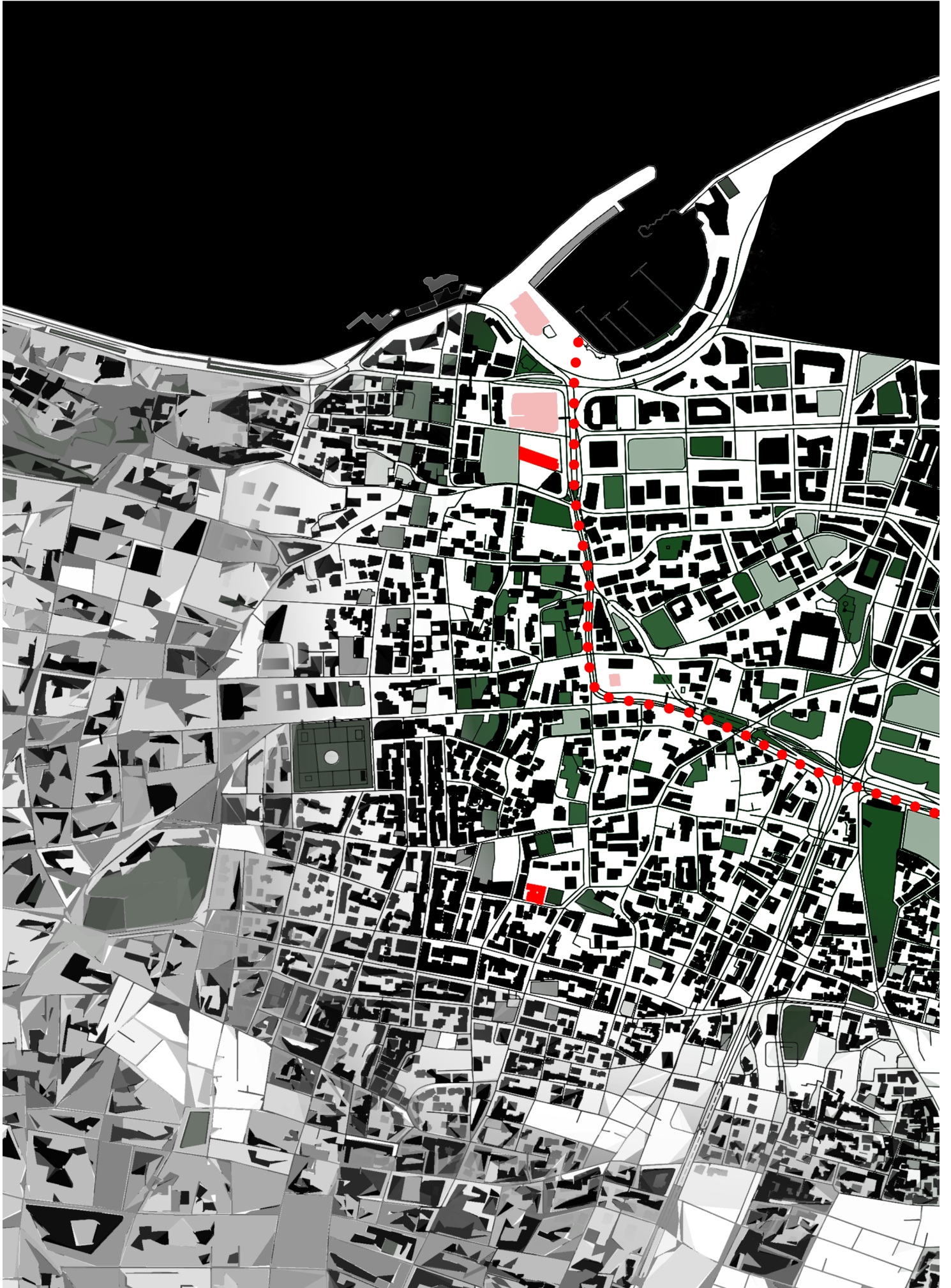
Figure No. 13:

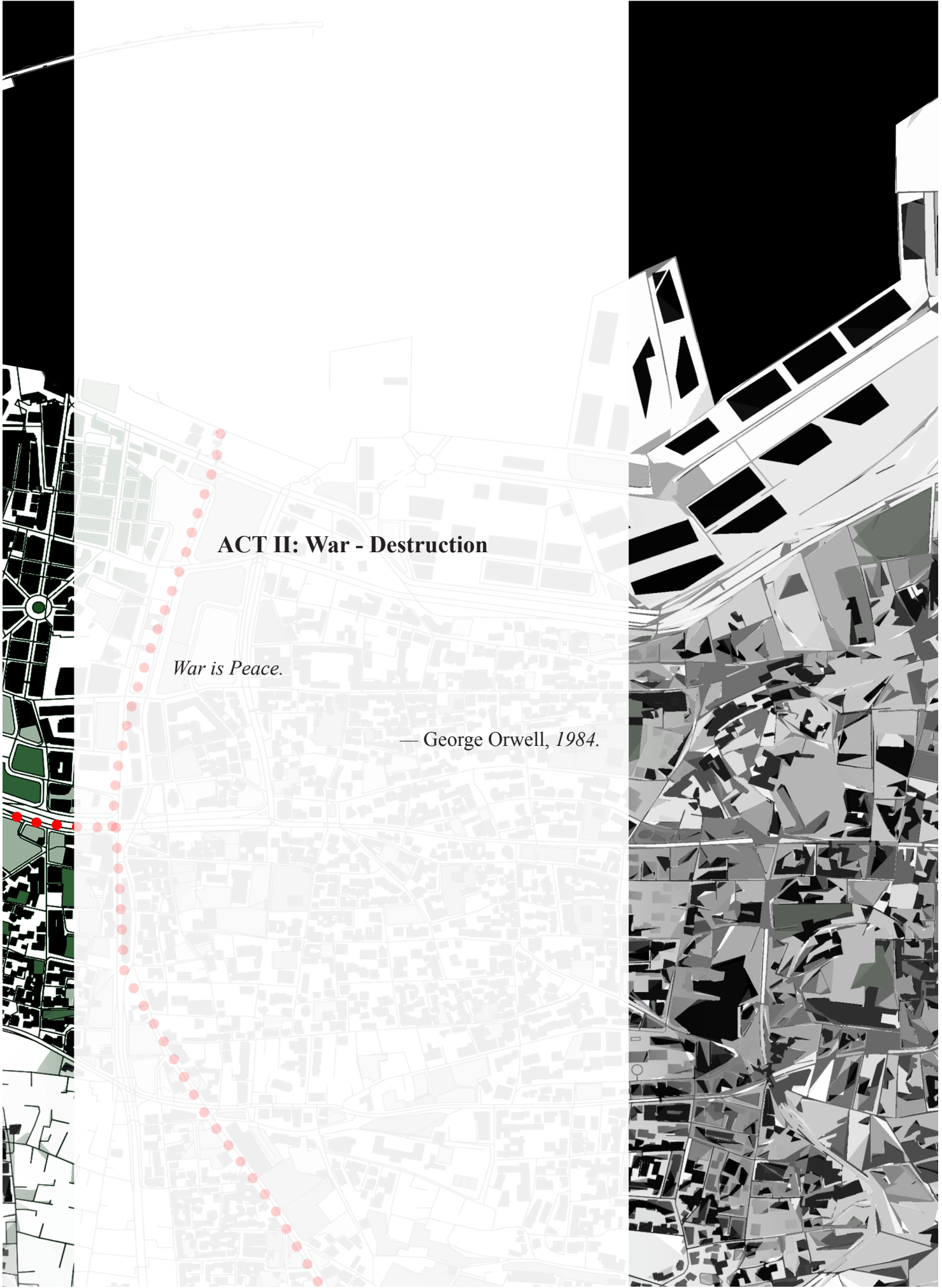
Cinematic Section: West Beyrouth and the
Holiday Inn on 13 April 1975.

EXT. - BEIRUT - APRIL 13 1975 - DAY

INT. - LYCEE ABDUL KADER - CORRIDOR

Tarek is leaving the classroom as the school's principal explains to the rest of the class all the privileges France had brought to Lebanon. Tarek approaches the window, the principle's speech becomes a background to what he sees in the street: masked armed men ambushing an approaching bus. For a mere moment Tarek looks back at his friend Omar who's still in the class, he feels something horrible is about to happen.





ACT II: War - Destruction

War is Peace.

— George Orwell, 1984.

ACT II: War - Destruction

City

Even if the city were divided and linked to different and somehow autonomous cantons, it would only entrench the enervating and violent divisions of the Civil War: Lebanon's heart would have been eviscerated.

— Tim Llewellyn, *Spirit of the Phoenix; Beirut and the Story of Lebanon*.

Any city however small, is in fact divided into two ... These are at war with one another.

— Plato.

It is evident within its history that Beirut has always been in a continuous transition between a city and a battlefield; during the French mandate, in 1958 (the American intervention), in 1968 (Operation Gift), and mainly during the Civil War, Beirut was a 'theatre' on which three different -yet connected- types of battles were being fought: International, regional, and inner battles. The persistent battles reflected the absence of a unified Lebanese front and a political vulnerability. With time, these conditions have fatigued the elasticity of metropolitan Beirut and forced a change upon the city. Needless to say, the most prominent and impactful change was the Civil War and the division of Beirut into West and East; the religious tension and territorial conflict rendered Beirut a prey of urban violence. While it is true that the division was a product of the Civil War, the Beirut pre-war urban configuration had always connoted a religiously predominant urbanscape; Muslims in the East, Christians in the West. This reality was somewhat agreed upon and convenient. However, the division represented crossing the threshold into intolerance between the West of Beirut and its East, between Christians and Muslim. It is important to realise that the strifes of back and forth did not aim to 'conquer' the other part as much to keep away the 'others', thus, it could be said that the



nature of the division was the need for a sense of security through the creation of religiously homogeneous territories. Sectarian cleansing was the objective, in total disregard to Beirut as a unified urban structure. In this sense, there has been an ongoing act of reduction of Beirut; from places to spaces, from a city to territories, and from urban continuity to frontiers. Consequently, little attention was given to what the real Beirut was; it was, in fact, what Beirut represented that mattered. Therefore, the battles were not only fought in Beirut, but on it, and through it.

The city characterized as the crossroads of civilizations became a crossroads of war. Situated on the Green Line, which divided a mainly Christian East Beirut and a majority Muslim West Beirut during the fighting¹

Sequence No. 7:

Stills from *In the Shadow of the City*.

00:30:25-00:31:17

As the division into West and East Beirut was an urban representation of a profound ideological intolerance, Beirut began to be used as an urban weapon; the transition between West and East was, in fact, a transition between conflicting ideologies, this rendered the demarcation line where the West and East met a space with two statuses: the first, as a hotspot of confrontations— a battleground, one where the rule is for guns and brutality. The second was the consideration of that line as a frontier, not a border; since the line was -by definition- the end of reach for the battling camps, it was regarded as identity-less, thus, subtracted from the city. This duality rendered the demarcation line a representation of the mutual radicalism, extremism, and xenophobia— the real face of the war. In other words, the demarcation line was in duality for being the centre of war, and the periphery to the divided city. Paradoxically, it came to be called ‘the Green Line’ as vegetation took over the lifeless debris.

Lebanese Cinema depicted this broader definition of urban limits, and portrayed the Green Line both as a trace of the war, and a reflection on it; *In the Shadow of the City* (2000) introduces the conflict on territoriality by addressing the perception of Beirut as ‘breakable at any time’; Nadeem, a young man drawn into the

¹ MONROE, Kristin V. - **The Insecure City; Space, Power, and Mobility in Beirut**. United States of America, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2016, p. 36

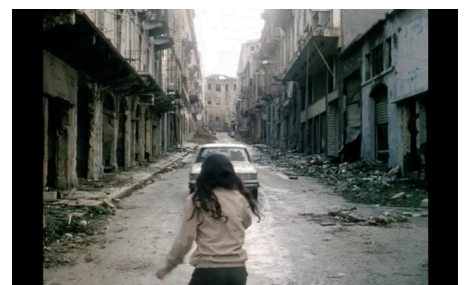
fostering radicalism, tells his sister Yasmine he is about to leave their house in ‘West Beirut’ and join the Christian militias in the eastern part of Beirut: *I am leaving, I cannot stand it here anymore, you should know this, Beirut is about to split into two, I am leaving before it gets worse*² (Sequence No. 7). As the story develops, he is spotted fighting at the Green Line, his family having migrated to East Beirut.

