

## Globalization and Its Discontents: The Case of Post-War Beirut

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I would like to preface this discussion of Beirut's vast post-War reconstruction with a disclaimer of sorts. What you will be reading here is but a small part of a far larger project I have undertaken, describing, interpreting, and appraising this building effort against the horizon of Lebanese social and economic renewal. The paper will also look at some of the construction images, both proposed and executed, which have characterized the project. It will also seek to explore some the meanings that can be attached to the city's new forms, as it suggests the basics of their ideological formation. These groundings emerge from questions like these: what is it about this place that impels its new forms to want to mean, to seek to signify, to long to identify? My contention here is that Beirut suffers from a profound lack of visual and social coherence stemming still from the trauma of the Civil War. This place's population seeks to live with its losses through a culturally sanctioned habit of accommodation by exchanging its liabilities for the promise of future assets, a capital both real and symbolic compensating for debts equally real and symbolic. To date, these difficult exchanges have been rendered visible in the new images that the ravaged state has come to assume while seeking to effectively represent its national identity on the world stage and its desirability within the international marketplace. For better and for worse, these national representations develop from what we today call the world culture of globalization.

To begin, a few words as to the genesis of the Beirut Central District, or BCD, reconstruction are in order. The most recent chapter in Lebanon's history began with an infamous 'Civil' War that began in 1975 and continued, in varying degrees of intensity, until 1990. The conflict claimed one hundred fifty thousand lives by conservative estimates.<sup>1</sup> Damage to the country was widespread and profound, but nowhere more debilitating than in Beirut, and no place more photogenic than in the city's devastated commercial center. From this stricken heart of Beirut issued that most notorious battle line of the Lebanese Civil War—the infamous 'Green Line' sited on what formerly had been the Damascus Road. This spatial demarca-

tion (which took its new name from vegetation encroaching upon the unused roadbed) has established itself for many as the spatial and psychic boundary separating East from West, Christian from Muslim sections of the city. The causes of the War are complex, and its political consequences have irreversibly altered the city of Beirut and its people. I will address these issues only to limited degree here. Instead, this paper's substance will focus more upon the processes and designs of Beirut's city center reconstruction, and the manifold modalities of social representation deployed in the project's major iterations. This paper especially concerns itself with images—images that give shape to critical locations of Lebanese culture, images that simultaneously project and obscure national identity/ies, images that serve to attract and distract a desirable marketplace at once, images that construct and deconstruct one-Self.

Zygmund Bauman has stated that the political nature of modernity, and its 'enlightened' will to order, is distilled into the colonial impulse. Modernity is for the East, "the tunnel at the end of the light."<sup>2</sup> That light is the light of enlightenment, and it originates in the West. It strikes the Orient like a spotlight, operatically staging the place's prominent performances upon a luminous center stage. Alternatively, other supernumerary features are lost in the shadows cast by this brilliantly Occidentalized East. The light we observe today at the end of Lebanon's 'tunnel vision' has been shaped by centuries of colonial occupation, most recently Ottoman, from 19th century to the end of World War I, and French, from 1920 to 1941, the so-called Mandate period. In November 1941, the country broke ranks with its Vichy French administration, declaring the moral bankruptcy of its colonial occupiers, its independence and sovereignty.

Despite the persistence of outspokenly modern forms into the post-Mandate period, the post-colonial in Beirut was accompanied by a quiet attack on Western modernity itself.<sup>3</sup> For instance, projects like Willy Sednaoui's Piccadilly building,

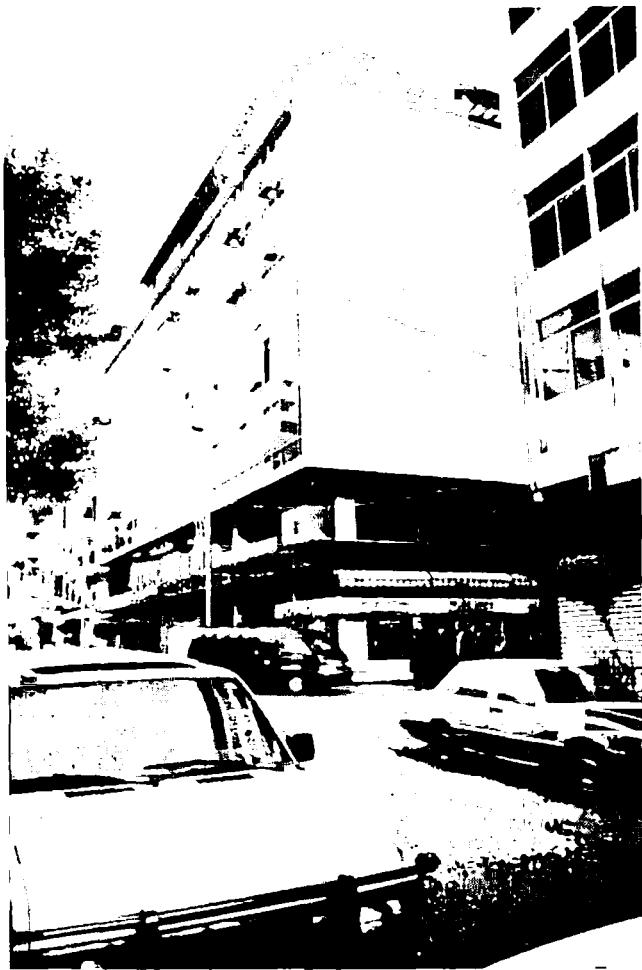


Fig. 1. Willy Sednaoui. *The Piccadilly Building, Beirut, 1965-1966.* (personal)

while showing a distinct likeness to Le Corbusier's laconic Pavillon Suisse, also remakes the paradigmatically High Modern by perversely absorbing it back into the city, and by appropriating and contaminating Corbu's vacant ground floor with nothing less than an Arab souk.<sup>4</sup> The Postcolonial Modern in Beirut seems implicitly to travesty essentializing Western modernism while illuminating ways in which its prescriptions might be both dethroned and radicalized, that is to say, post-modernized *avant la lettre*.

