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Exhibiting the "Just-Lived Past": Hizbullah's Nationalist Narratives in Transnational Political Context

LARA DEEB

University of California, Irvine

On 20 July 2006, eight days into an Israeli air assault on Lebanon,[1] Israeli shells hit the Khiam detention center, the notorious site where Lebanese resistance fighters and civilians had been imprisoned and tortured during the twenty-two-year (1978–2000) Israeli occupation of south Lebanon. A news article describing the destruction of the center was subtitled, "After being remade in recent years into a monument to political atrocity, the jail at Khiam now lies destroyed by Israeli strikes," and noted, "Fragments of walls, concrete held erect by stubborn rebar, point mute to the sky" (Quilty 2006).

What is it that went mute on 20 July? What does it matter that this former detention center has been silenced? What, if anything, is significant about the Israeli destruction of Khiam?[2] Clearly, one approach would be to treat the targeting of the detention center site simply as an incident of "deleting evidence," suppressing the stories of torture and death that those concrete walls had contained. This understanding will hover under the surface of the remainder of this article, especially in underscoring the fragility of "historical fact."[3] Yet, to fully address these questions, Khiam must be located in the context of an Islamic cultural sphere associated with the mainly Shi'i Muslim constituency of the political party Hizbullah in contemporary Lebanon. And its destruction must be viewed as emblematic of a wider contestation over representations and meanings of the "just-lived past." It is a truism that history and politics are inseparable, and it has become part of scholarly commonsense to

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[1] See the special issue of the *MIT Electronic Journal of Middle East Studies* titled "The July War," available at http://web.mit.edu/CIS/www/mitejmes/MITEJMES_Vol_6_Summer.pdf.

[2] While the July 2006 Israeli bombardment also largely destroyed the town of Khiam, in this article, "Khiam" refers specifically to the detention center.

[3] See Michel-Rolph Trouillot's eloquent treatment of this fragility (1995).

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understand that representations of the past are frequently about the present and hold implications for the future.[4] However, fully understanding this requires attention to the ways cultural productions through which the past—including the just-lived past—is represented are part of political projects, including those of non-state actors such as Hizbullah. When I ask, "Why Khiam?" I am asking: What does the destruction (or, for that matter, the construction) of a site that contains narratives and memories and understandings about the just-lived past mean in the context of contemporary political conflict?

In what follows, I will begin to think through these issues by analyzing an exhibition organized by Hizbullah in 2000 to memorialize its martyrs, along with the party's plans to build a "Resistance museum"[5] and to rebuild the Khiam detention center site.[6] The 2000 exhibit provides a salient entry point for a number of reasons. First, it was the first large-scale multi-media exhibit sponsored by the party, and the first exhibit held post-liberation, after the Israeli withdrawal in May of that year. Second, the exhibit signaled a shift in Hizbullah's approach in Lebanon toward a greater emphasis on cultural production, entertainment, and leisure sites.[7] This shift not only marked the beginning of a six-year period of relative calm along the Lebanese-Israeli border, eventually broken by the 2006 war; it also indicates the hegemonic entrenchments of the party in certain areas of Beirut and the country.[8] The plans for the Khiam center and the Resistance museum represent later stages of this entrenchment process.

I argue that this exhibition simultaneously drew people into "the Resistance community," delineated that community's boundaries, and articulated a particular narrative of Lebanese nationalism and the position of Lebanon in the Middle East vis-à-vis Israel (and by proxy, the United States). The narrativization process had a dual nature. On one hand, it was directed mainly at an "internal" audience. It worked to reinforce solidarity with Hizbullah's Islamic Resistance

[4] This scholarly "commonsense" builds on Halbwachs' writings (1980 [1950] and 1992 [1952]) regarding the relationship of memory and history to social context, and especially on Foucault's insights (1972) regarding how the present constructs the past through representation.

[5] I capitalize "Resistance" in contexts where it refers specifically to Hizbullah's Islamic Resistance or to the Hizbullah notion of their "Resistance community" or "Resistance museum." I write it lower-case when I refer to Lebanese resistance to occupation in general or to resistance as a concept.

[6] Martyr memorialization is common in the media landscape of Lebanon and the Middle East, though context determines who is defined as a "martyr," or *shahid* (e.g., the majority in government describes assassinated Prime Minister Hariri as a *shahid*). In Lebanon, *shahid* is a term of respect, used during the July 2006 war to refer to both fighters and civilians who were killed. However, most of the time, including in this exhibition, Hizbullah uses the term to refer specifically to those men who died fighting the occupation.

[7] These leisure sites also include beaches, restaurants, and amusement parks—places of play.

[8] By hegemony or hegemonic processes, I mean the Gramscian notion of the horizontal workings of power to achieve consent and agreement on ideas about social and political organization, and to render those ideas "commonsensical" (1971: 57–58), with the understanding that such processes of consent do work in conjunction with domination and coercion to a certain extent.

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by incorporating individual experiences of the Israeli occupation into a collective history of resistance and victory. In this way, the exhibition was self-referential, constructing the Resistance community to itself through shared hegemonic understandings, most insistently around martyr memorialization. Further, the exhibit made claims that extended its representative qualities to the entire Lebanese nation-state, narrating a specific version of the party's nationalism that rested on a particular signification of the just-lived past. Yet this internalizing process was complicated by the way the exhibit wrote those who did not fit or agree as outside the bounds of both community and the nation. On the other hand, an "external" transnational audience was inescapable, something that becomes even more evident in the plans for the museum and Khiam site. Efforts to sediment the just-lived past into what is understood as "history," through the medium of the exhibition and the sedimentation process itself, were pursued in the context of a global order in which U.S. and Israeli political, discursive, and military power matter.

NEITHER HISTORY NOR MEMORY: EXHIBITING THE "JUST-LIVED PAST"

In the wake of scholarly engagements with the work of French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, and later the project of Pierre Nora (1984), there are today vast literatures on social or collective memory.[9] Much of this work is predicated on a distinction between "history" and "memory." In Halbwachs, this emerges as the difference between personal or autobiographical memory and historical or archival memory,[10] while Nora views memory as a pre-historical idealized form that is "lost" with modernist moves to narrativized history. Another formulation of this dichotomy is found in works such as Sturken's (1997), and that of the Popular Memory Group (1982). Here, history is understood to be state-sanctioned or official narrative, and memory is then set up as its redemptive other, found in collective voices.