Moreover, in *Beirut the Encounter* (1981) there is an explicit addressing of the urban discontinuance in the shape of blocked streets and destroyed bridges (Sequence No. 8). The Green Line also has a presence as a barrier between two lovers; as the story unfolds, the journey to cross it turns out to be a journey of self-reflection. In other words, the Green Line was the absence of context and the presence of one’s self. Meanwhile, in *Little Wars* (1982), the Green Line was the physical destruction; a battleground as well as an unfamiliar territory (Sequence No. 9). Upon arrival to the Green Line, the characters dissolve into the violence and the rubble, they become strangers to their own past selves. In *Little Wars*, the Green Line was the absence of one’s self, and the presence of context. This presents a significant contrast between two films from a very close time of production, which displays the power of Cinema as an instrument of representation of different -and wholesome- perceptions.

With that in mind, Lebanese Cinema did not limit itself in addressing the urban conflicts only to represent the division and the Green Line, but there was more; in *Stray Bullet* (2010) there is a particular conversation about the changes in Beirut in the year 1976. Colette, a strong and unmerciful woman, takes the lead in talking about how the Palestinian camps were conquered, she and her fiancé describe the attacks on the camps. In one way or another, she seems to have a justification for everything in the name of self-protection (or collective protection), until she is confronted with her own wrongdoing (Sequence No. 10). This scene is compelling as it describes Beirut from the interior of a living room, and although seemingly similar to *Beirut, Oh Beirut* (1975), the emotional charge is very different. In *Beirut, Oh Beirut* the interior is detached from the exterior— the city, while in *Stray Bullet*, the interior is a mirror of the exterior, the conversations are constructing a subjective image of Beirut. Colette expresses hers, one with the camps and their inhabitants eradicated. That was, in fact, the unmasked face of war. That is, in fact, shortly after the film timeline takes place (late 70s early 80s) Tal Al-Zaatar, Katarina, and Jisr al Basha camps were under siege, and later, flattened.

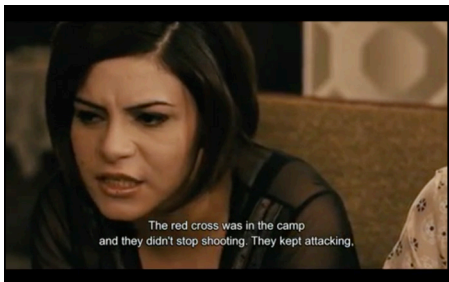
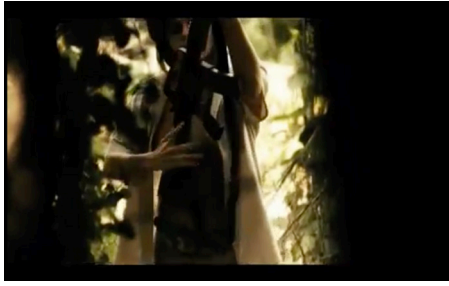


Sequence No. 8:
Stills from *Beirut the Encounter*.



Sequence No. 9:
Stills from *Little Wars*.
(first) 01:32:59/01:19:05 (last)

2 CHAMOUN, Jean Khalil, op. cit., 00:30:21 - 00:31:14



The Green Line and the Palestinian camps in Beirut were the primary physical manifestation of the Civil War; their destruction was the everlasting trace on the Beiruti geography. However, this also goes beyond the physicality of destruction, to the truth of alienating said places from the urban continuum, thus detaching them from Beirut into a state of urban isolation. This clearly means that Beirut did not only undergo a state of division, but it was, in fact, a state of fragmentation, which, eventually, would lead to its destruction or annihilation without any considerations to Beirut as a whole.

Sequence No. 10:

Stills from *Stray Bullet*.

00:24:12-00:29:03/00:41:42-00:44:10



Figure No. 14:

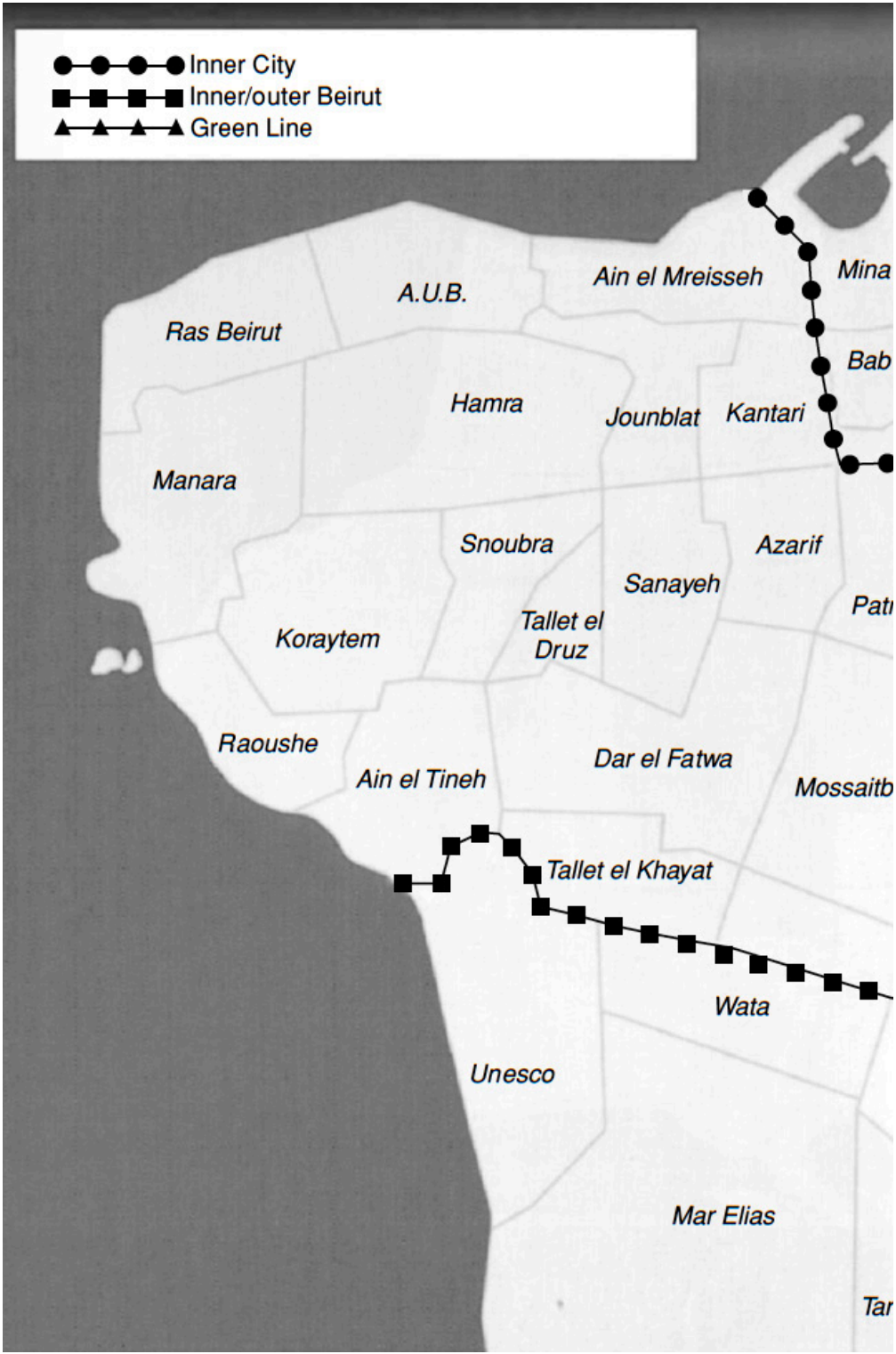
Photograph: The remnants of the Green Line in downtown Beirut.

©Marc Deville/Gamma-Rapho 1991.



Figure No. 15:

Photograph: the sheer destruction in Beirut, 1990s.



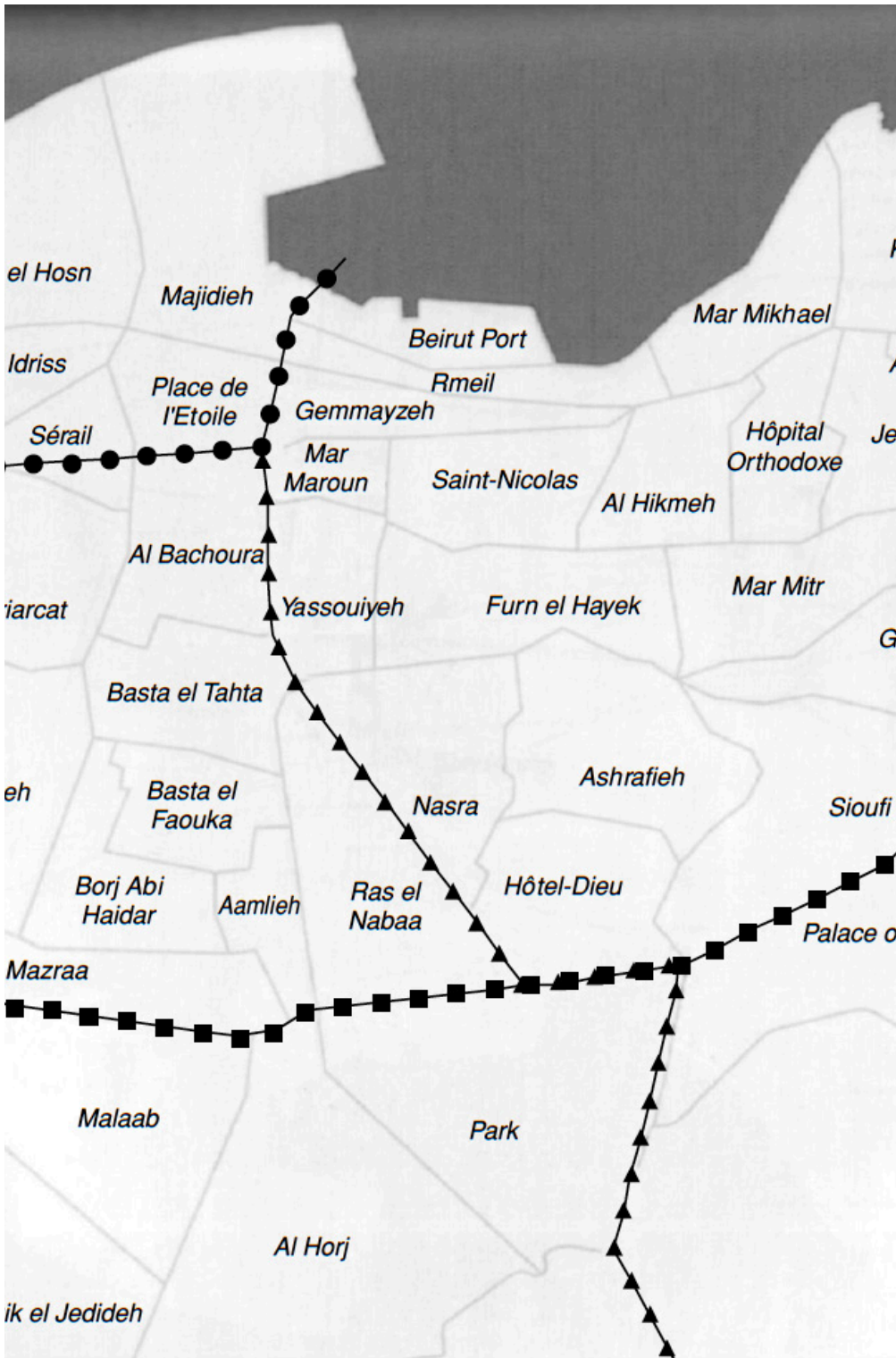


Figure No. 16:

Map: The fragmentation in Beirut during the war, 1975-1990.