When it came to sketching my first thoughts on the new shape of Beirut's BCD following the Civil War, it seemed to me that a French connection persisted here as though nothing very unusual had intervened. It was business as usual, or so it appeared. As ever, the light at the beginning of the tunnel emanated from *La Ville Lumière*. The French-trained Maronite architect Henri Eddé, a partner and lead designer in the Middle East's largest architectural firm Dar Al-Handasah, trod, it seemed, a time-worn path.<sup>5</sup> And so have others regarded his first BCD project in this way, particularly as it was roundly criticized for taking its inspiration from older colonial models

(like the Place de l'Etoile). Indeed, its hallmark French planning devices – boulevards, *rond-points*, and scenic vistas – seemed to many useless and obsolete spatial effects and unnecessary urban spectacle. Furthermore, it was argued that such formal contrivances were simply inappropriate, standing in stark contrast to the casual intricacy of the Center's centuries-old street network and densely packed historic building fabric. The foreignness of the project's interventions immediately met with the criticism of Eddé's contemporaries – architectural regionalists like Assem Salaam, Jad Tabet and Nabil Beyhoun, the URI group. They also, however, emboldened a new post-War generation of architects (like the group calling itself 'Plan B') – mostly trained in the United States, to produce their own decidedly contextual brand of site-specific urban response. Criticism arriving from both quarters led to numerous public meetings, then to televised Parliamentary debate. The immediate consequences: a second, and equally unsuccessful Eddé scheme, and then a new project entirely.

Before proceeding to these, I would first like to turn to a number of images from the first Eddé scheme to discuss in more elaborate terms why this project seems so foreign, so disquietingly strange. To begin, it is worth noting that Eddé's images operate allusively and connotatively as much as instrumentally, denotatively. Their stories are also framed against the natural settings that have come to symbolize, to the Christian Lebanese at least, *Le Grand Liban*. For instance, the drawing of Eddé's World Trade Center, modeled in miniature on New York's own, presents his twin towers as modernistically anti-gravitational, floating above a crystalline sea as effortlessly, as naturally, as the wind-filled sails propelling the ketch in the image's foreground. In a second drawing, less ebullient but no less self-assured office buildings march along a picturesque canal enframing (and spatializing) a new island carved from the collective debris of a 16-year long Civil War with spit and polish. In contrast to this procession, promenaders loiter along the canal's quais as they survey motor launches passing lazily beneath them. A third and final image sets its sights on the yacht basin beside the Hotel St-Georges, pausing first at the luxurious mid-rises on the island, and then off to Mount Sanine in the far distance. For those of us who know, the view is captured from a specific vantage: the celebrated, pre-War *terrasse* astride Edward Durrell Stone's Hotel Phoenicia.

This final image does concern itself with the architecture of Eddé's reconstruction project, to be sure. But it equally attends to rather specific private activity in its foreground. Two decidedly non-Starbucks cups of coffee (and, yes, Starbucks has reached Beirut) rest on that cafe table. Meanwhile, an attractive couple, lovers maybe, interrupt their *tete à tete* to enjoy a moment of distraction, as they appreciate the view unfolding before them, a pause in what would appear to be a moment of quiet flirtation if not seduction outright. In this single vignette, Eddé captures the new Beirut less as progressive, modern

marketplace than as surprisingly romantic diversion, a delicious, enticing and surprisingly familiar world ripe, ready, and waiting for the taking. As this happens, consumption as based in need is transformed into consumption based in desire. The sexual drive the image employs to tacitly power its message carries, it seems to me, another meaning: that for all the would-be modernity of this new place, the life of the city remains essentially body-driven, propelled by urges equal parts boy and girl, eminently human, basic, and natural. All images operate as if to say that this much here in Beirut is, quite simply, unarguable. Beirut, whether old or new, could simply be no other way.

The combination of naturalness and diversion is reinforced in later renditions of the Solidère project, even when those proposals are consciously designed to critique the progressivism embedded in the project itself. Most importantly, Angus Gavin's replacement Dar Al-Handasah scheme speaks at length to outspokenly bolster the historical frames of the project, consciously seeking to quell the outrage of a local Beirut population who bridled at the thought and appearance of Eddé's seeming 'modernity.' Gavin's outspokenly 'contextual' scheme, which makes direct use of such postmodernist theories

as Colin Rowe's notion of urban "Collage", grounds his project, so he argues, within the residual and uncanny historical specificities to be found on-site, recalling Beirut's now-buried shoreline and Ottoman seawall, antiquities, heritage architecture, and so on. He even furthers his design to essentially fabricate 'historical form' (sometimes even stylistically simulating it) by introducing into his plan gridding organizations which hearken back, so he argues, to both Greek and Roman sources. What's more, he frames the entire scheme between not one but two distinct yacht basins, a design motif directly suggesting that most resilient signifier of the Levantine city-state (and this, assumedly, is his wishful thinking for Beirut), the double-harbored Phoenician city.<sup>8</sup> Despite the bounty of historical allusion, Gavin's project works contrary to Rowe's call for controlled ambiguity and an iridescent urban semantics as set out in *Collage City*. (Indeed, Gavin's project is, in the final sense, more about ambiguous control.) For that book, as the entirety of Rowe's late urbanistic project, geared itself to the unmasking and humiliation of any progressivist urban order.<sup>9</sup> In so doing, Rowe had sought to loosen the strictures modernism placed upon contemporary practice, allowing his kind of design to advocate a more subversive understanding of history (as opposed to historicity) and to expand its palette of meaningful architectural and urban form. Gavin's scheme operates quite