There have been a number of cogent critiques of this dichotomization and the various meanings attributed to it (Olick 2003; Tonkin 1992: 117–21; Khalili 2007; Özyürek 2006; Zamponi 2003; Klein 2000).[11] Kerwin Klein, in particular, traces the genealogy of what he terms "the memory industry," noting, "Where we once spoke of folk history or popular history or oral history or public history or even myth we now employ memory as a metahistorical category that subsumes all these various terms" (2000: 128). He points out that memory has been cast as the redemptive version of the past to such an

[9] For overviews of these literatures, see Hutton 1993; Olick and Robbins 1998; and Klein 2000.
[10] This difference rested on the idea that while memory invoked continuity of the present with the past, history required their distinction.
[11] Zamponi notes that his view of "collective memory" is quite close to a narratological model of history (e.g., Hayden White 1990). See also Feldman 2003.

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extent that Foucault's notion of "counter-memory" is rarely used today "because it would be redundant" (ibid.: 146, n. 6).

Following Klein's critique, and despite the semantic affinity of "memorialization" to "memory," I understand the Hizbullah exhibition—including its memorializations of martyrs—as a practice of narrativizing or "writing" history. Whether I call this exhibition a part of Hizbullah's project of history or its project of collective memory matters only because of the meanings that those terms have come to carry, with regard to whether the project or representation in question is a hegemonic form, a redemptive narrative, state-sanctioned, official, sedimented, resistant, objective, subjective, and so forth. By choosing to understand this as a project of history, I want to emphasize both that history itself is not univocal or necessarily sedimented,[12] and that Hizbullah's historical narrativization is in process and may be at once hegemonic and counter-hegemonic, depending upon one's vantage point and the specific field of power relations under consideration. On one hand, Hizbullah's narration of the just-lived past in the 2000 exhibition was an effort to inscribe and sediment one particular history as the hegemonic historical understanding of the Resistance and its victory in Lebanon. On the other, the structure of the exhibition itself implied an already-hegemonic context of understanding. Furthermore, I understand this exhibition, as well as other representations and constructions of the just-lived past, to be *productive of* not only social relations but also political projects and collectivities ensuing within particular fields of power relations.[13] The specificities of these fields are crucial. In this case, for example, Hizbullah may be working within hegemonic frames of understanding in the southern suburb of Beirut, but the party's narrative is one among many competing ones in Lebanon as a whole. Moreover, it is a counter-hegemonic narrative in the context of broader contemporary geopolitics where a U.S.-based hegemonic project is pursued through media as well as political-economic and military power.

The question then arises of why this particular form. Why build an exhibit as one of the first public post-liberation activities? And why focus the exhibition on martyr memorialization? Much has been written about the ways that memorialization is crucial to constructing nationalist imaginings (Anderson 1983; Gillis 1994; Harootunian 1999), and how exhibitions and museums function as technologies of governmentality, implicated in the construction of national identities and disciplining citizens (Bennett 1995; Duncan 1995; Kratz and

[12] I use the term "sedimented" to evoke meaning ranging from Raymond Williams' notion of "precipitated" social formations (1977: 133–35), to a sense of institutionalization of narratives, to their emergence as part of commonsense understandings.

[13] Özyürek emphasizes that memory is "both productive and a product of political struggle in the present" (2006). See also the work of the Popular Memory Group, especially their arguments "that all political activity is intrinsically a process of historical argument and definition" (1982: 213).

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Karp 2006).[14] As Appadurai and Breckenridge recognize, museums and exhibitions are also part of "a transnational order of cultural forms" associated with "media, leisure, and spectacle," often in nationalist contexts (1992: 35).[15] In this paper I focus on how a non-state collectivity—in this case, a political party recently emergent as a powerful if ambivalent actor within the state—draws upon exhibitionary practices to simultaneously represent and construct its community. This is part of a broader pattern of diasporic communities, ethnic minorities, and political movements drawing upon exhibitionary practices in this way.

Hizbullah's cultural production includes other forms of martyr memorialization, including books cataloguing its martyrs and posters that blanket areas where the party enjoys popular support. Unlike those, however, the 2000 exhibition drew people in, incorporating them into its community via their walking through its spaces. It also foreshadowed an attempt at permanence, something evident in the plans to build a Resistance museum and rebuild the Khiam site. While martyr books hold a similar "permanence" that posters lack, in the context of a national public sphere an exhibition takes a more declarative stance, and the project of building a museum amplifies it in terms of both presence and permanence.

As Kratz and Karp put it, "[Museums] have become essential forms through which to make statements about history, identity, value and place and to claim recognition . . . [museums] have become a portable social technology, a set of museological practices through which such statements and claims are represented, embodied and debated" (2006: 4). Hizbullah's emphasis on the 2000 exhibit and future museum sites also highlights the transnational resonance of the museum as part of an "exhibitionary complex" (Bennett 1995); Hizbullah is attentive to the role of exhibits/museums in constructing citizenry through "winning hearts and minds as well as the disciplining and training of bodies" (ibid.: 62).[16]

Bennett's work links the political importance of history to exhibitionary practices when he notes the past is not the past until it is "*publicly demarcated* and *represented* as such" (ibid.: 130). By exhibiting *just-lived* events, Hizbullah places them firmly into "the past." In the process, it effects a certain level of consent to that particular narration of events, as well as a certain level of incomplete sedimentation. This is crucial in this political context where just-lived events, as long as they remain "current events," are on shaky ground, prone to erasure or revision, especially when mediated by dominant U.S.-based

[14] Kratz and Karp (2006) provide an overview of literature on the relationships between museums/museological processes and identities, communities, and nation-states.

[15] See also Karp et al. (2006), especially part 2.

[16] We can see this as part of a trend toward governmentality by Hizbullah, perhaps the most convincing argument in support of the idea that Hizbullah functions as a "state within a state."

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outlets such as CNN. By documenting current events as part of the historical record and transforming them into the just-lived past, Hizbullah is constructing an archive. We see another example of this in the party's videotaping and broadcasting its operations during the occupation in order to preserve and display "proof" against Israeli denials that Hizbullah had taken its military outposts.