Figure No. 17:

Photograph: Wedding picture in East Beirut.

©Joseph Barrak, 1989.



Figure No. 18:

Photograph: Two Christian militiamen during a Battle near the Green Line.

©Patrick Baz. 1980s





Figure No. 19:

Photograph: Part of the Green Line.
©Ali Mohammed, 1990.



Figure No. 20:

Photograph: The Green Line with the
vegetation taking over. ©Steve McCurry,
1982.



Figure No. 21:

Photograph: View from street Georges-Picot. ©Harry Koundakjian, 1969.



Figure No. 22:

Photograph: Pedestrians and cars crossing the “Barbir-Museum checkpoint” on the Green Line during a ceasefire. ©Nabil Ismail, July 1989.

Architecture

Architecture has become a proxy by which other ideological, ethnic and nationalist battles are still being fought today.

— Robert Bevan, *The Destruction of Memory; Architecture at War*.

Tarek: I am from West Beirut.

Oum Walid: West Beirut! What is this! West and East! Here there is no such thing, at Oum Walid's it only Beirut. Period.

— Ziad Doueiri, *West Beyrouth*.

In war, Architecture accommodates both peace and conflict in a paradoxical manner; on the one hand, Architecture -regardless to its function- can always transcend to become domestic, that is, during war, any Architectural structure is a spontaneous shelter— a home. In other words, Architecture is a refuge, an asylum from the exterior— the city. Home is a safe space, even when it is not. On the other hand, and according to Robert Bevan's approach to what he called 'Politicised Architecture': "*Buildings are not political but are politicized by why and how they are built, regarded and destroyed*"³. Architecture is representative. It presents itself as a façade of an ideological, ethnic, or religious manifestation, thus resulting in the consideration of Architecture as symbolic. This means that Architecture becomes a target, and war fuels over its destruction not only as a mere method, but also as an objective.

This is not 'collateral damage'. This is the active and often systematic destruction of particular building types or architectural traditions that happens in conflicts where the erasure of the memories, history

3 BEVAN, Robert - **The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War**. 1st edition. United Kingdom, London: Reaktion Books, 2006, p. 12



*Sequence No. 11:
Stills from Little Wars.
01:45:41-01:50:36*



*and identity attached to architecture and place – enforced forgetting – is the goal itself. These buildings are attacked not because they are in the path of a military objective: to their destroyers they are the objective.*⁴

While it is true that destruction is an objective, not only a method, Architecture is not always the prey of destruction; between domesticity and a being target, Architecture is subject to deformation from its own true self; this deformation sometimes exceeds to weaponise Architecture and conduct war through it. In this sense, one could say that Architecture has never been objective, yet peace cannot articulate its subjectivity. In contrast, war evokes the need to disregard the recognition of Architecture as mere objects, but as an evident representation of subjectivity, further, as an ‘emotional experience’ of spatial complexity (emotional in terms of understanding, and relating to, the intangible qualities and memories of the space). While Architecture per se possesses representative qualities, *Cinematic Architecture* -as previously defined- elaborates on said representativity to embed or evoke emotions. In one way or another, *Cinematic Architecture* lies between the realm of function (as an object) and the realm of fiction (as a subject).

At a first glance, it seems like the general scale for destruction in the war film genre is more urban than architectural; that is, when a city is subject to war, its inhabitants, as well as its Architecture are subjects. However, there is no explicit addressing for individuals (people or buildings), the devastation and destruction become ‘Meta’ in the sense that the visual display of destroyed Architecture is in complete disregard to its function. This disregarding of function eliminates the need for any understanding of Architecture besides its image. This is one way to generate a sense of urban unification; the rubbles may vary in their origin of function or purpose, yet they merge into a univocal representation— war. Hence, meta-destruction⁵.

This can be seen both in *Little Wars* (1982) in a number of montages within the rubble (Sequence No. 11), and *In the Shadow of*

⁴ BEVAN, Robert, op. cit., p. 8

⁵ While this is true in Lebanese Cinema, it is not exclusive to it; this depiction of destruction as a cinematic asset is evident in the filmography of the Second world War in films, as well as the filmography of Yugoslav Wars. Some of examples are: *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (1959), *La Jetee* (1962), *The Pianist* (2002), *The Book Thief* (2013), *Dunkirk* (2017), and many others.

Sequence No. 12:

Stills from *In the Shadow of the City*.

00:04:02-00:05:26

the City (2000) where there are two parallel sequences: the first is when Rami -a young boy- and his family are entering Beirut for the first time, and he is observing this unfamiliar urban and architectural presence from the back of his father's pickup, almost like he is absorbing the strange city, pre-war Beirut (Sequence No. 12). The second sequence where Rami -now a grown-up man- drives an ambulance through the rubble; he is in a peculiar city once again. He is, however, still in Beirut (Sequence No. 13). The complexity and importance of these sequences is not only in their visual similarities, but also in the fact that in both, Rami is a stranger to the city, and although he observes it from a moving vehicle in both sequences, it seems like he is fixed in place, Beirut swiftly unfolding before his eyes, as if it was a 'reel' of Architecture. This clearly illustrates how War Cinema -and in this case, Lebanese Cinema- often depends on displaying meta-destruction as a primary aspect of warfare, as a complement to any plot in terms of transmitting the unsettling image of war. While this is true, the more in-depth understanding of the role of Architecture defies the abbreviation of *Cinematic Architecture* to a mere visualisation of destruction; Cinema does not only show what was destroyed, but also why is it targeted. This is the reason why it activates Architecture as a functional and emotional space before the destruction, in order to address the destruction as a loss of a character rather than mere debris. Essentially, in Lebanese Cinema, Architecture is not designed (i.e. it is never an artificial set), but created through the manipulation and utilisation of Architecture as is.

*As architecture creates a sense of place and domesticates space, film's use of architecture works similarly by creating a context for a story event. In turn this activates the viewer's imagination so that images exceed their frames.*⁶

As stated, Architecture in Lebanese Cinema represented more than destruction; in some occasions, it is the mirror of the emotional charge, and in others, it is an accessory to the plot, if not the plot. In *Out*

6 BERGFELDER, Tim; HARRIS, Sue; STREET, Sarah - **Film Architecture and the Transnational Imagination; Set Design in 1930s European Cinema**. The Netherlands, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007, p. 23



Sequence No. 13:
Stills from *In the Shadow of the City*.
00:44:20-00:46:24



Sequence No. 14:
Stills from *Out of Life*.

of Life (1991) Patrick, a young French Journalist and photographer, gets kidnapped by an Islamic militia, with the intention of trading him for a prisoner in France (Sequence No. 14). Unfortunately for him, things do not necessarily go according to plans, and he ends up losing himself in captivity, developing Stockholm syndrome towards his captors. Along his days in captivity, Patrick experiences a devastating journey as he slowly loses hope, and with it, his sanity. His reality was in a state of reduction; first, he finds himself reduced to a pawn in a greater political scheme, as he starts to slowly break and lose his integrity. Then, for Patrick, Beirut does not exist anymore; his world reduced to the limits of any room in which he was held hostage. Even when he is eventually set free, in his perception, there is no city, only a slightly widened room. With the emotional charge it encompasses, Architecture in *Out of Life* is the momentarily place and time of Patrick. However, at the same time, there is an ongoing placelessness and timelessness— an isolation from the external world. Once again, Lebanese Cinema folds the exterior (the city) within the interior (Architecture).

This relation -or even dialogue- between interior and exterior is also present in *West Beyrouth* (1998); as stressed in Act I, there is a high level of symbolism in the architectural composition of the bus massacre scene. One could clearly see the cultural battle through a sequence of transition from exterior to interior. In the same manner, the bus massacre is seen by looking from the interior towards the exterior (Sequence No. 15). This clearly embeds Doueiri's vision of the value of Architecture. In this scene in particular, Architecture plays another important role besides representation; Tarek's transition from the exterior (recess), to another exterior (the street and the city) through the interior (the classroom and the corridor), is an architectural 'montage' and the set for the plot. First, it divulges Tarek's rebellion on some aspects of his predetermined identity, as he sees the French school building as a sort of a 'theatre' to express his Lebanese identity; at the same time, others are using the street also as a theatre, to express their own Lebanese identity.

This transition which eventually leads to the window, is, in fact, an architectural set for Tarek to have the ideal location to observe the massacre from a 'point of view', in the same manner as the plot times his arrival to the window moments before the attack. In other words, the architectural understanding of the scene suggests the role of Architecture as an accessory for the plot to advance. Doueiri employs Architecture to manifest his cinematic statement, on the premise of both Architecture and Cinema being primarily

constructive, and ultimately emotional.

In the context of war, Cinema is also a celebration of survival, not only of who survived but also of what survived; the city, the buildings, people, they all become sudden heroes, or in the case of *The Holiday Inn*, an antihero— a weapon. The significance of this towering edifice as a representation of power and dominance, to war and Memory, is rarely addressed in Lebanese Cinema; despite its brief presence in several films such as *Beirut the Encounter* (1981), *Little Wars* (1982), and *In the Shadow of the City* (2000), it was never a character in any of them, i.e. it did not metamorphose from Architecture to *Cinematic Architecture*, which is an understatement to its actual relevance to the Civil War. Nonetheless, *The Holiday Inn* was cinematic outside of Cinema; as previously stated, the change of its function from a hotel to a stronghold also changed the perception of it, from a landmark to a weapon of surveillance and death. Moreover, during the battle of the hotels, Beirut was subject to its first large scale battle. The international hotels' district was the battleground of this battle, and in the centre was *The Holiday Inn*. From the battle onwards, *The Holiday Inn* was encompassing -within its limits- a separate reality from the rest of Beirut. For whoever was in control of *The Holiday Inn*, the building becomes the centre of their reality. At the same time, it had a powerful impact on its surroundings; *The Holiday Inn* was the urban centre of whatever was in its sight. Perhaps this is why Lebanese Cinema did not give the importance of *The Holiday Inn* Justice, only showing it from the exterior looking in, but never from the interior looking out. Once again there is a dichotomy between the interior and the exterior, as *The Holiday Inn* reduces Architecture only to its own self, its periphery was no longer Beirut, but only the limit of its sphere of influence.

All of this could only mean one thing: that Architecture is the product of human complexity. It represents ideology, culture, and Memory. Thus, its destruction or deformation is only natural -or at least, expected- during war.