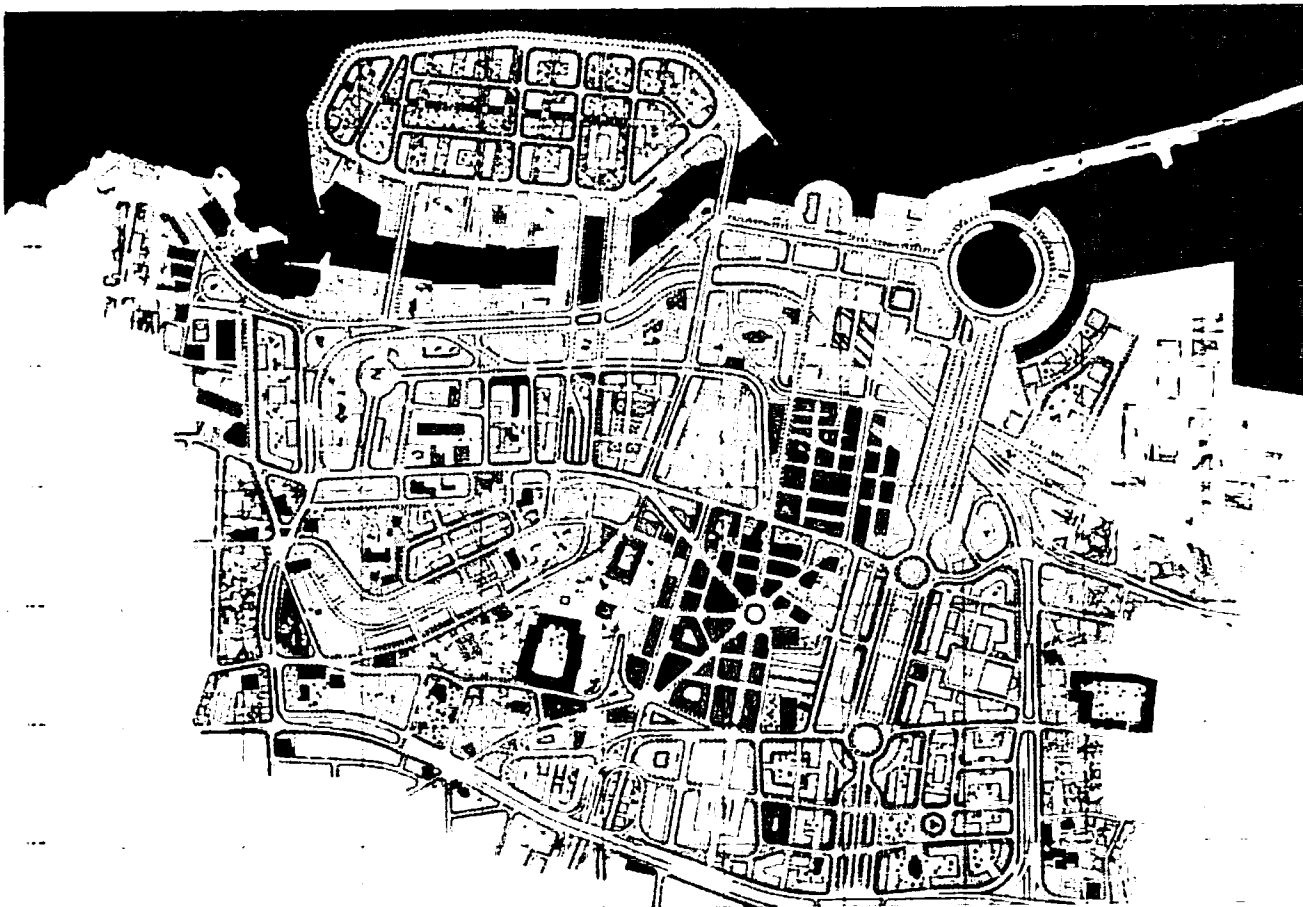


Fig. 2. Henri Eddé, Master Plan for Beirut, scheme 1, 1992. (from Eddé, Master Plan of Beirut)

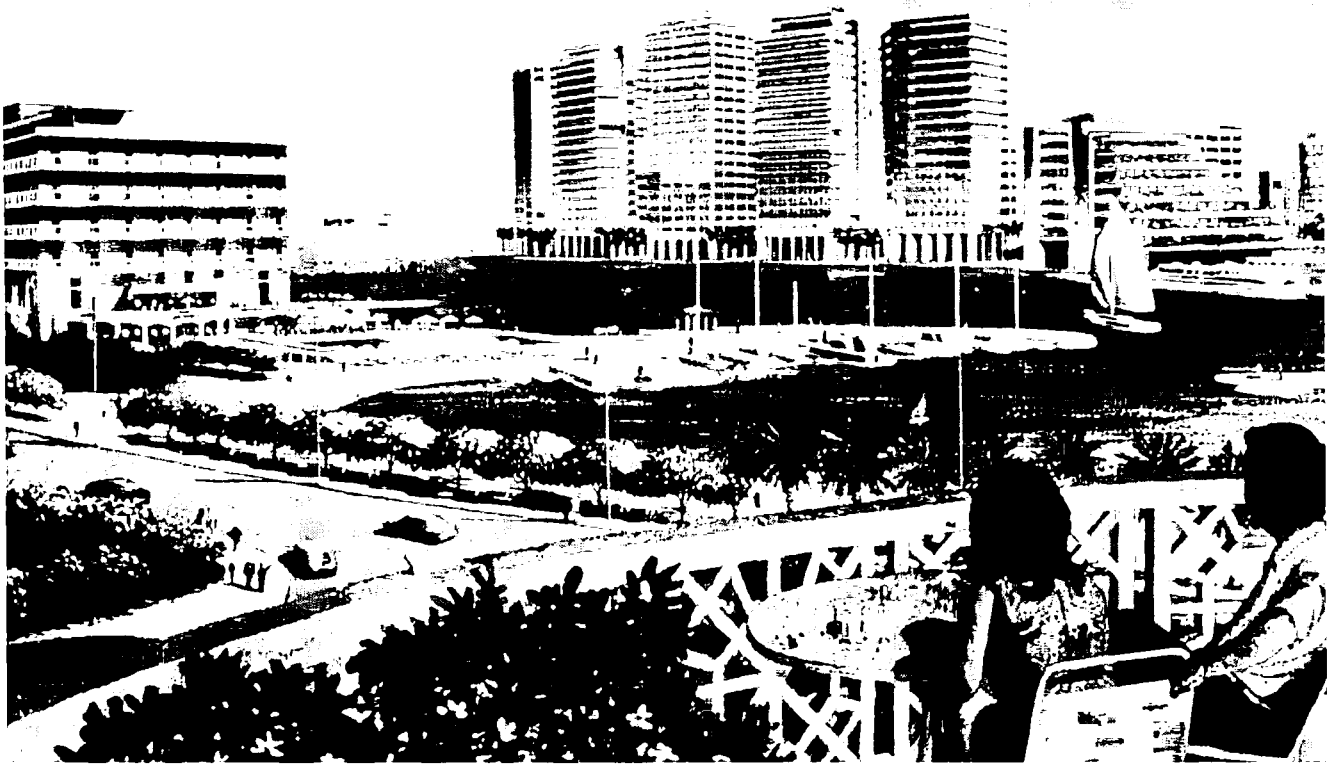


Fig. 3. Henri Eddé, "Tea at the Phoenicia", 1992. (from Eddé, Master Plan of Beirut)

differently. Solidère's revised project seeks to restructure and rigidify the ambiguous post-War state of Beirut, implementing essentially academic formal devices that here appear nothing short of invasive. All posturing aside, in the final analysis, history takes Gavin's final scheme for Solidère to the same place modernity does for Eddé – to an ideal location which is the natural and necessary destination of an urban teleology. One man's history would be but another man's progress.