To understand Hizbullah's projects of representing history, it is crucial that we grasp this history's "just-lived" quality. These are not projects of recovering the past, or defining heritage or patrimony. A focus on the just-lived past allows for a flexibility of meaning, an incompleteness to its sedimentation into a historical record. There are hints of this in all three cases I discuss. But the two permanent sites, especially, were conceived as more than mere calls to remembrance, or parts of an evidentiary record; they were living calls to learn, articulate, teach, and work toward the community's future. There remain open possibilities within the hegemonic narration, not to question its basic tenets but rather to include individual actions in various ways. In recent years, an emphasis on structured narratives has re-emerged, culminating in the model for reconstructing Khiam, but what effects this may have on the flexibility of meaning remains to be seen. Thus far, this simultaneous sedimentation and openness is what has made these media powerful in defining Hizbullah's constituency and cultural sphere. Before turning to these issues in greater depth, a brief background to Hizbullah and its nationalist project is necessary.

HIZBULLAH'S NATIONALISM AND ISLAMIC SPHERE

Hizbullah is only one player—albeit the most renowned one—in Shi'i political and cultural life in Lebanon, and can be understood as part of a *hala islamiyya*, or Islamic sphere.[17] This Islamic sphere is the result of multiple strands of Shi'i mobilization that began in the 1970s and included several key actors with varying political perspectives, methods, and ideologies.[18] What united them was an effort to organize Shi'i Muslims in Lebanon—historically a politically and economically marginalized community—to work toward alleviating poverty and disenfranchisement in their communities.[19] The context for

[17] I have analyzed this Islamic sphere in Deeb 2006a, especially as it is forged through daily religious practice and discourse, ritual commemorations, the visual environment of urban spaces, social welfare provision, and women's volunteer work. I am currently conducting a long-term collaborative field research project with Mona Harb of the American University of Beirut to explore new cultural and leisure-related aspects of this sphere. While *hala* literally conveys a "state of being" or a "condition," Harb and I chose to use the term "sphere" in part to articulate with theoretical notions of a public sphere and to allow for the inclusion of various dimensions, (e.g., cultural, economic, political).

[18] These include Sayyid Musa al-Sadr and Sayyid Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah. For more on this mobilization, see Norton 1987, and Deeb 2006a, ch. 2.

[19] Poverty and disenfranchisement were related to Shi'i under-representation in Lebanon's sectarian power-sharing government system, the institutionalization of confessionalism in sect-based

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these mobilizations included the Lebanese civil war (1975–1990), the Islamic Revolution in Iran (1979), and most crucially, Israel's two invasions of Lebanon (1978 and 1982) and its continued occupation of south Lebanon until May 2000.[20]

Hizbullah began as a movement of armed resistance to this Israeli occupation in the mid-1980s, and has since developed into the major political face of the Shi'i Islamic mobilization and a legitimate political party that works within the post-civil war Lebanese state.[21] The withdrawal from Lebanese territory of Israeli troops and its proxy militia, the Southern Lebanese Army, in 2000 was understood by most Lebanese as a victory for Hizbullah's Islamic Resistance and fueled a high point in the party's popularity at the turn of the century.[22] Hizbullah also carries a major bloc in parliament and holds a cabinet position as well as numerous elected municipal positions throughout the country.[23] In addition, the party is loosely affiliated with one of the largest, most efficient, and least corrupt networks of social welfare service provision in Lebanon. These three aspects of the party—political, social, and military—bridge an at-times significant gap between the Shi'i confessional community and the Lebanese state. This gap has become especially apparent in the year following the July 2006 war, during which Hizbullah has led a multi-party opposition movement against the prime minister and his allied majority in the Lebanese government.[24] This rift has bifurcated the country in part along Shi'i-Sunni lines (with Christian Lebanese divided amongst themselves), inserting a relatively new aspect of sectarian division into the political field.[25]

Since 2000, the party, in concordance with other Shi'i political, religious, and social leaders in Lebanon, has begun to focus on cultural production within the Islamic sphere.[26] A key element in this milieu is the narration through various media (television and radio programming), sites (memorials,

social institutions, the hold of feudal landowning elites on Shi'i Parliamentary seats, and greater population growth in Shi'i areas.

[20] On the continued conflict after May 2000, see Norton 2000 and 2007.

[21] On the institutional and political aspects of Hizbullah, see Deeb 2006b; Fawaz 1998; Hamzeh 2004; Harik 2004; Saad-Ghorayeb 2002; and Norton 1999; 2000; and 2007.

[22] The July 2006 war similarly saw a surge in support for Hizbullah, though in a significantly fractured Lebanese polity.

[23] The contentious decision to participate in the first post-civil war elections (1992) exemplified Hizbullah's commitment to working through the existing (sectarian) structure of the state. See Qasim 2004.

[24] The opposition's tactics have included the resignation of its cabinet ministers, a long-term sit-in in downtown Beirut, and sporadic protests. Key issues of contention include Hizbullah's continuing armed resistance, "anti-U.S." versus "pro-U.S." stances (related to the constructed polarization of the Middle East into "U.S./Saudi" versus "Iranian/Syrian" camps), post-war reconstruction, economic policies, and the election of a new president.

[25] During the Lebanese civil war, very little of the fighting was Sunni-Shi'i.

[26] On popular culture, see Harb 2005. Another significant aspect of the Islamic sphere is the economic arena (Harik 2004; Harb 2007).

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religious and political tourist sites) and events (commemorations, political rallies) of a Hizbullah-specific history of resistance to Israeli occupation. This history emphasizes sacrifice for the nation and the necessity of the Resistance's role in liberating Lebanon as a way to incorporate the long-marginalized Shi'i community into the nation-state. This is one of the major narratives that underlies what I have analyzed elsewhere as the community of "the Shi'i pious modern" (Deeb 2006a).[27] While this community is not synonymous with Hizbullah, the narrative is widely shared and has become in many ways hegemonic, a part of "commonsense" knowledge in Beirut's southern suburb, an area that has taken on the misnomer "the Shi'i ghetto."[28] Today, it is one of the main narratives within the discursive field of competing and negotiated histories and identities that has always characterized Lebanon.