Sequence No. 15:
Stills from *West Beyrouth*.
00:01:30-00:07:30

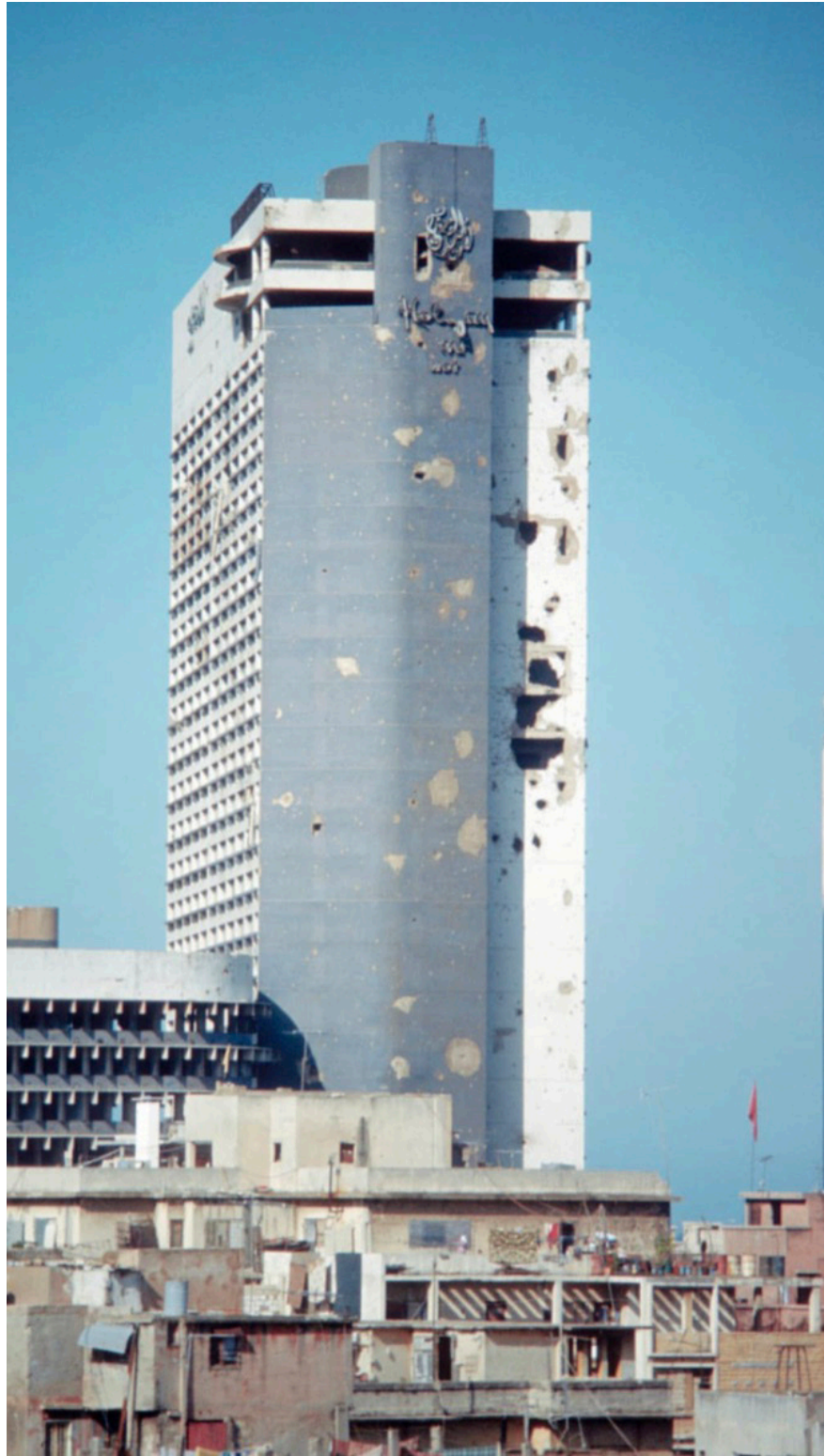


Figure No. 23:

Photograph: The Holiday Inn showing its destruction, 1990.



Figure No. 24:

Photograph: Part of the Green Line showing The Holiday Inn in the background, 1978.



Figure No. 25:

Photograph: Beirut between destruction and coping. ©Steve McCurry, 1982.



Figure No. 26 (left), Figure No. 27 (right):

Photographs: Beirut between destruction and coping, 1977.



Figure No. 28 (left):

Photograph: Beirut between destruction and coping, 1978.

Figure No. 29 (right):

Photograph: Beirut between destruction and coping, 1991.



Figure No. 30:

Photograph: Beirut between destruction and coping, 1991.

Memory

Ten thousand furious days had passed about them, and they had no memory. They lived like creatures born full-grown into present time, shedding the whole accumulation of the past with every breath, and all their lives were written in the passing of each actual moment.

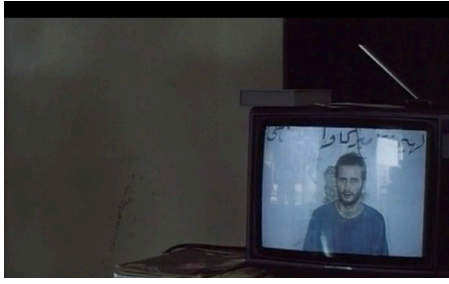
— Thomas Wolfe, *You Can't Go Home Again*.

Place is the Memory, once one leaves his place, he leaves his Memory as well.

— Mouhamad Abdulaziz, *Damascus with Love*.

During war, Memory could disappear without one noticing; between the 13th of April 1975 and 13th of October 1990, Beirut was a place of many realities— war, peace, and survival. It is important to emphasise how these different realities were the product of different perceptions of the Civil War. For the perpetrators, it was the end which justifies the means— bloodshed was the mean, cleansing was the end. At the same time, and for many others, it was simply the loss of everything at once. The bloodshed, the fragmentation of Beirut and the destruction of its Architecture were the first layers of loss. However, fundamentally, it is whom or what they all represented; together, people, Beirut, and Architecture represented the collective Memory, thus revisiting Architecture is an evocative remembrance.

Memory is identity; thus, its opposite is not forgetting, but absence. Today, in the peak of reconstructing Beirut, this absence is evident— in today's Beirut, the war never probably happened since it appears not to be remembered. Lebanese Cinema remains one of the very few visitors to the Civil War, its primary purpose being to find a manner through which all the Lebanese may remember it without self-victimisation or avoidance of confrontation. Lebanese Cinema addresses Memory in various definitions: it is the past,



Sequence No. 16:
Stills from *Out of Life*. 01:00:02-
01:02:49



Sequence No. 17:
Stills from *Beirut the Encounter*.

the present, the future, and the 'could have been'. In many films, there appears to be an identification with a certain space -or spaces- within which the story unfolds, thus, establishing Memory. In this sense, Architecture becomes more than space; it becomes a token of Memory, a representation of time, and with it, a representation of identity. In other words, Memory in Lebanese Cinema becomes the preservation of space, and the manipulation of time.

As before-mentioned, in Lebanese Cinema, Memory has more than one approach. In some films, Memory is the past; this type of Memory is the clearest, it is evoked by the realisation of change, and it holds within it a sense of nostalgia as well as an undertone of despair. In *Out of Life* (1991), Patrick is ordered to read a filmed statement to the French government, however, and after his long captivity and change of perception, Patrick breaks down in front of the camera, and reaches out to his lover Julie instead of reading the statement (Sequence No. 16). This is a powerful moment where it is shown how he is in exile of space, having only his Memory left. One example to understand Memory as the present is *Beirut the Encounter* (1981); in this film, the lovers Haidar and Zeina are separated, each is in one of the Beiruts, they plan a last meeting to give their torn apart relationship a sort of closure. However, as the story unfolds, the 'place-ful'⁷ encounter begins to be impossible. As a result, they decide to record and exchange their perception of war on cassettes (Sequence No. 17); their recordings of war memories convey hopelessness and a deep detachment from their place. As they were recording, they were, in fact, remembering, then, redefining their memories of the past from being 'place-ful' to being placeless. Zeina says it all in a heated discussion with her professor: *The past by itself cannot make war, war feeds on itself. The past doesn't provoke war, war provokes the past, and brings it to the present. War cannot easily convince us to continue the battles of the past ... How do you want the people to stop it [war], professor? That is ridiculous. Do people know from where it springs? ... Two years ago they would declare why they were fighting; now they don't, you cannot know whether the war is there or not, they don't know what to say, they don't have to say anything.*⁸

Furthermore, in *West Beyrouth* (1998), Memory stands in a trance between the past and present; on the one hand, it is a romanticisation

7 As in relation to a certain place.

8 ALAOUIÉ, Borhan - *Beirut the Encounter (Beirut Al-Liqaa)*. Lebanon: Ciné Libre, Etablissement Arabe de Production Cinématographique (EAPC), Satpec. 1981. (125 min.), 00:56:33 - 00:58:16

of the past, on the other hand, it crosses the threshold into the denial of the present. At the beginning of the film, the school principal is romanticising the French mandate on Lebanon, claiming all the history and civilisation of Lebanon to be under the French influence, and of a French origin. (Sequence No. 18) She states -in French-: *Keep in mind, ladies and gentlemen, the French high school of Beirut is the embodiment of the French mission. Let us not forget that France created your country, gave you your borders, and taught you peace; we created your civilisation, and your constitution. Let it be known that education, French education in particular, is the only way out of your primitive customs.*⁹ Shortly after the bus massacre, and as the Civil War began to take visible shape, Tarek refuses to acknowledge the changes. As everyone around him starts to gradually apprehend the cost of war, he remains oblivious; regardless of the changes, Beirut to him was always the pre-war Beirut. He persists on trying to create a 'war free' reality, until he is confronted with the undeniable truth: nothing is the same— His mother passes away, and the film ends with her memory (Sequence No. 19).

*To lose all that is familiar – the destruction of one's environment – can mean a disorientating exile from the memories they have invoked.*¹⁰

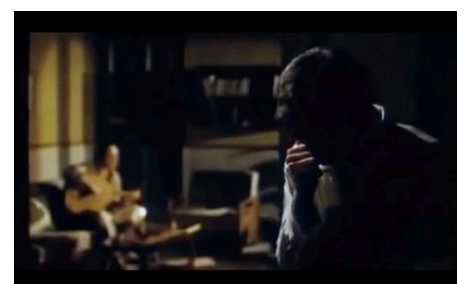
In contrast to *West Beyrouth* where the present is denied, there are films where the conflict is addressed directly, and Memory is depicted as the present. It is the short term Memory at work, where Reality is in perpetual resetting. This can be seen in *Little wars* (1982), where there is a visual Memory of people who passed during the latest battles, a Memory represented by posters on the walls, the accumulation of posters reflecting into the number of deaths, and suggesting that the poster on top is the newest. In this case, looking at a wall becomes a confrontation. Similarly, Architecture also becomes a confrontation in *In the Shadow of the City* (2000), as the film talks about two periods of time, one where Rami is a young boy, and the other when he is a grown-up; it turns out that not only impressions of the present are the memories of the future, but also, Memory is the future of places which no longer exists; Memory becomes its only presence, and remembrance is its recreation, thus, giving it a non-physical future.

9 DOUEIRI, Ziad, op. cit., 00:05:33 - 00:06:18

10 BEVAN, Robert, op. cit., p. 13



Sequence No. 18:
Stills from *West Beyrouth*.
00:03:40-00:05:35



Sequence No. 19:
Stills from *West Beyrouth*.
01:35:30-01:40:51



Sequence No. 20:
Stills from *The Dream*.

The Last example is a very particular one; the Film *The Dream* (1987) unfolds as a series of interviews with residents of the Palestinian camps in Beirut, while they all answer a seemingly simple question: “What is your dream?” (Sequence No. 20) The ambiguity of the question renders the answers liminal memories, something between a dream as a scary memory of Reality—a nightmare, and a dream as a vision of the future—a hope. The interviewees divulge their ‘dreams’ with a clear detachment from Beirut, and at the same time, with a robust connection to their home country, Palestine. What this means is that their ultimate collective dream is the return. As one woman says: *God’s willing, one day we will return to our lands, and plant it with watermelon.*¹¹ Sadly, this dream, as well as all the other dreams remained unexecuted desires, as some of the camps where this film was shot witnessed cold-blooded massacres, and others were flattened. Those desires are somewhere between wishes and memories of a future that could have been.

Whereas all these definitions of Memory are divulged through Lebanese Cinema, Memory remains an intangible quality; however, it is embedded in architectural or urban manifestations, the emotional experience of space is the one where Memory is invoked. This means Memory is also subject to fragmentation (as the city) or destruction (as Architecture). Architecture gives Memory a tangible physicality. Hence, *The Holiday Inn Hotel* stands somewhere between being a Memory and a memorial. Also, and in this sense, Lebanese Cinema and cinematic Architecture do not only represent Memory, but they also stand as a Memory on its own; they become a means of documenting the war, and translate its impact into traces. In short, Cinema serves a higher purpose than a mere display of Beirut or its Architecture; it is an instrument of perceiving Reality, a device of representation, and above all, a place. That is, from war to destruction, Lebanese Cinema -by itself- becomes a Memory of the Civil War.