What's more, both projects seek to outline an architecture which is less productive in the capitalistic sense of the word than attractive. Eddé speaks hardly at all about the functional use of his urban ensemble and the buildings themselves assist little in the clarification. Gavin's project reduces to little more than 'mixed use' with functions to be determined on demand by the marketplace. What guides the project's concept of 'prescriptive planning' here is fundamentally esthetic, not practical zoning. And this means that appearance is as powerful a driver of this urban conception as it was in Eddé's project, if not more. Recent developments in Gavin's project further underscore this fact: the urban vision now touts itself no longer as the capital center of the Middle East (and it is a good thing because Beirut would be hard pressed to reclaim this title from Abu Dhabi or Dubai) but as tourist destination.<sup>10</sup> With its plethora of archaeological remains being unearthed (and therefore placed at risk), Beirut now seeks to market itself as attraction for the

so-called heritage tourist. Furthermore, there is even talk now of loosening the new city's vaunted esthetic planning, the project's legislative centerpiece, in certain key locations of the plan earmarked specifically for designs to be produced by so-called master-architects. These buildings, so the head designer explained, might be just the constructive incentive – the *architainment* – needed to promote highly profitable 'architectural tourism.'<sup>11</sup> The list of new attractions goes on. The most recent redesign to enhance the scheme's attractiveness occurs on the project's land-fill portion. This area, the one-time financial district in both Eddé and Gavin schemes, has just been just been reconfigured (by SOM no less) to accommodate a Formula 1 race à la Monte Carlo, thereby targeting a wealthy class of mostly male sport tourist. And with this single grand gesture, the one-time Switzerland of the Levant is transformed into monster-car track, a fancy playground for big boys with big toys.

Historical imagination in Gavin's executed scheme (and even more in Eddé's unexecuted project) goes hand-in-hand with historical erasure. In fact, historical fabrication is part of a culturally conditioned response to the trauma of the War with the threat of social elimination as indicated by the affair of the Mazar Ibn Irak al-Dimashki, today a final remnant of the old souks. In the tale that they constructed around this Mamluk

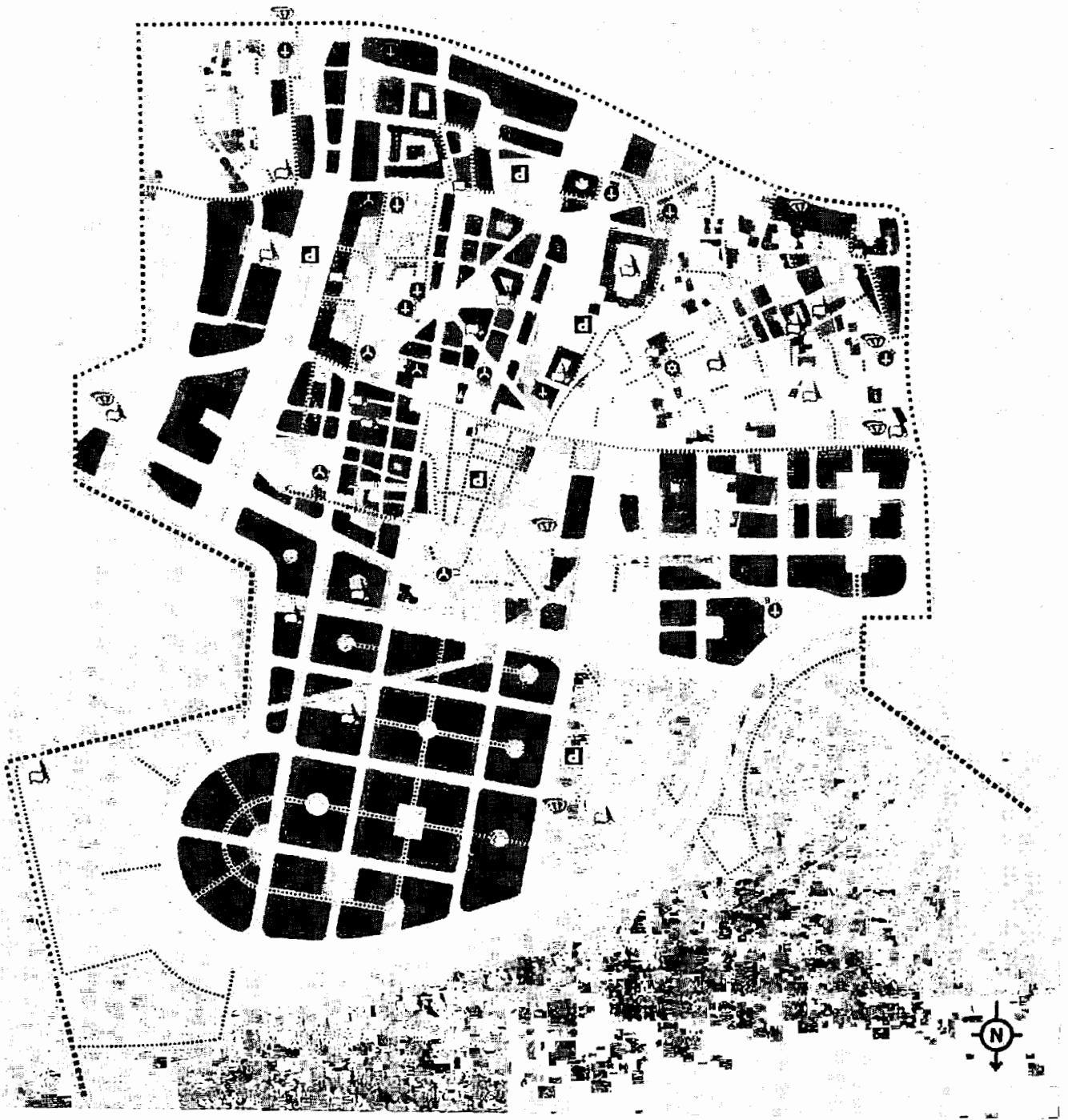


Fig. 4. Angus Gurn, Revised Musser Plan for Beirut, 1993-1994. (from Gurn, Beirut Reborn)