In keeping with the multiplicity of Lebanese nationalist narratives, there are no state-sponsored memorials to those who died fighting the Israeli occupation, and Liberation celebrations and commemorations have been initiated by Hizbullah. The temporary exhibition I analyze below is the first major public display of resistance history by any group in post-Liberation Lebanon. The narrative it puts forth articulates a nationalism that exists in opposition to other Lebanese nationalisms. Narratives of the latter include one based on a Phoenician origins myth, espoused by many in Lebanon's Christian right, and one based on neo-liberal style economic policies, promoted by the incumbent (U.S.-supported) prime minister and the majority in government. Hizbullah offers an alternative nationalism that views Lebanon as an Arab state that cannot distance itself from causes like that of Palestine. It is predicated on the importance of liberating national territory through sacrifice, and fuses religious, heroic, and folk themes in its symbolism and discourse.[29]

Within this framework, different elements are emphasized at different times: In 2000, liberation of territory from Israeli occupation took on valences of nationalist victory as Hizbullah positioned itself to take on a greater role in internal politics. The 2006 war was not only more acute, it also took place in a different Middle East, one in which the United States occupies Iraq and both Arab and western governments draw on "war on terror" rhetoric. This context has complicated Hizbullah's nationalist presentation. On one hand, their casting of the July 2006 war as an Arab victory was echoed by the

[27] These narratives also address material development, spiritual reform towards what is understood as modern piety, and the "progress" of Lebanese Shi'a in both these regards.

[28] This predominately Shi'i Muslim "suburb" is a conglomeration of densely populated neighborhoods south of municipal Beirut. Its common appellation *dahiyat Hizbullah*—"Hizbullah's suburb"—reflects assumptions about both residents' support of the party and the party's control within those neighborhoods.

[29] For example, since the end of the civil war, the party has consistently drawn upon the Lebanese flag in its rallies and exhibitions. Harb also notes the inclusion of folk over religious themes in recent party anthems (2007).

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broad *popular* appeal across the Arab world of both the party and its Secretary General, Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah. On the other, several Sunni Arab governments took a position against the party and with the government majority during and after the war. While this is related to tensions between the Shi'i-specificity of Hizbullah's ideology and a history of Sunni-dominant Arab nationalism, it is also clearly linked to a contemporary polarization in the Middle East between pro- and anti-U.S. positions.

Inside Lebanon, this polarization is reflected in the standoff between the opposition and the government as well as in the responses of members of other communities to Hizbullah's martyr representations. In the months leading up to and immediately following Israeli withdrawal in 2000, many people across the country regarded Resistance fighters as national heroes who had liberated the south. Six months later, a Christian woman who lives just outside the southern suburb responded negatively to a martyr poster near her house, saying, "See, *al-dahiya* [the suburb] is creeping up on us."[30] That sort of response has only grown stronger as both sides have entrenched their positions, and today one often hears racist rhetoric about the opposition sit-in in downtown Beirut that employs tropes of "dirtiness" and "backwardness" to describe its mainly Shi'i participants.

It is also vital to keep in mind that Hizbullah's nationalism is articulated in a U.S.-dominated global context where the party has been subsumed under the label "terrorist."[31] Through the exhibition, Hizbullah is not only narrating its history, but is also providing evidentiary materials for that narration. In this vein, the exhibit can be read alongside the broader cultural production of the party. The sense that it is imperative to document and archive Resistance activities underscores the ways dominant narratives about Hizbullah are linked to the discursive power of U.S. media, which often reproduce Israeli versions of events and perspectives and rely on Israeli "experts." I will return to this point below after I describe the exhibition itself.

THE RIJALAT AL-MAJD EXHIBITION

The exhibition opened with much fanfare on Martyrs' Day in 2000, almost six months after the Israeli withdrawal from the south. Hizbullah established Martyrs' Day, 11 November, to commemorate the date of the first martyrdom operation against the Israeli occupation in 1982.[32] The party's Beirut media office organized the exhibition in honor of the 1,281 (at that time) Hizbullah Resistance martyrs and titled it Rijalat al-Majd, "Men of Glory." It took

[30] She was responding simultaneously to the religious and class significations of "the southern suburb" represented in the poster.
[31] See Harb and Leenders 2005.
[32] Martyrdom operations, *'amaliyat istishhadiyya*, occur when a fighter's death is planned in advance ("suicide attacks" in U.S. media). Very few Hizbullah martyrs actually died this way.

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place in a public garden in a municipality in the southern suburb where the mayor is a party member. The organizers estimated that over the course of ten days over two hundred thousand people walked through its over 6,000 square meters.

I attended the exhibit twice, once with Aziza, a friend from the community, and alone a couple of days later. Both times the hall was packed with people of all ages: scout groups, mothers and fathers with their children, groups of young people, couples and, less frequently, individuals. The displays included huge walk-through dioramas with three-dimensional recreations, model rooms representing "homes" that could be peered into inquisitively, brilliant and skillfully airbrushed wall paintings, a variety of objects and artifacts, maps, photographs, artwork, newspaper clippings, and a plethora of names, dates, and numbers.

Through strategies of display and organization, exhibitions carefully guide viewers through narratives.[33] They are "political arenas in which definitions of identity and culture are asserted and contested" (Karp 1992).[34] The Rijalat al-Majd exhibit was no exception. It was well orchestrated, with a single route from beginning to end, the path guiding visitors from one display to another in a clear layout. The first half tied together history from the Battle of Karbala, to the Lebanese village under Israeli siege, to the birth of the Islamic Resistance. It continued through the successes of the Resistance culminating in Liberation, while memorializing those martyred for them. A hallway marking the center shifted the focus to the presentation of informational evidence—the names, dates, and photographs of each of the 1,281 martyrs. Material evidence followed in the form of martyr artifacts and the spoils of war. Interpretation, affect, and expressions of solidarity were then represented in an art exhibit that included paintings from artists of several nationalities.[35] The final room contained summation, alongside a reminder of the importance of solidarity with ongoing battles.

From its beginnings, the exhibition provided a multi-sensorial and self-referential experience.[36] The approach to the hall's entrance required one to walk through a garden with crimson shrine-like arches strewn with flowers

[33] Kratz highlights this narrative structure: "Visitors experience exhibitions as a temporal flow as they move through them. Juxtaposition, spatial design, and movement through exhibitions often contribute to the intended or implied narratives that exhibitions convey" (2002: 93).

[34] See also Karp and Lavine (1991), and Kratz (2002).

[35] This is related to Hizbullah's status as the only Arab group to successfully thwart an Israeli military occupation or attack. The inclusion of art may also contribute another valence of validation to the Resistance.

[36] Chakrabarty's insight, building on Bhabha's models of politics and citizenship, may be useful here. He argues that museums (and, I would add, exhibitions) are caught in the tensions between the pedagogic and the performative, where the former "privileges the capacity for abstract reasoning and imagination" and the latter "brings into view the domain of the embodied and the sensual" (2002: 7). This duality/tension highlights the importance of the multi-sensorial quality of the Hizbullah exhibition to the multiple ways it worked to reinforce a sense of belonging to the Resistance community.