11 MALAS, Muhamad - *The Dream (Al-Manam)*. Syria: Maram Cinema and TV, 1987. (45 min.), 00:15:22 - 00:18:48

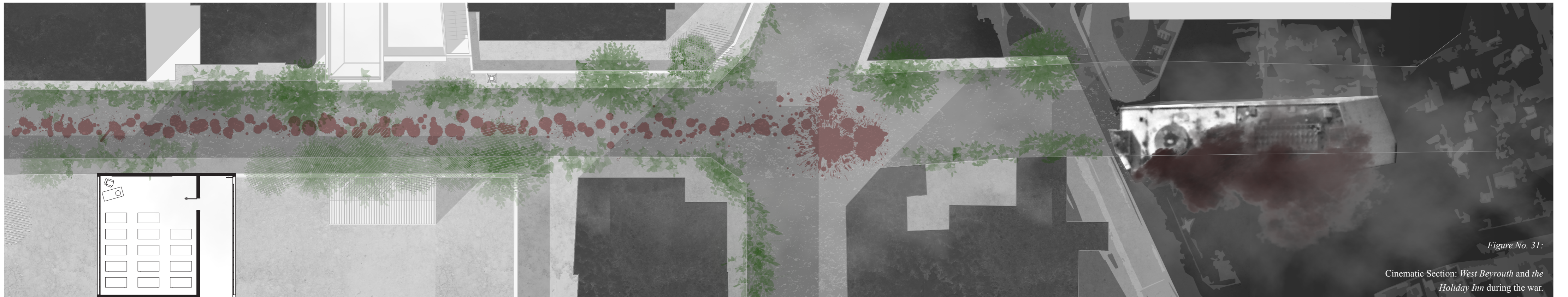
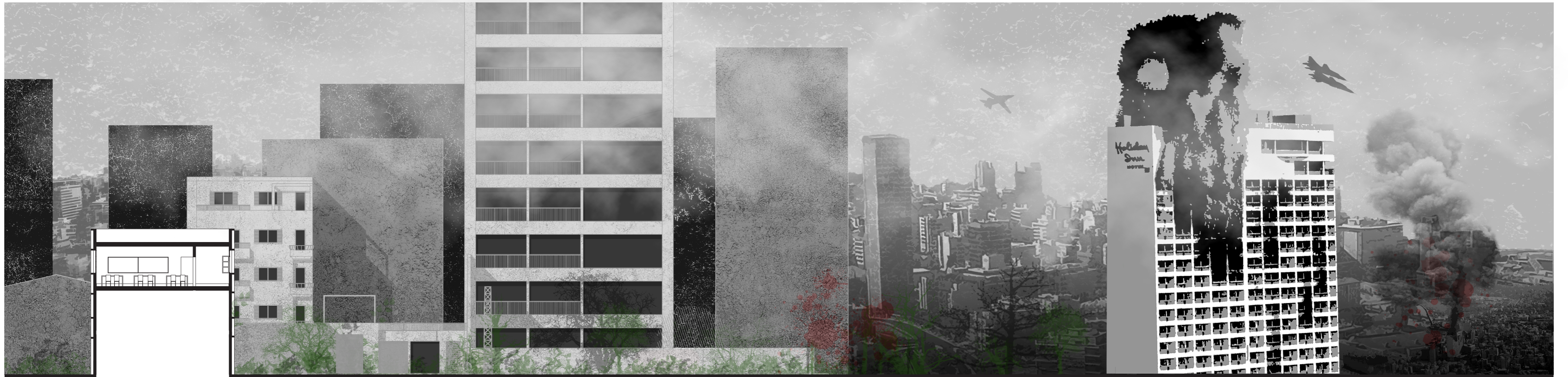
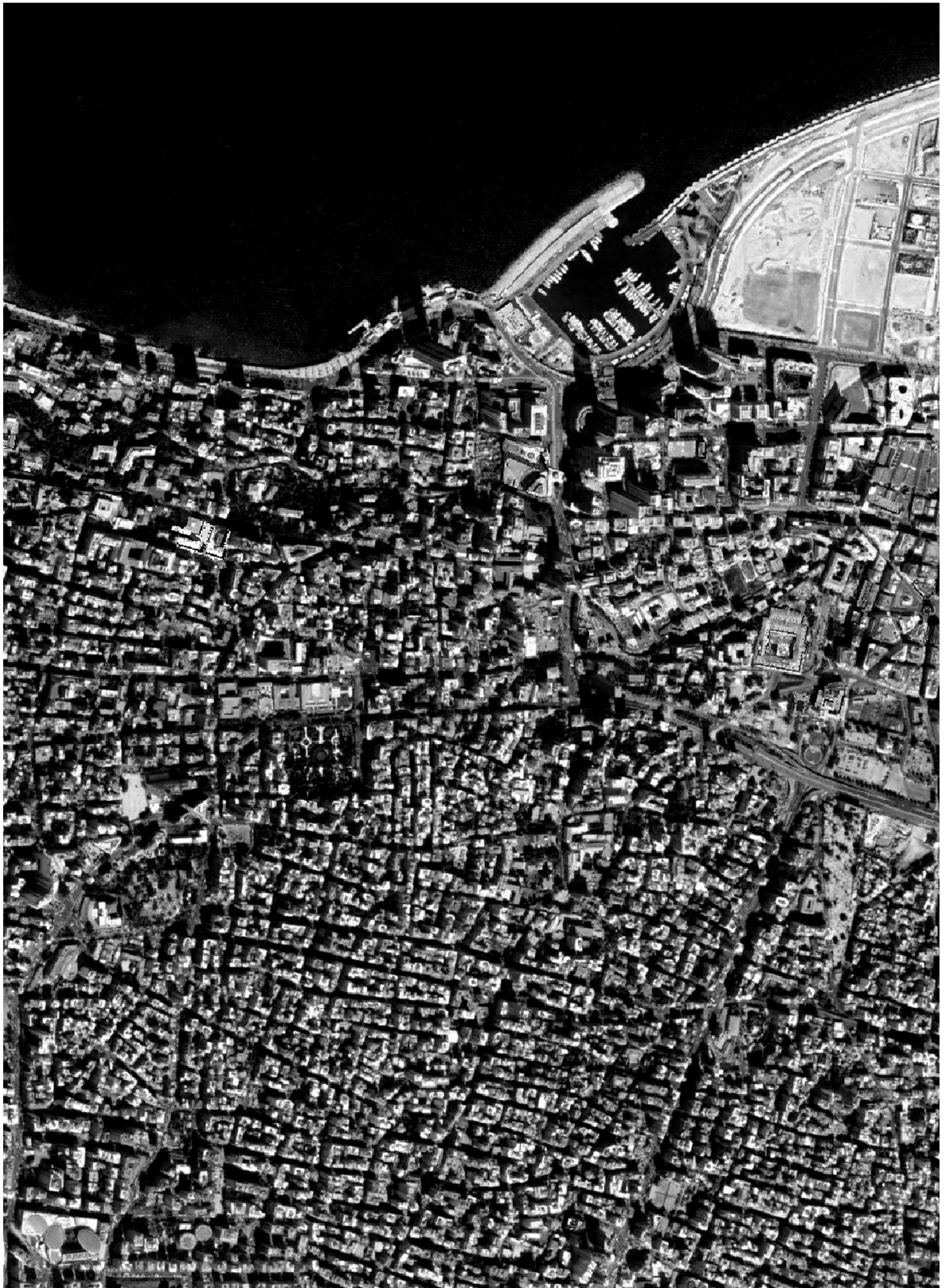


Figure No. 31:
Cinematic Section: West Beyrouth and the
Holiday Inn during the war.

EXT. - BEIRUT - 1975/1990 - DAY

INT. - LYCEE ABDUL KADER - CORRIDOR

Tarek is growing up somewhere in the 'other city' West Beirut, while the school is part of the Green Line. Emptiness and fear are the character of the foreground while war is the one for the background. War is taking over, and the Holiday Inn is both its prey and weapon.





ACT III: Traces - Emotion

Does pain go away and leave no trace, then?

— Yasunari Kawabata, *Thousand Cranes*.

ACT III: Traces - Emotion

Scars

The axe forgets what the tree remembers.

— African proverb.

*Out of suffering have emerged the strongest souls;
the most massive characters are seared with scars.*

— Khalil Gibran, *The broken Wings*.

The 13th of October 1990 marked the day when the end of the Lebanese Civil War was announced, at least in political terms. This ‘political end’ came about for several reasons: the first and most important is the Al-Taef accord on the 22nd of October 1989, an accord amongst the Lebanese parliamentary members, that produced a consensus on divulging a path to end the war and reconstruct. This accord coincided with an American-Syrian agreement to facilitate peace in Lebanon¹. The second reason is the evolvement of the conflict; prior to said date, Beirut was undergoing the darkest days of the war, as it was taking a new dimension. In the late 1980s, the Civil War was no longer a war of ideologies— War in the name of God, but now a war over authority and spoils— War in the name of power. The emergence of new power holders in what is supposed to be a unified front (mainly the Christian front²) had turned the conflict mainly from Muslim-Christian to Muslim-Muslim and Christian-Christian. At the same time, the Syrians, the Israelis, as well as the Palestinians, were still major players. This chaotic situation invoked a rushed political exit, and so it was.

The rushed ending of the Civil War exemplified once again the dichotomy between the political reality, and the social one. While the new political regime was in rapid motion to conceal the horrors of the Civil War, Lebanon and Beirut were still in devastation and destruction, and above all, the people were still in grief. Thus,

1 TRABOULSI, Fawwaz, op. cit., p 419

2 Ibid., p. 420

for some, the war ended in 1990, while for others, it perpetuated, perhaps till these days. The political end of the war was marked by the reinstatement of governmental jurisdiction over the entirety of Beirut, after 15 years of its complete absence. The reunification of Beirut declared that -in one way or another- the city-scale war was -seemingly- over, and the reconstruction would shortly take place. The reanimated governmental body shied away from any attempt to facilitate a national dialogue or reconciliation. Its negligence of accountability allowed the political reality to achieve a sort of closure— the war was the past, and the warlords of the past are the politicians of the present.

Unfortunately, the same could not be said about the social reality; it was actually the opposite. The devastation and destruction were not addressed as a national crisis, but as a reminder of the war, and by extension, of its perpetrators. It came to be evident that there was an agenda to eliminate, or at least, neutralise the Memory of the Civil War. This agenda was apparent on many occasions, for example, the demolition and reconstruction of 80 per cent of the Downtown, while only 30 per cent of the destruction was the result of the Civil War³. Architecture became once again a victim of another war, the war of reconstructing the narrative. The ghost of the Civil War was still lingering in Lebanon, and in Beirut; the efforts to eradicate the Green Line, and the city centre (Downtown Beirut) are not a mere post-war reconstruction process, but in fact, a deliberate attempt to erase the Civil War by erasing its Memory and its traces. Unsurprisingly, it did work to some extent; it created collective amnesia by rendering Beirut *a city that has silenced its memories about the civil war and encouraged the eradication of remembrance from people's lives through radical changes in their urban environment.*⁴ That is, the government was more focused on the image of Lebanon as the 'Phoenix rising from the ashes' than any effort to acknowledge and make peace with the past. In other words, for the political officialdom, disrememberance came to be the only resolution to guarantee 'a sort of peace⁵'. Hence, the Amnesty law of 1991, and the post-war destruction and reconstruction of Beirut.