shrine (incidentally, Beirut's only surviving structure from this period), local Shites metaphorically squatted on the 'sainted' edifice previously thought to be Sunni Muslim so as to construct an historical narrative by which they might spatially attach themselves to this location. In rewriting this place's history in a decidedly interested way, Shites came to mark their presence within this geography from which they had been traditionally absented. It might be further said, I think, that

here architecture triggers hysterical as much as historical symptom.<sup>12</sup>

On a somewhat different tack, of the more than 1800 buildings damaged but largely extant within the site confines, fully two-thirds were demolished for reconstruction by Solidère. Where the remains of these buildings have gone is a simple question to answer — they have joined the other debris left by the Civil War in the Normandic dump, now euphemistically known as the

Solidère landfill. Of course there were those buildings, like the suite of commercial banks along the Rue Riad El-Solh that miraculously escaped damage virtually intact, thanks to smart bombs then too, or were they smart bombers? Monumental, religious buildings, no matter how degraded, were also off-limits to the developers. 'Historically significant' structures and urban ensembles were also protected, like the French-inspired Place de l'Étoile. And then there were buildings belonging to politically influential owners, like the Murr Tower, the property of the country's former Minister of the Interior who leveraged his political status to avoid expropriation.<sup>13</sup> Buildings too were destroyed for political reasons. Whereas colonial buildings of one era – French Mandate – were largely protected and cherished, Ottoman structures of the previous century, the old souks for instance, were almost wholly eradicated. And, as George Corm, the former Minister of Finance recounts, there was the Jewish quarter in Wadi Abu-Jamil, razed but for the synagogue (protected as a religious structure) as misplaced political protest, or vengeance, against the 1996 Israeli invasion.<sup>14</sup> Here, this spokesman observes a case of what might be termed 'rhetorical demolition', that its history erased because the reality of its continued effect is just too painful or infuriating

to bear. At moments like this, urban renewal goes hand in hand with denial and, in turn, leads to repression, which is, in Pierre Bourdieu's reading, the flip-side of seduction, historical or otherwise.<sup>15</sup> Of course, the event which both reconstruction projects, Eddé's and Gavin's, seeks to eradicate most effectively are traces of the War itself. And the vast emptiness recorded by time-lapse photographs taken at the American University of Beirut for the recently constructed Aga Khan Archmet website registers this historical reality only too clearly. The land fill, that shard pile of the recent past, has today been cleansed and purified by a waste management company from Houston, Texas, the dirt of the War purified of any chemical or psychological toxicity. What we find today of the old city that Solidère's developers have deposited there is scarcely more than gravel.<sup>16</sup>

The great irony is that there is little renewal in the BCD per se, for of the twelve hundred buildings destroyed, only six new ones have been constructed to date.<sup>17</sup> The Normandie dump/landfill today looks equal parts transplanted, sixty hectare fragment of the Arabian peninsula and *terrain vague*.<sup>18</sup> What we now see in this place rests in sharp contrast to any idealizing image à la Eddé. To contemporary eyes the BCD site presents itself a stark and surprisingly modernist *tabula rasa*, a vast space that operates as the best defense against hidden demons. "Not a single building should be kept as it is to remind us of the civil war. There is no need to preserve this painful memory", so the Prime Minister Hariri recently advanced.<sup>19</sup> His message here is clear. To guard against recurrent trauma, erase. In the absence of collective memory, collective denial will do just fine.

Eddé's and Gavin's speculative images of the new Beirut were pictures geared for public consumption. Their role was partly informative: these were descriptions of a country's first stab at re-producing a downtown, a place that might return a nation and its capital to financial and social health. The images were also palliative: they were contrived to reassure a country on the verge of economic collapse in the aftermath of the 1989 Taif peace accords. Most importantly, these images were frankly promotional, attached to a glossy prospectus for a public offering of stock shares in a new, publicly-traded, private corporation, Solidère. They were employed to entice, to whet the appetite of a 'public' that would be attracted to the place they held in their very own hands. These were images that were to be so convincing, so desirable, as to make a public, and this is to say a marketplace, partake in the urban fantasy so seductively pictured here. This future was to be theirs as they became investors in the *Grand Projet*, encouraging Beirut's rebirth by purchasing shares in the city's new development corporation. The capital generated by the subscription to Solidère shares would provide the money by which the cash strapped nation would rebuild its capital city.



Fig. 5. Mazar Ibn Irak al-Dinashki, structure dates from mid-16th century. (personal)



Fig. 6. Synagogue area, Wadi Abu Jamil, photos taken 1990, 2000. (from the Aga Khan Archnet website)

The images did their job. Nearly two billion dollars were raised by the sale of shares in their initial public offering to begin the reconstruction, allowing Solidère to embark on its mission with enormous liquidity. Stock shares also resolved the thorniest issue of the reconstruction: the expropriation of current property owners by eminent domain as virtually all land holdings in the BCD were consolidated into the holdings of the development corporation, for eventual redevelopment and resale. The municipality of Beirut determined their 'fair market value', and proprietors were compensated with a value equivalent in Solidère shares.