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lining the pathways. Inside each arch were displayed several photographs of martyrs. Aziza told me she thought this represented heaven, an observation confirmed by the brochure I was given (upon asking for a "guide"). As we entered the building, we walked over a large doormat printed with an Israeli flag, and then came into an entrance hall with a monument to the martyrs at its center. Here visitors were instructed to read the *fatiha* for the martyrs' souls, and many complied. Though admission was free, an area to the right displayed items for purchase, including books and videos about the Resistance and Hizbullah, and the teachings of important sayyids (e.g., Khomeini, Fadlullah, Nasrallah), along with the standard key chains, photographs, pins, stickers, flags, and other paraphernalia bearing the Hizbullah symbol or the faces of Nasrallah or Khomeini. To the left was an area from which al-Nūr radio station blared, filling the space with anthems and retrospective reports about various military operations.

Past the monument, we walked through another door to begin our journey through the history of the Resistance. First, there was a re-creation of the Battle of Karbala, where Shi'i Imam Husayn was martyred at the hands of Sunni troops in 680 C.E. Spectators were taken to Karbala through a three-dimensional panoramic rendering of the battle scene, which included model corpses and a burning tent against an airbrushed desert background.[37] Karbala represents the point of origin for the possibility of Shi'i-specific resistance against oppression, and is a source of inspiration for the nationalist resistance narrative that follows. From Karbala the exhibit leapt to the early 1980s, locating the proximate beginnings of the contemporary Islamic Resistance in an explicitly sect-less, generic Lebanese village. Visitors could peek into models of village homes destroyed by Israeli bombardment, glimpse a life-size figure of a mother weeping over her son's corpse, and look through the door of a village mosque to see a *shaykh* praying with fighters within, the scene backlit in orange.

The remainder of the first half of the exhibition contained a chronicling of selected military accomplishments and sacrifices of the Resistance, casting these operations as notable by virtue of their inclusion in the exhibition itself. This began with the first martyrdom operation undertaken in Sour by Ahmad Qasir in 1982, before the party officially existed, and ended with a model of Hizbullah fighters taking the Israeli outpost at Sojod in 1998, one of their most significant actions. In between was a chronological display of developments in martyr memorialization. First came hand-drawn posters and snapshot-like photographs typical of martyr images from the 1980s and early 1990s, which gradually shifted to the standardized, mass-produced

[37] Shi'i Muslims commemorate the events of Karbala annually during the first ten days of Muharram. Husayn and other members of the Prophet Muhammad's family provide role models for living a moral lifestyle in *al-Dahiya* (Deeb 2005 and 2006a).

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representations that continue to dot the cityscape of the southern suburb today. Here a caption in the brochure read: "As the operations developed, the media developed as well." A television followed that displayed video footage of Resistance operations. Resistance fighters who were not martyred were the subject of the next area. To one side, a corner of crutches, flowers, and wood-carvings honored the injured, and across from this a collage reminded attendees of the many Lebanese still held in Israeli prisons.

A side alcove revealed a graveyard strewn with rose petals. On its walls were large, well-lit portraits of Sayyid Abbas al-Musawi and Shaykh Raghib Harb, the martyred Hizbullah *ulama* (see Image 1). Just after the graveyard, a diorama depicted the assassination of al-Musawi by an Israeli helicopter in 1992. This began with the actual car in which he and his wife and son died, and was followed by a shrine to the sayyid. A long funeral procession began as a painting along the wall and emerged as a three-dimensional model of al-Musawi's coffin being carried by life-size mourners. At the end of the procession, on the right, was another small alcove, which another attendee explained symbolized the graves of martyrs who had no graves—those who died in martyrdom operations. Here a larger-than-life image of Khomeini watched over and blessed bodies wrapped in white shrouds and Hizbullah flags (see Image 2).

At its midpoint, the exhibit turned to the left in order to loop back toward the entrance. A passageway—"the tunnel of martyrs"—connected the two sides. Here all 1,281 were named in chronological order, along with the details of their deaths and their photographs. Again, uncoordinated snapshots gave way to more standardized compositions from around the end of the Lebanese civil war, as Hizbullah reconsolidated as an organized political party. The visual contrast with the brilliance of the rest of the exhibition thus far was sharp: the walls were draped in black, with black and white photographs, and information about the martyrs was given in black print on white paper. The only bursts of color here were the word *'udhma'una* (our magnificent ones) looping in red over the white pages and the crimson carpet.

The tunnel emerged into a room where martyrs' artifacts (*athar al-shuhada'*) were displayed. Placed on black-draped stands were the writings and small objects of martyrs, including letters, poetry, Qur'ans, photographs, even an occasional article of clothing or handkerchief. Each was clearly labeled with the martyr's name. From artifacts of memorialization the exhibition moved to artifacts of war: Israeli paraphernalia taken from outposts and confiscated after Liberation. These included weapons, uniforms, bullets, and other small objects.

The final series of rooms placed the history of Lebanese resistance in the context of Hizbullah's wider nationalist vision, which sees Lebanon as a part of the Arab and Islamic worlds. An art exhibit included works donated by and commissioned from painters from Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, and Egypt around the theme of resistance. Within this transnational space, two walls

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were set aside for graffiti contributions of attendees. The exhibit then closed with two images side by side: a map of Lebanon labeled with the numbers of martyrs from each area against the backdrop of the Lebanese flag, and a painting of Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, a reminder of continuing battles.[38] With that final image, we stepped back into the entrance hall on the other side of the martyrs' monument.

INCORPORATING A COLLECTIVITY, OR, "DRAWING IN" THE COMMUNITY

At first glance, it would appear that this exhibit should be read with a focus on its martyr memorializations. However, while commemoration and memorialization were no doubt key aspects of it, evident in its title and timing, the structuring of the exhibit as well as its framing through official discourse were linked to Hizbullah's larger project of meaning-making. Martyrs were memorialized here with an emphasis on inclusivity and incorporation—with individual experience meant to contribute to the collectivity—rather than on individualized experiences of loss and mourning. Indeed, mourning itself is viewed as a source of community identity and solidarity. My focus here is on this larger project, viewed through the lens of the Hizbullah exhibition as intended and presented, rather than receptions and contestations of its narratives. Meanings were certainly contested, and this has only intensified in recent years. However, in the year following liberation, in 2000, Hizbullah's popularity and the potential of its hegemonic project were at their high point thus far. The notion that the Resistance was a valid and victorious nationalist project had become part of commonsense understandings of the party across the country, but especially, and I would venture to say nearly without question, among the party's constituents in the southern suburb.[39]

A prime example of official discourse regarding the exhibition's intended meanings can be found in the speech of Hizbullah Secretary General Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah at its opening ceremony. A charismatic speaker, he reminded the audience—which included members of Parliament and other prominent community members—of the broader meanings of the exhibit and the significance of Martyrs' Day in 2000, the year of liberation. Noting that the "meaning" of the exhibition was to "clarify the message, goal, and values" represented in the martyrs' blood, he went on to define this message as "a *collective responsibility* to preserve this history. He called upon the community (*al-mujtama'*), the people (*al-sha'b*), the government (*al-hukuma*), and the nation (*al-watan*) to "preserve this blood, and to articulate it in different

[38] The Al-Aqsa Intifada had begun a few months earlier.