3 MAKDISI, Saree - Laying Claim to Beirut: Urban Narrative and Spatial Identity in the Age of Solidere. *Critical Inquiry*, United States of America, Chicago. Vol. 23, n.° 3 (1997), p. 674

4 PUZON, Katarzyna - Memory and Artistic Production in a Post-war Arab City. In O'RAWA, Des; PHELAN, Mark - **Post-Conflict Performance, Film and Visual Arts: Cities of Memory**. United Kingdom, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, p. 268

5 See GHOSN, Faten, op. cit., p. 382

From the onset in 1990, Lebanese officialdom discouraged critical memorialisation and instead promoted a culture of letting bygones be bygones. In the absence of state-sponsored attempts to establish what happened in the Lebanese Civil War and who was to blame for the human tragedies that accompanied it, the politics of remembering in postwar Lebanon emerged mainly through cultural production, by which various nonstate actors disputed the ethical, political and historical meaning of the civil war.⁶

This deliberate annihilation of the Memory of the Civil War began with the eradication of its visual manifestations, i.e. destruction of the city and Architecture. While the reconstruction was -slowly but surely- erasing the bruises of the Civil War, Cinema was one mean to document the destruction by transforming the rubble into a cinematic character, further declaring that even the debris can be *Cinematic Architecture*. This is a key difference between the cinematic approach to post-war Beirut and the political one, in the sense that the cinematic saw potential in destruction as visual Memory, the political saw a loose end of the amnesia scheme. As a result, Cinema was in a race with reconstruction, for the fact that the city was undergoing rapid urban and architectural transformations, which meant Cinema had minimal time and space to divulge the cinematic potential of destruction, without jeopardising the integrity of the emotional charge of destruction as a representation of war. Nowadays, the majority of post-war filming locations lost their war-related identities; in many cases, this happened shortly after filming. In this sense, Lebanese Cinema -alongside literature and art- was a significant player in the counterculture for the urban proxy war on the traces of the Civil War. Cinema preserved the Memory of the place, and with it, an aspect of its identity.

In the light of understanding the relationship between Cinema and Architecture, and Memory. It is important to realise that Cinema is not just a tool of documentation, but a device through which Memory is contentiously being remembered. This is evident in *In the Shadow of the City* (2000) which begins with third-party footage

⁶ HAUGBOLLE, Sune - **War and Memory in Lebanon**. United States of America: Cambridge University Press, 2010, p. 4



(Sequence No. 21) (courtesy of the televised war journalism and military surveillance) showing acts of destruction and warfare horrors. The use of this footage is delicate as it alternates the narrative between subjective and objective. However, one could say this is its true purpose; this alternation between the intimacy of the narrative and the harshness of destruction helps to understand that war was horrible for everything and everyone. In one way, it is similar to *Beirut, Oh Beirut* (1975), which also starts with an objective acknowledgement of the past. In this sense, one could say that, if footage or traces of the past conflicts in *Beirut, Oh Beirut* were warnings, there is no doubt they serve the same purpose again in post-war Cinema.

The same use of third-party footage is powerfully present in *West Beyrouth* (1998) (Sequence No. 22), as it was not used to display war more realistically, but to portray how little were the people entangled in higher politics, at the same time how significant was the impact on the everyday livelihood. Once again, *West Beyrouth* is exemplified to examine the phenomenon of Cinema being in liminality between being a document and a fiction; the making of this film -according to Lina Khatib- marked the renaissance of Lebanese Cinema⁷, as it was a fictionalised narration of the Civil War, where it depicted actual events with their respective consequences, and subjectified them to become relatable. Moreover, as it was shot after the war had ended, it depended primarily on filming the parts of Beirut where the destruction of war was still present. Thus, in one way or another, the film created an urban temporal parallel of destruction; *West Beyrouth* was shot when Beirut was in an urban transition from war to post-war, but at the same time, the film talks about Beirut being in another urban transition, from pre-war to war. This parallel serves a role in transcending Cinema into emotional confrontations, when the physicality of destruction appears in the film (as seen on the then newly emergent demarcation line), it is more than a visual display of the war, it becomes an acknowledgement of wrongdoing. With this being said, it is worth mentioning that Lycée Abdul Kader, the school where the first minutes of the film were shot, is now under the threat of being demolished, and for the same empty argument.

Clearly, Lebanese Cinema is in a state of symbiosis with Beirut, it represents Beirut as a space becoming a place, and as an organism; whether intentionally or not, it captured and experienced the post-war urban morphology. In this sense, what remains untouched by the reconstruction 'machine' becomes a *de facto* trace of war, thus, all

Sequence No. 21:
Stills from *In the Shadow of the City*.
00:01:32-00:04:01

⁷ KHATIB, Lina - *Lebanese Cinema Imagining the Civil War and Beyond*. United Kingdom, London: Tauris, 2008, p. 30

the still standing architectural structures, namely *Beit Beirut* (*Beirut House*), *Cinema city*, *Saint George Hotel*, *Al-Murr tower*, and *The Holiday Inn Hotel* are the last remnants of Beirut's intact history—they are, perhaps, the only true history. *The Holiday Inn* takes an unparalleled presence; as previously stressed, *The Holiday Inn* stands as a powerful scar in Beirut—it had redefined the city before the war, during war, and it continued after. Throughout its existence *The Holiday Inn* represented the unspoken, unquantifiable war in Beirut, from the economic war, through the Civil War, reaching the war on Memory, thus, its mere presence evokes an interchangeable image of Beirut, this means that what once represented the power of Beirut also became a witness to its downfall. This complexity renders *The Holiday Inn* an active trace of not only the war, but its emotional charge, hence, the consideration of *The Holiday Inn* as a vertical memorial, one where war seems to be gone, and yet, its fear still lingers. It is worth mentioning that most of said buildings, including *The Holiday Inn*, are still standing due to legal restrictions. Otherwise, they would have been long gone! This reinforces the fact that those buildings did not survive because they are the history of Beirut during the Civil War, but quite the opposite, they are the history because they survived.

Cinema remains the place where the Memory of the war is always present to remind, and congregate. It is imperative to address that it is nothing but natural to rebuild and reconstruct after a war; however, rebuilding should start by reconciliation on the social level before the architectural or urban ones. Without a national consensus, reconstruction becomes a process of commodification, alongside an eradication of Memory, it is not -in any way, shape or form- a process of national healing.



Sequence No. 22:
Stills from West Beyrouth.
00:53:27-00:53:53



Figure No. 32:

Diagram: Downtown Beirut's urban morphology between 1841-2017.

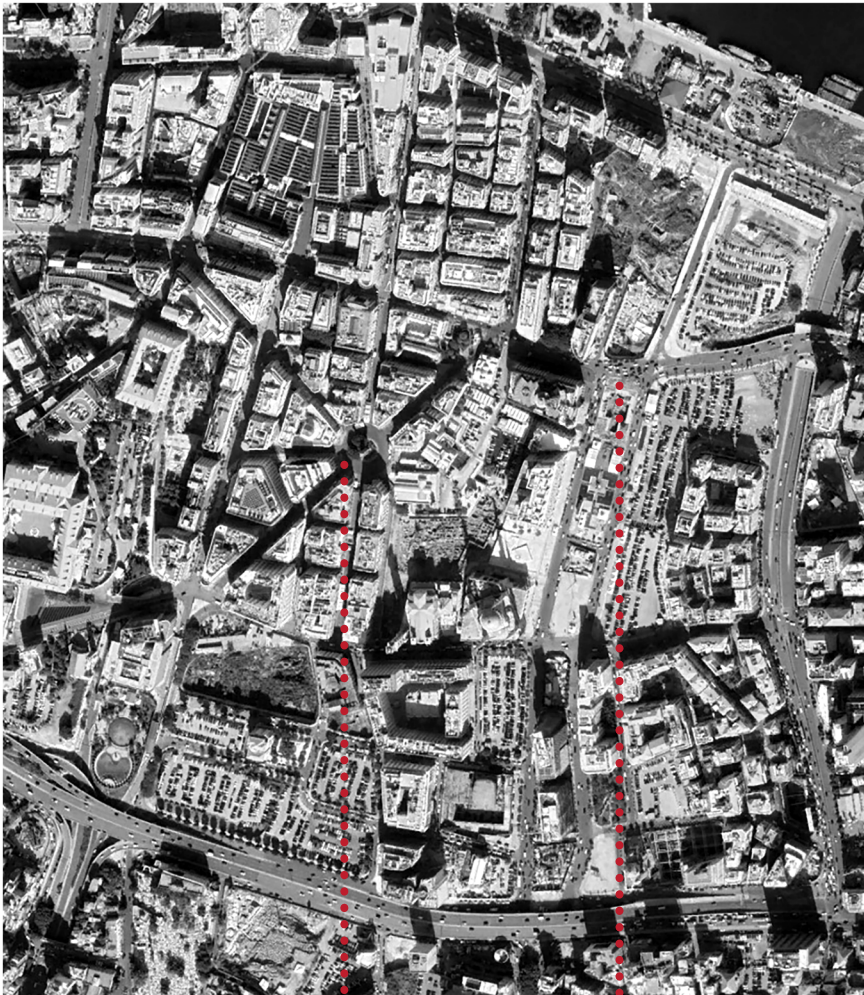


Figure No. 33:

Orthophotograph: Downtown Beirut, 2017.



Figure No. 34:

Orthophotograph: Downtown Beirut, 1982.





Figure No. 35:

Photograph: street vendor in Martyrs' Square selling posters of the same place in the late sixties. © Patrick Baz, 1990s.

Figure No. 36:

Photograph: Martyr's square in destruction. ©Alex Hofford, 1992.

Sculptor: *Renato Marino Mazzacurat.*



Figure No. 37:

Photograph: Martyr's square in destruction. ©Alex Hofford, 1992.

Sculptor: *Renato Marino Mazzacurat.*





Figure No. 38:

Photograph: Martyr's square after it was reconstructed by Solidere.
©Fouad El-Khoury, 2010.

Sculptor: *Renato Marino Mazzacurati.*



Figure No. 39:

Photograph: Martyr's square after it was reconstructed by Solidere, general view showing Cinema City on the left.
©Fouad El-Khoury, 2010.



Figure No. 40:

Photograph: Contemporary Beirut showing the Holiday Inn Hotel amongst post-war high rises.
©Rami Rizk, 2019



Figure No. 41:

Photograph: General view over Beirut showing Al-Murr tower and The Holiday Inn.

Scares

I do not remember the precise day the Civil War ended. I do not think many Lebanese people do either. People in Lebanon are well aware of when the War started: 13 April 1975. But no one seems to agree on when the War ended.

— Lina Khatib, *Lebanese Cinema; Imagining the Civil War and beyond.*

When the war ended in Lebanon, it was like it never happened ... The moment the war was over, she explained, it suddenly felt unreal, as if it were a distant memory or part of a film

— Sune Haugbolle, *War and Memory in Lebanon.*

As the remembrance of the war became to be controversial at least, and provocative at most, it was evident that the ongoing war against Memory in Beirut is on the verge of partial amnesia; no one seems to know precisely when the war was actually over, or who emerged victoriously. The compromised collective Memory is, in fact, the result of many factors, such as the post-war laws, the Israeli occupation of the south till the year 2000, the presence of the Syrian army, etc.. Nonetheless, it is evident that the reconstruction has not only embedded the false vision of a ‘war-free’ Beirut, but it also has had the most powerful impact of the post-war image of the city, as the reconstruction machine has erased most of the physical traces of the Civil War from Beirut. However, Memory transforms into trauma, as the fear still lingers.

The involuntary absence of the physical Memory -in the shape of traces or scars- thrusts the non-physical Memory to become a trauma, one with a -seemingly- unknown origin. This is extremely dangerous

is an unstable region such as the Middle East, with a divided society such as the Lebanese. When war becomes an unquantifiable Memory, its projection ceases to be on the past, but on the present. This is why -for many people- the war has not ended; the trauma is translated into civil tension, and the ghost of the past haunts the present. In other words, amnesia renders the war an intangible trauma.