Solidère would also benefit from the government's involvement in two other ways. First, the state underwrites the cost of all infrastructure associated with the urban design to be later reimbursed by the company after it reaches profitability. Not only has old and destroyed infrastructure been replaced by this means – streets, water, electricity, and sanitary sewers – but innovative fiber optical networks have also been incorporated to guarantee what has been called the most technologically innovative development zone in the Middle East. Second, the post-war, debt-ridden Lebanese government continuously provides requisite capital to Solidère via various debt instruments: low interest loans from funding sources like the World Bank, high interest loans from Lebanon's commercial banks, and



Fig. 7. The Normandie dump, photo taken ca. 1985. (from Gavin, Beirut Reborn)

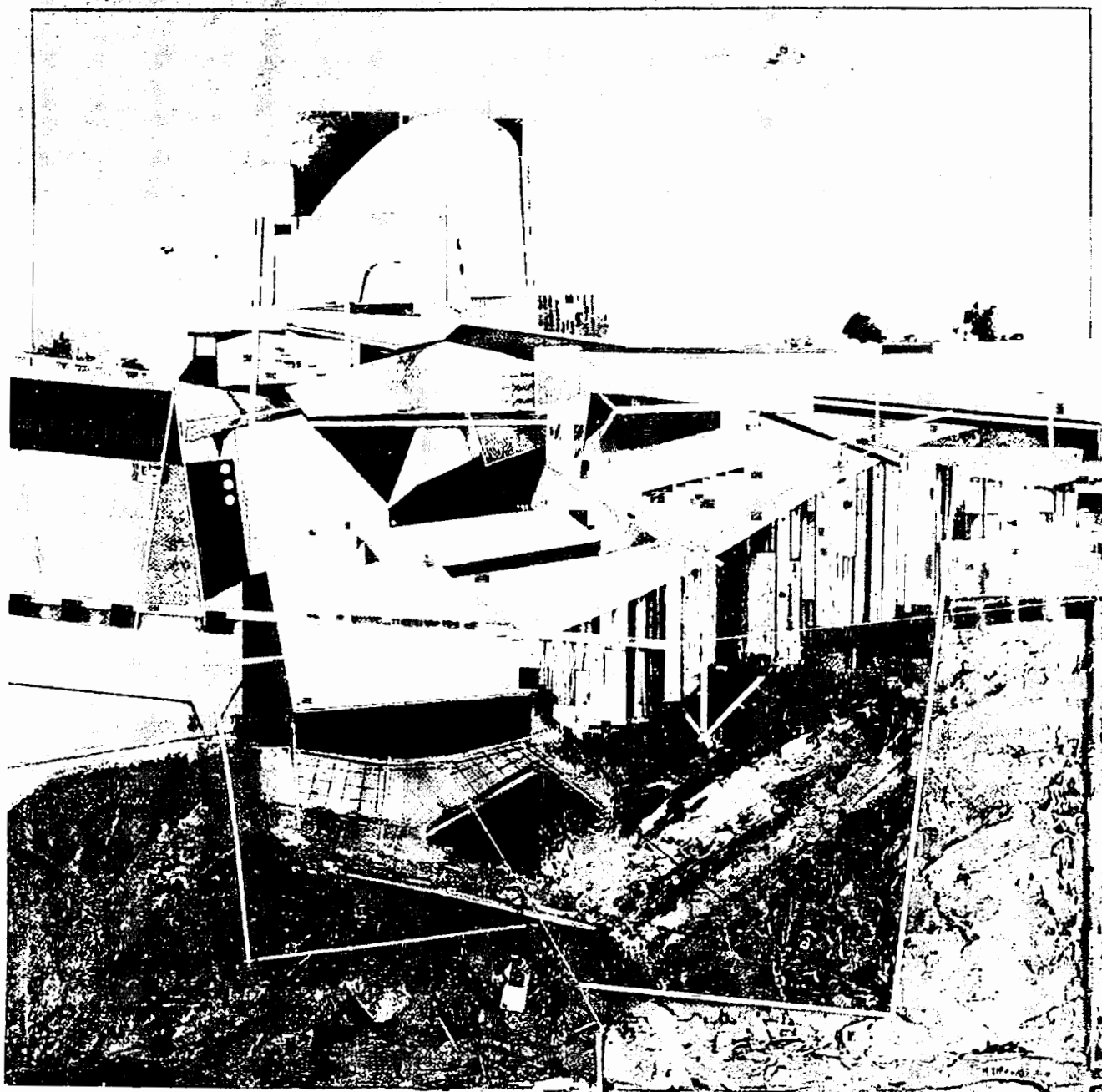


Fig. 8. Mohammed Al-Rawaz, "Third World Utopia", mixed media assemblage, 2000. (Mohammed Al-Rawaz exhibition catalogue)

lastly, high-interest short-term bond issues traded within the international debt markets (underwritten, incidentally, by Merrill Lynch). As this occurs, the lion's share of Solidère's corporate risk is assumed by the government itself.

To date, there have been no repayments in kind from Solidère to the Lebanese government. (In the meantime, the state has paid outright for certain critical portions of the corporation's infrastructure as, for instance, the sea wall designed to protect the landfill from the so-called 100-year storm). But there has been a payback of sorts. Most important are the published

accusations that claim the state has been compensated by the corporation in stock shares not cash, allegations, incidentally, that have been roundly denied by the last Minister of Finance. These claims notwithstanding, the nation's underwriting of Solidère, its debt obligations, and its suspicious financial involvements in the company have resulted in blurring the line between public and private domains and their respective interests. Virtually everything here has been privatized. The corporate appropriation that has resulted is today highlighted by the fact that the public realm once incumbent in the city's older proprietary claims is rent asunder by the project's new



property lines. What had been private is now seemingly rendered public, that is to say, associated with the interests of Solidère. But this newfound publicity is again rendered private as the corporation makes evident time and again that its interests are inevitably its own. Indeed, this corporation is fully prepared, capable, and entitled to operate independent of city and state oversight when need be. Although the city remains responsible for the maintenance of the new BCD's infrastructure, nothing, not even its streets, belongs anymore to the city in fact. Everything is Solidère's, winner take all. The presence of the public in this place is an act of civic-minded accommodation, an essentially benevolent, and paternalistic, sign of the corporation's good will. It is also a privilege to be rescinded at a moment's notice.

Solidère, the most visible in Lebanon's array of new public works, promotes itself on the basis of modernized images borrowed heavily from the experience of modernity in the West. Their intention, I argue, is frankly ideological, designed to reassure a Western marketplace of the country's returning civil order, economic stability, and Westernized social identity. This is a good place, so its images imply, for you to do business. Part of the role these images have to play is to construct a productive narrative for the reemergent city of capital, the once and future Switzerland of the Levant. This rhetorical agenda, however, is accomplished at the expense of another narrative—the War itself, which, dreadful as it was, constitutes the single shared experience to cut across all of Lebanon's social divisions. Ironically it is the one master narrative today with which all Lebanese can readily identify. It is also the one to be repressed for many in power.