[39] Since 2000, this project has come under question, and today it is part of what has bifurcated Lebanon. For an example of contestation of memorialization within the Shi'i community, see Volk 2007.

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ways." Here he articulated a reversal of the responsibility of a citizen to a nation-state, so that the nation becomes responsible to its martyrs, in this case those of Hizbullah's Resistance, who represent its frontline citizens.

This nationalist emphasis also emerged later in Nasrallah's speech when he described the 2000 victory as representing a reformed reputation for Lebanon as a nation, a move away from the years of civil war and the inability of its people to coexist to a new example for Palestine and the world: "But with the actions of the resistance of the fighters and the Lebanese people, the meaning of 'Lebanon' changed to a term that carries all the meanings of jihad and resistance, steadfastness, patience and sacrifice, desire and greatness, and ability to defeat the enemy." Again, the Resistance has recuperated the nation's reputation, and Resistance martyrs, and by extension those who support and identify with them, emerge as representative of that nation. Martyrs are important both because they represent the ideal collectivity, and because through their memorialization they provide a means through which others can gain entry into that collectivity.

A slightly different perspective—one that hints at a tension between Hizbullah's attributions of meaning to martyrs and individuals' personal responses—was expressed by Jamal, one of the primary designers of the Rijalat al-Majd exhibition. He explained that it was intended in part to respond to the fact that "at that time, people wanted memorials," but in such a way that channeled that desire away from a message that "we will always remember" to one that stated "we will never forget." This shift from remembrance to a refusal to forget highlighted that these martyr memorializations were intended to place their deaths into history and link the dead and the living into a single collectivity. According to its organizers, its primary intended audience was people already marked as part of this collectivity, a perspective supported by the way the exhibition was advertised primarily through Hizbullah-affiliated media and the lack of direct explanation throughout. In keeping with this, during my two visits to the exhibit most of the attendees seemed to be pious Shi'i Muslims (with an occasional journalist, who may or may not have shared a stance of solidarity). If, as Carol Duncan argues, art museums are ritual settings that cast their visitors as "enlightenment-seeking citizens" (1995: 12), then this exhibit cast its visitors in the role of citizens affirming their identification with and membership in a specifically and typically *Lebanese Shi'i* community. Rather than providing an historical or ideological lesson for the outsider, for the majority of viewers the exhibition substantiated and structured existing understandings.

In myriad ways, the exhibition's structure and content reinforced spectators' sense of belonging to that which was exhibited. It drew them into this collectivity in both senses of their being sketched or depicted within it, and their being constantly pulled into it. Indeed, a full understanding of the exhibit depended on already understanding its cues, on sharing its hegemonic narrative

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of resistance. Aside from the pathway directing visitors from one display to the next, there were scant clues as to its meaning. Little explanation was provided in either the "provided only upon request" brochure (which I saw nobody else holding) or the Arabic signs posted throughout,[40] and there were no official "guides" or docents. Instead, viewers commented on displays to one another and parents explained things to their children.[41] In general, however, conversation in the exhibition hall seemed focused on how impressive it was or on the joys of the recent victory.

As noted above, the success of this reliance on shared understandings was facilitated in part by how recent the narrated past was, so recent that most attendees had personally experienced the events portrayed. It is for them, for the living the dead left behind, that the exhibition mediated between experiences of this just-lived past and the understanding of the past as crucial to membership in the collectivity. It depicted contemporary relationships, experiences, and memories, condensed them into a captured space, and provided a framework that reinforced their hegemonic interpretations. The goal was not to facilitate personal mourning or experiences of loss; these were absorbed within a singular collective identity.[42] The ability of the organizers to rely on shared meanings in constructing the exhibition also indicated the success of Hizbullah's hegemonic project at this moment in 2000.

As they walked through the structured narrative, visitors were able to interact with the exhibition, pausing to peer into alcoves, touch certain objects, admire pieces of art or simply note the artist's nationality, and add to the graffiti wall.[43] This interactivity highlighted the exhibit's sensual basis, beginning with the call to recite the *fatiha* at its entrance. Recitation pulled visitors into the exhibition by requiring their ritual participation in sacralizing the space. It prepared their minds for the spiritual aspects of the journey upon which they were about to embark, and insisted on the inseparability of the spiritual from the historical

[40] For example, the sign next to the village home doorway and mosque read simply, "From here it began," and the diorama of the Battle of Karbala was not explicated in detail, but instead included signs like those that would normally be displayed in the southern suburb during annual Ashura commemorations (e.g., *kul yawm Ashura*—"every day is Ashura").

[41] Compare Appadurai and Breckenridge's discussion of how in India and other postcolonial contexts, "Viewing and interpretation are profoundly communal acts" and museum-going is a dialogic experience (1992: 50).

[42] Contrast the Palestinian exhibition "100 Martyrs-100 Lives," where organizers focused on preserving families' personal grief and strove to represent martyrs as individuals (Allen 2005: 156–57; and 2006; Khalili 2007: ch. 6). While there are parallels here to Allen's discussions of contestation in Palestinian collective memory, there exists greater unity of perspective among Hizbullah's constituency. This is related to the moment of "victory" in 2000, to particularities of the second *intifada*, and to obvious differences in the relationships of the movements in each case to the existence or non-existence of a state.

[43] Compare Duncan's likening of museum exhibits to medieval cathedral pilgrimages, "in which pilgrims followed a narrative route, stopping at prescribed points for prayer or contemplation" (1995: 11). Paul Connerton's argument that social memory exists in necessarily habitual and embodied ritual performance is also relevant here (1989).