While trauma is evident in Lebanon and particularly in Beirut, it remains to some extent unmeasurable; the sheer amount of untreated psychological wounds is overwhelmingly crippling to any nation. At the same time, sadly, trauma is what unites the Lebanese, not the many personal memories of the war; there are little to no indicators of what is still collectively remembered from the war— the Memory of war reflects the uncertainty. In the light of this argument, it is essential to remember that war was horrible on the people, and resulted in a collective loss; in war, the city is in fragments, and Architecture -as seen in a previous chapter- is in spontaneous domesticity. After the war, however, the city becomes in fear, and Architecture transcends into ambiguity. In this sense, the loss was not only in the shape of destruction or death, but mainly, the Lebanese lost their identity; *the identity of the past, the identity of the present, and the identity of the future*⁸. The dominant image of war evokes a contemporary revolution on the state of ambiguity, and imposes the need for a search for an identity. This could follow one of two possibilities: establishing a new identity from between the remaining aspects of the post-war national values. Or, alternatively, relating to an identity which exists somewhere in the past; one that is either forgotten, or buried underneath many layers of fear. The tendency towards the second option was, in fact, the Lebanese dilemma; it looked for an identity in the past; for intangible trauma invokes a retrospect. However, with the disoriented collective Memory, and the fact that the history of Lebanon was not one with a unified front on any level, i.e. political, economic, religious, sectarian, etc., the retrospective search for identity is rendered a dangerous territory; the past has what divides as well as what unites. Therefore, the approach must be unbiased, delicate, and purposeful.

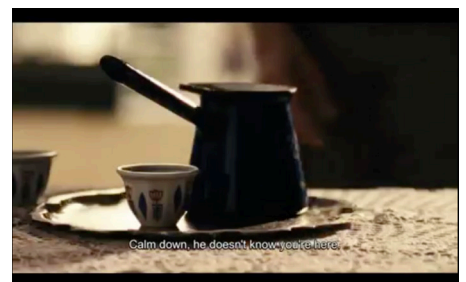
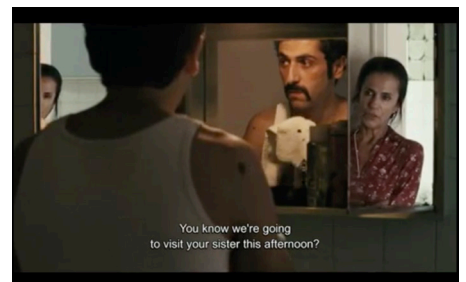
It is interesting how many films were made after the war, yet having a retrospective timeline; each film has tailored a fictional narrative to coincide with the occurrences of the Civil War. In the bigger picture, Lebanese Cinema presents itself as one means of

8 From an interview with Borhan Alaouié. Available on <https://youtu.be/kwLWHmlYIP0?t=5302>, 01:28:22 - 01:54:06. Accessed in 24.02.2019

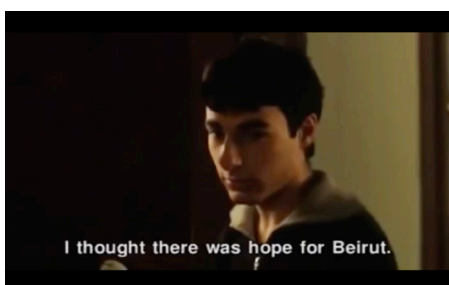
establishing identity retrospectively, without inflaming the civil tension; as it bridges between the present to the past, Lebanese Cinema becomes a Memory of the war, and at the same time, the war is remembered via Cinema. In this manner, post-war Cinema does not only revisit the war, but it always treats it as it is a present, not a past. Spectators are, of course, aware of the fact that the war happened many years ago, yet Cinema challenges their timeless trauma; it does not only bring all dreads of the Civil War to the fore, but it also provides a manner through which one could re-experience the war, relate to it, and confront their personal fears. In this sense, the cinematic experience becomes something more profound. This hypothesis would not be feasible if Cinema were not considered a place as well as an emotional experience, as it engulfs the city and its Architecture, it also encompasses all of the emotions which they accommodate or evoke. Thus, experiencing Cinema provokes the perception of destruction, alongside circumstances and consequences of its occurrence. This invites the spectators to go beyond the physical destruction, and explore their inner emotional trauma, vis-à-vis the external one— the scares of war are still within.

This is well displayed in *Stray Bullet* (2010), a film set in 1976, with an undertone of nostalgia to the 70s, evident in the scenography as well as the music (Sequence No. 23). The beginning of the film is -allegedly- about a love story versus the traditionally arranged marriage. However, as the plot advances, it turns out that the film addresses one of the most difficult issues Beirut have witnessed during the Civil War, the war on the Palestinian refugee camps. Despite the bloodiness of the battles at that time, the film focuses on the interactions and conversations between the characters in a simple living room, a -seemingly- neutral environment. In contrast, the conversations are not as simple; they are always about shifting blames, the war, death, loss, and the existence of ‘the others’, This film reminds the spectators of the horrors of the war, at the same time, it invites them to reflect on the fears of the past, in relation to the fears of the present. That is, such conversations happened in every living room, and perhaps are still happening.

Over the last 30 years, Lebanese cinema has acted as a commentator on the development of sectarian conflict in Lebanon; on the normalization of war; on the reconstruction of Lebanon in the postwar



Sequence No. 23:
Stills from *Stray Bullet*.



Sequence No. 24:
Stills from *West Beyrouth*.
00:05:35-00:07:30/ 01:23:33

*period; and on the way the war still lurks in every corner in today's Lebanon.*⁹

One could say that *West Beyrouth* (1998) started the phenomenon of retrospective Cinema in Lebanon, it marked a crucial moment where Cinema transcends from being a fictionalisation of a story to the fictionalisation of history (Sequence No. 24); in pre-war and during-war Cinema, the centre of the plot was the war as an ongoing state of vagueness. Whereas *West Beyrouth* was a first row seat to an assessment of the war as a reality, and the premise of said assessment is the fictionalisation of actual events of the Civil War, and divulging their impact on an average family— one that anyone and everyone can relate to, thus feeling their helplessness, frustration, rage, and fear.

With all of that being said about *West Beyrouth*, perhaps the primary reason that makes it stand out in Lebanese Cinema is the fact that it pioneered in challenging the collective Memory of the people; it was the first film to directly address the war as a document and a fact, while morphing it into an act of fiction. One of the most potent scenes, the attack on the bus, is both factual, and fictional; the fact of the attack is only seen via Tarek's view from that window of the French school, despite the fact that the 13th of April 1975 was a Sunday!

*The film achieved at least two positive outcomes of remembering the war. First, it alleviated a common feeling of national and personal guilt and embarrassment; second, it presented an inclusive national memory that glossed over the middle-class and little-man schism.*¹⁰

There is no doubt Lebanese Cinema -same as everything else in Lebanon- is traumatised by war. However, Cinema excels as a primary means to remember the war, and translate its trauma into a meaningful confrontation; in Cinema, fear is confronted once and many times. The nature of this confrontation often begins as traumatic, however, it always ends as Cathartic.

9 KHATIB, Lina - *Lebanese Cinema Imagining the Civil War and Beyond*. op. cit., p. xvii

10 HAUGBOLLE, Sune, op. cit., p. 127-128



Figure No. 42:

Photograph: Rare photograph of the actual bus of 13.04.1975.



Figure No. 43:

Collage: The bus.
Artist: *Reem Bassous*, 2013.





Figure No. 44:

Painting: *The Hoilday Inn*.
Artist: *Tom Young*.

Catharsis

When it conceals, Cinema becomes part of the war machine, a silencing mechanism that stands in the way of achieving national reconciliation. When it reveals, it serves a role in national therapy.

— Lina Khatib, *Lebanese Cinema; Imagining the Civil War and beyond.*

*To Beirut, the glory is from the ashes;
To Beirut, the wounds have blossomed;
To Beirut.*

— Joseph Harb.

Beirut is a trace of peace, a trace of war, and a trace of the journey in-between; Today's Beirut is only a copy of its past self, and perhaps to some, this rendered Beirut unrecognisable; the radical changes of Beirut's urban and architectural image deny the city the time it needs to process the pain. Consequently, and with all these changes and gentrifications, the Lebanese still look back to pre-war Beirut as 'the good old days'. In one way or another, this gives a certain legitimacy to the traces of the Civil War to become cathartic, in the sense that although they provoke the trauma, they, as many people, withstood.

The Civil War is -by definition- a conflict between several groups from the same country, its resolution must be an actual national dialogue, accountability, and reconciliation in order to establish a peaceful and peacekeeping state. Sadly this is not the case of the Lebanese Civil War; that is, as long as the dialogues only reinforce division and appropriations, true peace seems to remain intangible. Nonetheless, an unofficial national therapy has been divulging through Lebanese Cinema; that is, during the Civil War, Beirut as a whole has undergone a *Cinematic Metamorphosis*, from the reality of being a city, to its perception as a territory, to its representation

of suffering, after the war. However, Beirut was also subject to said metamorphosis, in the sense that its reality is devastation, its perception as a burden, and it represented trauma. With this being said, there is more to it than what meets the eye; in Cinema, Beirut becomes the place that is continuously defined and redefined by its spectators, that is, the subjective experience musters the spectator's innermost self in all its fears and hopes, losses and survivals, similarities and differences. The complexity of human nature of its relation to space, place, Architecture and Memory is exposed in Cinema; the naked truth of vulnerability is both relative and absolute. When all of this comes together for a moment of revelation, Cinema challenges the emotions and channels into profoundness and catharsis; it allows for the trauma to partake in the creation of hope, as it displays division to encourage togetherness, and it documents the war to promote peace.

Catharsis means transforming emotions into thinking, and this is what we are likely to do with films; first we laugh, we cry, we're afraid, we're touched, we're moved, it resembles something we have experienced, something we dreamed of, or something we hope will happen to or we are anguish it might happen to us. And from this hope this anguish this joy, eventually, we'll elaborate inside ourselves something else, this is what Cinema is very much likely to do and to do with anyone on this planet, it addresses mankind, each of us can establish with the film there's potentially an immense self-elaboration, internal elaboration, this what I do expect from Cinema at least.¹¹

After divulging the history of the Civil War and assessing its impact, there is nothing left to address but the hope of a post-war national healing, and a manner through which the Lebanese can find unity, and perhaps peace. In this sense, Cinema as an instrument of national therapy and catharsis is one aspect of uniting the Lebanese not only in pain, but also in hope. *The Holiday Inn* stands as a powerful figure of the past; it is the war, the dominance, and the

¹¹ From an interview with Jean-Michel Frodon. Available on <http://shc.stanford.edu/multimedia/film-critic-jean-michel-frodon-Cinema-catharsis>. Accessed in 26.03.2018

fear. However, being the Memory and the memorial, is to some extent a representation of its resilience— it is, at the end of the day, a Lebanese survivor. In the same manner, *West Beyrouth* (1998) is a powerful cinematic statement not only because it addresses the Civil War amongst many other wars, nor due to its unique depiction of Beirut, but above all because *it humanised the Lebanese*¹².

The post-war state of Beirut cannot but exhibit the weight of the lingering traces of war, not only for the grand devastation the war has caused, but for the impossibility of reversing the damage to its original past. However, Lebanese Architects such as Bernard Khoury presented a new post-war architectural typology. Being a significant influencer on the Beirut urbanism and a harsh critic of its post-war Architecture, Khoury has several proposals and interventions on Beirut, all with a settle undertone of Brutalism and reflection on the civil war. His vision announces that there is a possibility for an Architecture that does not rebuild blindly, copy the past, nor clad the city wounds with empty international modernism. But one of reflections, confrontations and foresight; Architecture of Catharsis. This is evident in his work, starting with *B-018* (1998), a bunker-like music club, to *Plot #1282* (2017) an apartment building in the periphery of the city. Despite his radical work, Khoury seems to be well aware that this typology of Architecture will and must remain singularities; however, its existence is crucial to the idea and notion of emotional cleansing. That is, While his buildings may appear to be dark, brutal, and unsettling, they are also fictional, emotional, and cathartic— same as Cinema.

As one can see, many films and buildings are -in one way or another- cathartic; Cinema and Architecture are not only a reminder of the past, but also a warning to the present, and -potentially- a remedy to the future. It is difficult to cope with war and trauma without finding a meaning and a purpose in the suffering. Eventually, from traces to emotions, Cinema becomes a Catharsis of war— a long-awaited Reality.