A columnist for *The New York Times*, John Kifner, recently wrote an article headlined "The Beirut I Knew Wasn't So Different". His description of the city following a long absence concluded that the city seems to be returning to the same place it was before the War.<sup>20</sup> For someone who has lived in Beirut recently, much of what I gather existed in Beirut then does seem very much present—restaurants, bars, boutiques, discos, gaming, prostitution, drugs. Seemingly every diversion that made this place the luxury destination of the gogo jetset during the '60s and '70s appears to again be in ample supply if somewhat less immediately visible. Beirut is again a (if not the) playground of the Middle East, though interlopers among the Emirates on the Persian Gulf have assumed something of a cultural lead. Certainly Solidère's images of limpid seas, sparkling skyscrapers and boundless leisure have a major hand in promoting the idea of the city resurgent, and of turning back the clock.

But along with the surplus comes the real values of Beirut social life, among them, glaring disparities of wealth, dramatic and recalcitrant class stratification, the increase of interconfessional disputes which are also intractably class-bound, the erosion of the Lebanese middle class, and the disturbing rise of

poverty. A recent painting by noted Lebanese artist Mohammed Al-Rawaz points directly to these problems in a cynical, millennialistic mixed media assemblage "Third World Utopia", where a sleek and bouncy, Gehry-esque house on a hill hovers above a collection of what seems to be beach-side shanties.<sup>21</sup> The image has definite staying power. Although putatively contemporary, this urban landscape harkens back to pre-War settings of architectural high style irremediably contaminated (so those of a certain social class would argue) by the plethora of squatter dwellings that proliferated in Beirut's so-called Misery Belt. Sadly, this kind of pre-War architectural view persists today in the largely Shiite and Palestinian 'informal sectors' of South Beirut like Ouzai, Jnah, and Saint-Simon. **Plus ça change ...** Rawaz's image seems to make hay with its subject matter, and to ironically unsettle the spatial, temporal, and ideological distinctions that his painting, and its title, initially describe. The tensions transmitted between image and caption give us cause to ponder. "Is this place Utopian? Is the place Third World?" And with the unsettling, we are caused to ponder just how utopian, just how modern, just how Third World is it? And if it is not precisely modern, nor utopian, nor progressist, nor Eastern, then this image may just as well be ... us, that is, we 'enlightened' Western observers. Which leads me to pose the following question. If it can said, to paraphrase social theorist Ghassan Haje, that modernity is best characterized by what kind of future the First World shows the Third, then might it not also be argued that postmodernity is best characterized by the kind of future the Third World shows the First, that is to say, our Western world?<sup>22</sup>

And what of globalization and its colonial impulses? Surely Solidère gives every indication that this place can be interpreted as having been colonized by global, that is to say, First World capital. Indeed, it is precisely this colonization that causes us to liken its forms to New York, Paris, London, and the like. The place's desire to draw a foreign market stems from its historic role as international service center, as hub of worldwide banking activity. To attract, it operates as a mirror of the Western capitalization it desires, quietly seducing the gaze of the Western Other while outspokenly validating it. However, in 'constructing' itself in this way, it also acquiesces to Western demands for order, efficiency, and transparency—there are to be no secrets here. Its forms invariably perform in conformance with the terms demanded by Western funding entities like the World Bank, always indebted to the West, ever prepared to submit to the terms of the deal, repaying the debt, though not necessarily in kind, when the loan is said to fall due.<sup>23</sup>

I contend that Solidère presents an image of the persistent colonialism pursuant to globalization. The great irony here is that the colonizers today are none other than the colonized themselves. This situation suggests that colonization and its economic construction are more than a matter of finance but also, so Max Weber would argue, a matter of an obsessively self-perpetuating social psychology. The compulsively regenerative

nature of capital is accomplished by continually recreating the very circumstances necessary to engender itself, and these include producing a self-sustaining manner of thinking, an ideology of capital. So it is, I would argue, with the colonized. I wonder if the colonial self-construction survives into the post-colonial moment precisely because this place can simply imagine itself no other way. It remains compulsively colonial because it can no longer, if it ever did, imagine itself as other than a culture consuming as it is consumed, and deeply indebted as the consequence of its voracious appetite, of its need to consume, no matter the cost.

Recent history only serves to reinforce our misgivings. Pursuant to the history of the last nine months (read: 9/11) and the heightened Palestinian Intifada, Beirut's post-war project has ground to an almost total standstill. The place's mute foundations, silent machinery, wide and vacant streets, conceived within an upbeat economy and vast visual culture of globalization, seem these days unrealistically, even hopelessly optimistic, utopian, naïve. The city's best days may well lay behind it, its future yesterday's. Furthermore, the wartime history recalled by the events of 9/11 brings two thoughts inescapably to mind: first, that everything economic is political, particularly in this most partisan of geographies, and second, that the globalized exchanges between First World and Third do not move exclusively in one direction. Our future too may be another's yesterday.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> This number does not include the 17,000 still recorded as missing.

<sup>2</sup> Here Bauman quotes Klaus Offe, see *Postmodernity and Its Discontents* (New York: NYU Press, 1997), p. 22.

<sup>3</sup> One telling discussion of post-Mandate architectural form occurs in Jad Tabet, "From Colonial Style to Regional Modernism: Modern Architecture in Lebanon and the Problem of Cultural Identity", included in *Projecting Beirut: Episodes in the Construction and Reconstruction of Modernity*, eds. Peter Rowe and Hashim Sarkis (Munich: Prestel, 1996), pp. 83-105.

<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Edward Said has spoken of three phases of colonialism – most important of these, a third period wherein the East, now educated in the institutions of the West, is empowered to direct its appropriated critical weapons at the incipiently imperialistic bases of these institutions, and their master narratives. The net result is a "De-Colonial", Post-Modern critical project that compels the West to regard itself from a place of radical alterity. See, for instance, "Yeats and Decolonialization", included in eds. Mustafa Bayoumi and Andrew Rubin, *The Edward Said Reader* (New York: Vintage, 2000), esp. pp. 297-302. Also "Intellectuals: Expatriates and Marginals", *ibid.*, pp. 377-381.