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and political. Indeed, visitors were drawn in throughout, with spaces that encouraged them to link their own experiences of occupation—loss, fear, violence, or displacement—to the collective framework highlighting resistance. Perhaps the most explicit example of this can be seen in the mourning procession for al-Musawi—the flat figures painted on the wall emerged into three-dimensional models moving in the direction of the exhibit's flow, allowing viewers to walk a few steps with them as mourners alongside his casket (see Image 3).

Many of the rooms and alcoves built within the exhibition hall itself also structured viewing so as to emphasize identification with the represented events and places. These literal walls marked sacred spaces of prayer and burial, but also delineated domestic space in the village "home." The tandem of village home and mosque highlighted the gendered division of labor within the Resistance, and the figure of the martyr's mother, drawing on women's typically cast role as making maternal sacrifices for the nation.[44] The contrast of the realist aesthetic of these life-size models with the aestheticized, vividly colored representations of the martyred and the heavens in other scenes encouraged an identification with the real, with the person seated in the mosque or home, as another "ordinary" member of the Resistance community. It was crucial that nothing about the home indicated the religion of the family living there, and that the mosque could easily have been either Shi'i or Sunni, accentuating a relatively inclusive nationalism. The ability to "peek into" domestic and sacred spaces raises the question of who was peeking and what they brought with them. To an outsider, peering into the home and mosque might feel voyeuristic, or highlight exclusion, with the inaccessibility of objects and meanings made manifest by walls. But for those who identified with those spaces, the walls served to pull them into the room, with accessibility of meaning leading to a heightened sense of inclusion and intimacy. "I pray too." "I too attend the mosque." "I too have a son." "I too am from such a village."

Even aspects of the exhibition where one would expect gaps between private and collective readings—namely, the plethora of martyr images, information, and artifacts—were structured so as to emphasize a collective response. The small scale of the southern suburb (and of Lebanon in general) and the minimal degrees of separation between community members guaranteed that many who passed by the images, names, and objects knew one of the martyrs or his family, or were at least familiar with them. In the tunnel of martyrs' information, some attendees searched the wall for friends and relatives.[45] Yet all of them were physically linked to those who had come before

[44] This gendered emphasis contrasts with the massive mobilization of women as participants in the resistance, albeit rarely in an armed capacity.

[45] As Gillis notes for the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington, D.C., the wall of martyrs in the Hizbullah exhibition is "an event . . . demanding that everyone who passes by do his or her duty to memory in one way or another" (1994: 13). However, unlike the stand-alone Vietnam wall, with its uniform list of names, the Hizbullah exhibition contained a plethora of other information about the

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and those who would follow by the single looping word written in red across the wall, which claimed the martyrs for the collective: "our magnificent ones."

The images of martyrs displayed in photographs, paintings, and posters similarly incorporated the personal into the collective. On one hand, these images carried a duality related to "the tension between personal identity and social identity, individual and type, a tension integral to portraiture" (Kratz 2002: 119). However, the homogenization of form characteristic of martyr images shifts this tension towards the social. Between 1999 and 2001, for example, most of the Hizbullah posters displayed, not only in the exhibition but on street-lamps and buildings, showed a martyr's head and shoulders against a pastel background of the yellow Hizbullah flag flanked by pink at the top and blue at the bottom. Written in white along the lower edge was the martyr's name with a title: "The martyred fighter so-and-so." The uniformity of these images had the effect of rendering the martyrs themselves faceless, like indistinguishable masks. They became both metonymic pieces of a collective and the whole itself—each was simultaneously representative of the Resistance and a part of the Resistance in its entirety. This duality is related to the binary function of memorial photography: to remember death and to remember the life that has ended (Ruby 1995). Publicly displayed portraits of martyrs do exactly this: they memorialize the deaths of individuals in the context of solidarity with the community epitomized by the lives that were sacrificed.

"Martyrs' artifacts"—*athar al-shuhada*—represent another area through which the party works to incorporate individual loss into its narratives of collective identity. Collection of these artifacts began rather haphazardly in the mid-1980s when the Beqaa Valley media office of the nascent Hizbullah decided to organize an exhibition in honor of local martyrs. Since then, the process has been centralized and is coordinated by a single office located in Beirut. Initial collection was done by asking martyrs' families to bring in "any items related to the martyr," and in theory the department continues to collect "anything related." Yet, in practice, they were so overwhelmed by the quantity of artifacts received that they had to limit their requests, specifying, in the words of the committee chair in 2001, "a few select items per martyr, limited to symbolic, important and informative items." He explained, "his Resistance brothers might provide weapons, a uniform or maybe a piece of rock with his blood on it," but that from the families they wanted personal items like photographs, handwritten letters to his wife or mother, or poems or paintings he had created. Once collected by the party, these very personal belongings of loved ones become public property, available to be exhibited and perused by visitors and researchers. Once the museum is constructed they will

dead, encouraging their location within a broader narrative, rather than an experience of private grief.

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be housed in a centralized site. This process reinforces the collective nature of the martyr's death and identity that Hizbullah emphasizes, as the martyr comes to "belong" to the public through the public display of private objects. Party members who work with the collection committee did acknowledge to me the personal dimensions of loss encompassed in martyrdom, but they generally highlighted that, in the words of one member, "while of course the martyr is part of a family, this family does not own the martyr. He is for all of society, the youth, the nation, the world. And he belongs to the land, to history."

In both the images and the artifacts displayed in the Rijalat al-Majd exhibition, personal loss was activated on behalf of and given to the collectivity. No community, national or otherwise, can continue to exist without crisis if its dead are understood to have died "in vain"—if death is solely a discontinuity or disruption.[46] In an essay on war memorials, Koselleck notes, "What is certain is that the meaning of 'dying for...' as it is recorded on memorials is established by survivors, in which case a common identity of the dead and the living is conjured up" (2002: 288). This particular exhibit, along with the images and artifacts it contained, was *for* and *of* the community from which sacrifice was made, and it emphasized that the dead died with purpose. Reporters and the occasional anthropologist aside, these images and artifacts contributed to the exhibition's process of reinforcing a sense of community and national belonging.

Of course, spectators did not simply receive the exhibition's messages; they were filtered through and engaged with both shared and non-shared understandings about the events and things displayed. The exhibition defined who belongs in Lebanon by establishing nationalist credentials for the Resistance community and by positioning Hizbullah, as the party of resistance, as speaking for and as Lebanese. By concluding with the reminder of al-Quds and the ongoing Palestinian struggle, it also emphasized the particularity of this nationalism within the Lebanese context. However, because of the peculiarity of the moment of victory and the popularity of the party among its constituents, the exhibit's clarity of message can be read as an implicit acknowledgment of the hegemonic status the Resistance narrative had in Lebanon at that time.