12 HAUGBOLLE, Sune, op. cit., p. 129



Figure No. 45:

Photograph: The exterior of B-018 Music Club, built in 1998.
Architect: *Bernard Khoury.*

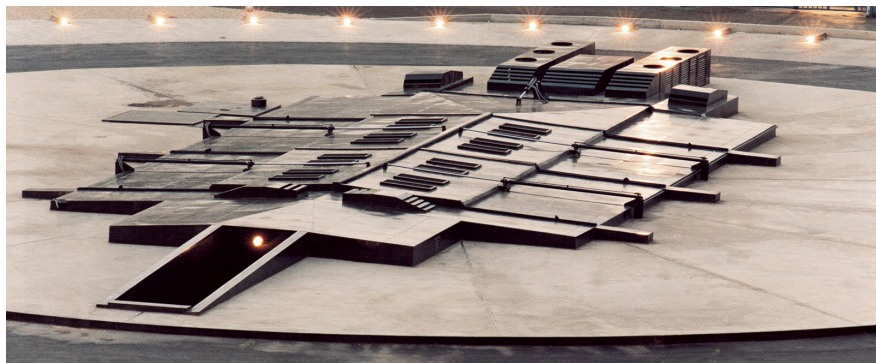


Figure No. 46:

Photograph: The exterior of B-018 Music Club.

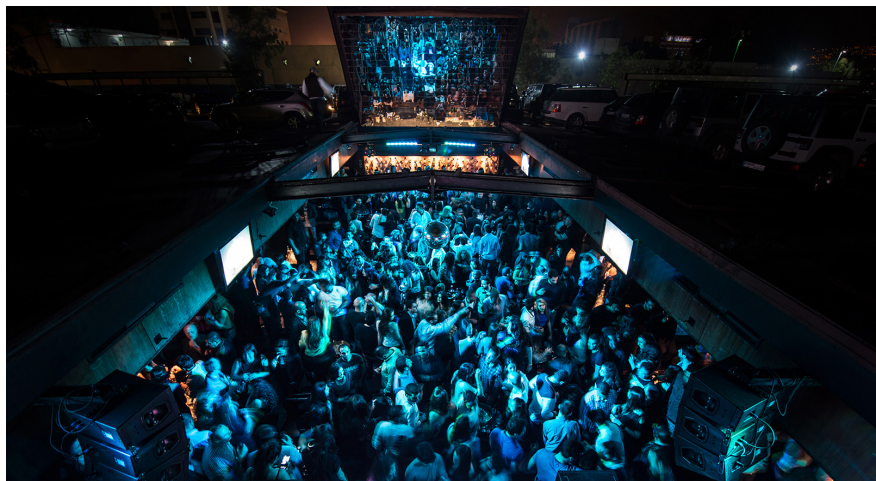


Figure No. 47:

Photograph: The interior of B-018 Music Club.



Figure No. 48:

Photomontage: Proposal of intervention
in Cinema City, 2004.
Architect: *Bernard Khoury.*



Figure No. 49:

Photomontage: Proposal of intervention
in Cinema City, 2004.



Figure No. 50:

Photograph: Plot #1282, Built in 2017.
Architect: Bernard Khoury.



Figure No. 51:

Photograph: Plot #1282's view over
Beirut.

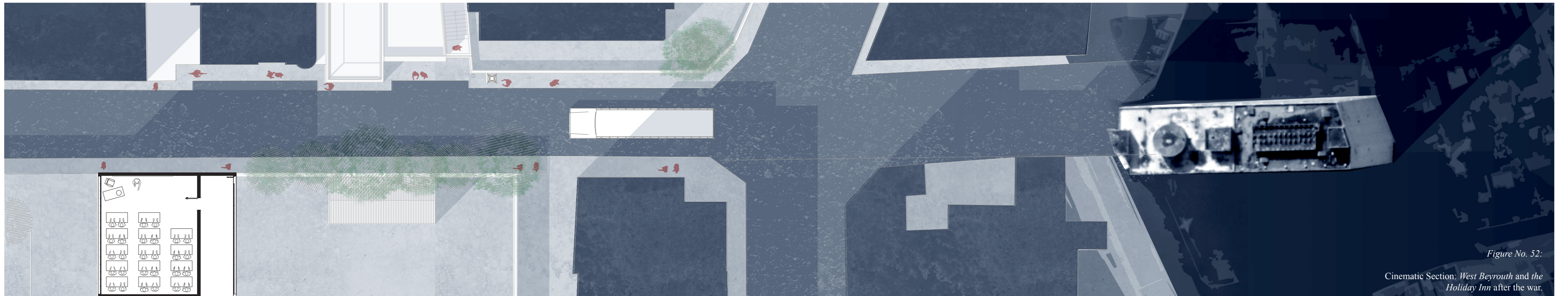
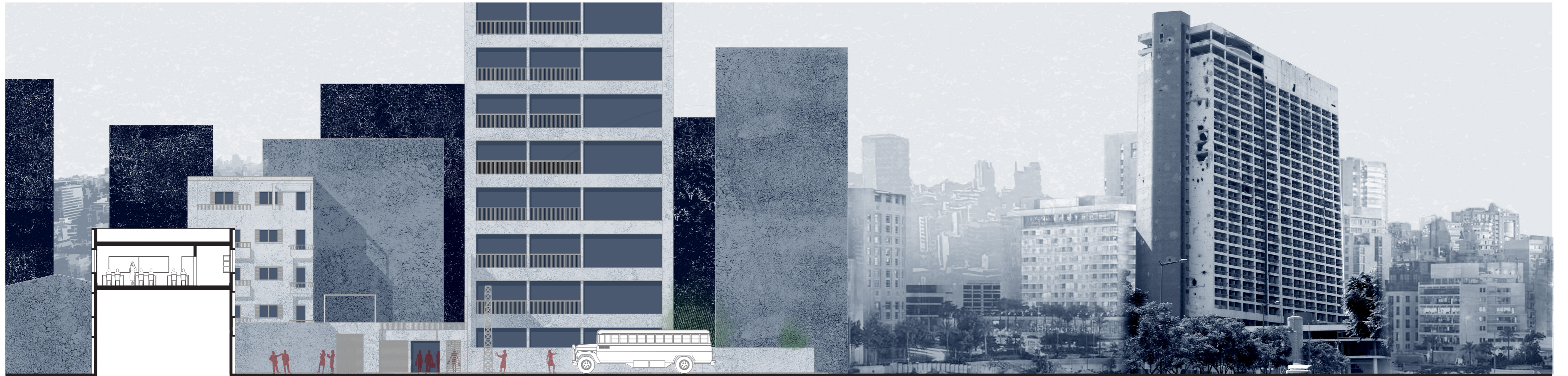


Figure No. 52:
Cinematic Section: West Beyrouth and the
Holiday Inn after the war.

EXT. - BEIRUT - 1990/PRESENT - DAY

INT. - LYCEE ABDUL KADER - CORRIDOR

Tarek is a stranger to Beirut, and to his old school. Amongst the crowds he passes by, he looks up to the window where he once stood. For him, there and then is when the war started. A bus passes by him. Out of the corner of his eye, he sees the Holiday Inn empty, broken, standing.

FADE OUT:

THE END

Epilogue

Why Cinema?

Undoubtedly, the post-war state of Beirut is still a subject to many challenges; in present day's Beirut, there are still the questions of social and economic inequalities, infrastructure, sectarianism, civil tension, so on and so forth. The purpose of this dissertation is not to romanticise the war, nor shy away from addressing the contemporary urban and architectural challenges, but it is to divulge the necessary fore-step of acknowledgement and peacemaking. It is proposed that the use of Cinema and Architecture as a means to understand the war, understand 'the other', to be able to move forward.

In many cases, the conventional architectural thinking presumes that the value of Architecture is the value by addition, in the sense that Architecture is always a solution to a particular problem or challenge. However, throughout this dissertation, Architecture is not depicted as an object, but a subject, and above all, as a perspective.

This connotes that Architecture does not necessarily need to divulge a solution to a problem; but in fact, it may function as a diagnosis to social, political, economic, and psychological issues. At the same time, and as the history of Beirut is narrated, it became evident that Beirut cannot be explained in detachment from Cinema, for it is there, in Cinema, the city becomes a place, and Architecture becomes a Memory. This cinematic-architectural symbiosis is what candidates Cinema to be an architectural tool; it presents Architecture as a character, and the city as a plot. Not only this, but also the understanding of the role of Architecture in Cinema may inspire some architects to utilise the trauma of war to fictionalise their Architecture, and to build -and rebuild- Beirut with the incorporation of its traces of war. Thus manifesting once and for all that *Fiction in any form has always intended to be realistic.*¹

Why Cinema? Because through Cinema, Beirut has always been the best version of itself, even amidst war. One could say that -in Cinema as well as in Reality- Beirut has always been a city of fiction, where war and peace are not opposites but mere perceptions within one's innermost self.

1 CHANDLER, Raymond - **The Simple Art of Murder**. United States of America, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1950. p. 2

My dear,

The truth is more important than the facts.

I don't care that this and this happened! I care about us, people. I care to know about how we grow, how we better ourselves, how we love, and how we hurt.

That is the truth! And that is what I want to hear.

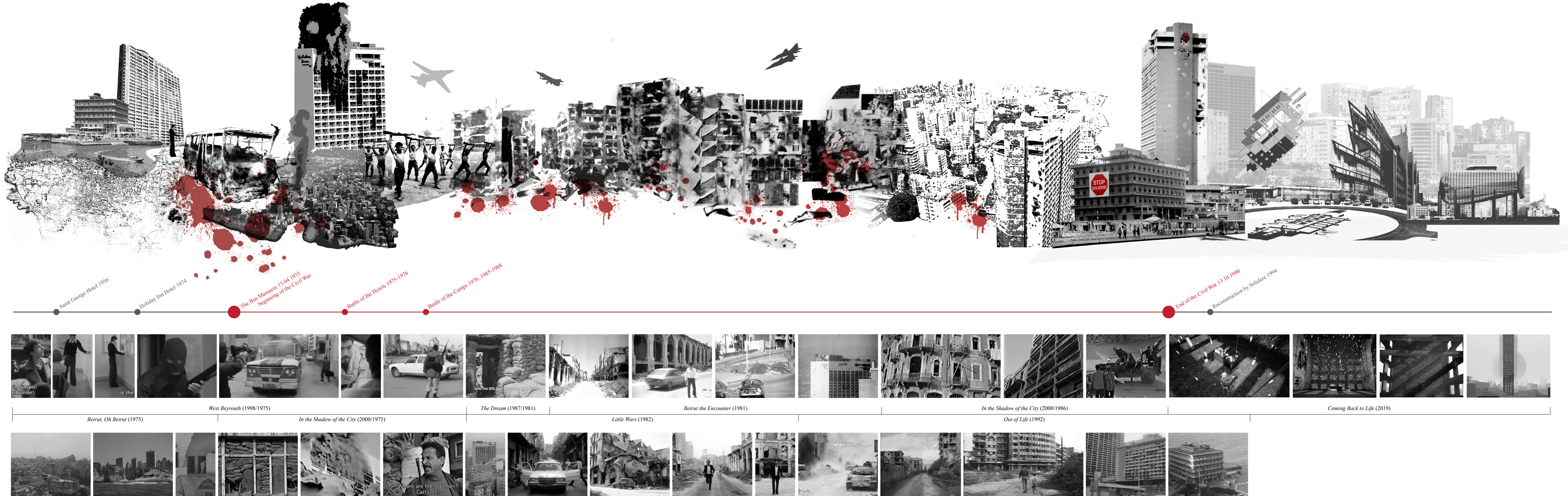
Not that shallow fact that hides in plain sight.

Falsely yours,

— Frank Lloyd Wright.

Figure No. 53:

Timeline: Cinematic-architectural timeline



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