<sup>5</sup> For an alternative discussion of the two Eddé projects, see Hashim Sarkis, "Territorial Claims: Architecture and Post-War Attitudes toward the Built Environment", included in *Recovering Beirut*, eds. Samir Khalaf and Philip Khoury, introd. Richard Sennett (Leiden, New York, Cologne: Brill, 1993), pp. 101-127. See also, Sarce Makdisi, "Laying Claim to Beirut: Urban Narrative and Spatial Identity in the Age of Solidère", *Critical Inquiry* 23 (Spring 1997): 661-705.

<sup>6</sup> Angus Gavin, *Beirut Reborn: The Restoration and Development of the Central District* (London: Academy Editions, 1996), especially chapter 6 "Grandeur and Context." Gavin's debt to Rowe has been revealed in the course of

discussions with the project architect; *Collage City* is also listed in Gavin's bibliography.

<sup>7</sup> The competition program for the souks project, to be built by Solidère, demonstrates the project's contextualizing preferences. The project's architectural program brief even includes various style sheets of historic design upon which competitors should model their facades. See *The Reconstruction of the Souks of Beirut: An International Ideas Competition (Beirut: Solidère, 1994)*, especially "Souks of Beirut Condition and Program Kit."

<sup>8</sup> Maria Eugenia Aubet, *The Phoenicians and the West: Politics, Colonies, and Trade*, trans. Mary Turton (Cambridge, England: Cambridge, 1987) pp. 151-155.

<sup>9</sup> Colin Rowe, *Collage City* (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 1978), especially Chapter 1: "Utopia, Decline and Fall."

<sup>10</sup> Both cities have become the Middle East's foremost marketplaces whose growth is spurred by their tax-free status. They have supplemented their allure for cheap shopping with unparalleled opportunities for entertainment. Beirut seeks to profit from these cities' formulae for success by foregrounding its leisure culture as well as by envisioning specific tax free zones near border points, including the Lebanon/Syria border and the Beirut international airport. Beirut also imitates these foreign tax-free zones one month a year during "Fabulous February" when state tax levies are temporarily suspended.

<sup>11</sup> I borrow this apt description from the recent essay by Norman Klein, "Architainment: L'Industrialisation du Désir", trans. Thierry Marignac, included in *Au delà de la Spectacle* (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 2001), pp. 77-84.

<sup>12</sup> Nabil Beyhoum, "Ne Me Tuez Pas une Seconde Fois ...", included in Michael Davie, *Beyrouth: Regards Croisés* (Tours: URBAMA, 1997), pp. 351-3.

<sup>13</sup> Unfortunately, Murr was unable to leverage a higher price from Solidère, leaving him holding the bag on this truly unsalvageable, white elephant of a commercial building.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with former Finance Minister Georges Corm in Paris at *Le Dôme*, 15 Feb 2001, 5:00 pm. Corm argues that Jad Tabet will confirm the facts of this matter. Spokespeople for Solidère, however, argue that the buildings were demolished because of their damaged and dangerous physical condition. Physical condition, no matter how degraded, cannot adequately explain the wanton and wholesale destruction of an entire urban quarter.

<sup>15</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1984), pp. 306-7.

<sup>16</sup> Beirut's Solidère project typifies the kind of modernist, 'hygienic' urban discourse decried by Sigmund Bauman in *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1991), esp. Chap. III "The Self-construction of Ambivalence."

<sup>17</sup> These buildings include the United Nations ESCWA building by Pierre El-Khoury, the power substation by Abdul-Halim Jabr in association with Bawader architects, the new Parliament Annex at Place de l'Étoile and Forum building on Rue Maraad, both by Builders Design Consultants (Nabil Azar, principal), the Banque Audi by Kevin Dash beneath the Serail, and the nearly complete L'Orient-le-Jour/An Nahar building, also by Pierre El-Khoury, on the Burj Square (Place des Martyrs)

<sup>18</sup> This comparison is no idle one. For an essential aspect of the Solidère redevelopment is the spatial and political model provided by its Saudi Arabian counterparts. Rafik Hariri has been a developer and builder for the House of Saud, instrumental in constructing *grands ensembles* across which the royal family has conferred the visual culture of the Saudi state. His work for them includes the very conference center in Taif where the Lebanese peace accords were signed. Most importantly are the urban ensembles built upon empty, desert or vacated land – not unlike the vacated *tabula rasa* created by Solidère – that the royal family has built in Riyadh and Jeddah confecting hugely modernized simulations of rural, and village peninsular culture. Naba, p. 32 citing Guilain Denoux and Robert Springbord, "Hariri's Lebanon", *Middle East Policy Review* VI:2 (Oct 1998). For a parallel discussion of the ways that contemporary Saudi culture both un-writes and re-writes its contemporary culture, see Elaine Sciolino, "Where the Prophet Trod, He Begs, Tread Lightly", *New York Times International* (15 Feb 2002), p. 4 col. 3, and Howayda Al-Harithy, "Manufacturing Architectural Identity:

"The Works of Rasem Badran in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia", *Traditional Dwellings and Settlement Review* XII:1 (Fall 2000): 49.

<sup>19</sup> The aspiring Prime Minister made this statement at the ceremony on Martyr's Square commemorating the 25th anniversary of the outbreak of the Civil War. *The Star* (14 April 2000): 1.

<sup>20</sup> John Kifner, "The Beirut I Knew Wasn't So Different", *The New York Times* (9 July 2000), IV: 16.

<sup>21</sup> *Mohammed Al-Rawaz*, exhibition catalogue (Beirut: Galerie Janine Rubeiz, 2000), pl. 6.

<sup>22</sup> Ghassan Haje, lecture: "The Gift of Space: On the Ethics of Pedestrian Crossings in Sydney and Beirut." American University of Beirut, 14 Feb 2001.

<sup>23</sup> Hariri now seeks forgiveness of the nation's more than twenty billion dollar national debt in order to avert the nation's complete financial collapse. Rumors run rife that he is prepared to naturalize Palestinians exiled in Lebanon provided its public debt is forgiven by the World Bank. Intriguing as this scenario may sound, such economic high drama is fiscally impossible given the fact that the World Bank can forgive only bilateral loans, which constitute only a fraction of the national debt. *Corn, loc. cit.*