Despite this sense of a project accomplished, there remained within the 2000 exhibition, as well as in the statements and remarks of party representatives, a pressing sense of the need to document and narrate this history and to provide evidentiary proof of the importance of the Resistance to the Lebanese nation. It is to this sense of documentary urgency that I now turn.

[46] Consider, for example, some of the current anti-war discourse in the United States, not necessarily rooted in pacifism or political dissent, but sometimes simply in the notion that "our boys" are dying without appropriate cause.

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HISTORY AND PERMANENCE, FOR THOSE DRAWN "OUTSIDE"?

The Rijalat al-Majd exhibition was a temporary one, eventually disassembled and stored for the future. Until its destruction in the 2006 Israeli bombardment, this future had included incorporation into a permanent memorial site for Hizbullah martyrs, a "Resistance museum" of sorts to be built on the airport road in the southern suburb. The "museum," in blueprint phase in 2005 and subsequently delayed by the war, is envisioned as a multimedia facility that will include various exhibition halls and types of spaces. These include a cinema, permanent exhibitions of martyr artifacts and art, a remembrance area where visitors can leave flowers and other memorial contributions, and space for visiting and temporary exhibitions and events. Like the Rijalat al-Majd exhibition, it will include participatory spaces that work to facilitate inclusion in the Resistance community. Yet, this project, as party representatives described it to me, will be directed outside the collectivity to a much greater extent. This is not to say that the intended audience is solely outsiders. Rather, it appears that priorities have shifted toward giving the external generic viewing public more weight than the internal collectivity.

With regard to its internal community, the museum, like the Martyrs' Day exhibition, is conceptualized as helping to "pass the heritage of the Resistance to future generations." The importance of this heritage and its message of identification with and support for the Resistance were underscored during the July 2006 war. It is this aspect of the future museum's mandate that led Hajj Abbas, a Hizbullah member involved with the planning process, to insist that "*mathaf*" (the term for "museum") was the wrong word to describe this project. When I asked him to explain why, he replied:

> Layki, this project is not just for the display of artifacts and old things, the goal is to be a sign or a message. It is called a "museum" because it is a fixed/permanent exhibition, but just like Picasso's painting of the Spanish civil war, that is not *just* a painting, it is history, a message. Just like that painting, this is not a museum or an exhibit. It is a place where you see that this paper [he lifts the saucer from beneath his tea glass and points to it] has a martyr's handwriting on it, and this martyr is not a Richard Nixon or a Napoleon Bonaparte, he is not famous or important. Instead, this is the handwriting of a person who gave his blood . . . the handwriting of a person who went to die so that we can live. This is the handwriting of a person who is more important than me, better than me. The importance of this project is for where we are going, not for where we have been; it is important for the future, not the past. A museum teaches us that something has happened in the past and *khalas* (that's it), the world benefited from it perhaps, but that's all, it's over. But this project teaches us what *should always happen*. The martyrs say, "do like me, stop occupation, be free."

In addition to the notion of martyr-as-example emphasized by this planner, the deployment of museums/exhibitions as living educational projects is made possible by the flexibility they allow regarding how intended messages are

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IMAGE 1 al-Musawi. Author's photo.

IMAGE 2 Khomeini watching over martyrs. Author's photo.

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Image 3 Funeral Procession. Author's photo.

Image 4 The Khiam Detention Center. Author's photo.

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applied.[47] The participatory spaces within the Rijalat al-Majd exhibit (especially the graffiti section), and the museum's proposed "remembrance" section, call upon visitors to contribute to their construction. The message itself cannot be altered, but the means by which one may live or express it varies. This flexibility is also facilitated by the "just-lived past" status of the events documented. Yet herein lies a tension as well: To continue to motivate and inspire future generations of Lebanese to participate in the Resistance project, and in the project of the Islamic sphere of which it is a crucial part, this just-lived past must remain a part of "current events." However, in order to create a historical narrative that can compete in a transnational field of discursive power relations dominated by U.S. media, the just-lived past must be cast as acceptable and archived, so that it can—as a "museum"—teach us about something that has happened in "the past." The tensions between the internal and external intended audiences find their parallels in those between sedimentation and its refusal.

In 2005, I interviewed another Hizbullah member involved with planning the museum, who emphasized its external pedagogical and ideological purposes. He explained the reasoning behind the museum as follows: "We decided that it was time that, when someone came to Lebanon, he could go to one centralized place to learn about the Resistance and the martyrs and about this piece of history. Foreigners need to be able to learn about what happened here." Hajj Abbas, also, directly addressed the importance of providing a counter-narrative to U.S. and Israeli narratives of the occupation and liberation of Lebanon: "This is both a museum about people who died for a cause and a response to people, like western society, who talk about us as suicidal. This shows that we are martyrs, not suicides or terrorists."

The party's media production since the 2006 war points to the continued and perhaps even increased importance of this counter-narrative and the "external" audience to which it is mainly addressed. For example, a multilingual "Divine Victory" campaign of billboards and posters that went up around the country after the war (having been planned and produced during the war) was carefully calculated to address a broad national and transnational viewership.[48] Shaykh Ali, director of the office responsible for the campaign, explained[49]: "There is a discourse (*khitab*) for our audience, and there is also a discourse for other

[47] Compare Chakrabarty's description of the District Six Museum in Cape Town as "not a nostalgic monument to a dead past but a living memory that is part of the struggle against racism in post-Apartheid South Africa" (2002: 10). Chakrabarty overstates the distinction between "the logic of remembering" and history, linking it to experiential versus archival knowledge. In the Hizbullah case, it is precisely history that is contested through a combination of the experiential and the archival. Rassool (2006) details the complexity of such engagements—especially around notions of community, memory and identity construction—with regard to the District Six Museum.

[48] This multilinguality also evokes the literal translation of "Nasrallah" to "God's Victory."

[49] This is the recently created and party-affiliated *jam'iyya lubnaniyya lil-funun* (Lebanese Association for the Arts), which overseas all related media and art production.

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audiences. . .. [Divine Victory] went up all over Lebanon, and we didn't put up Hizbullah's flag, and we didn't choose the color yellow that is associated with Hizbullah. We chose the colors of the Lebanese flag. There is a philosophy here, that this victory, like the Sayyid [Nasrallah] said, is for all Lebanese."[50]

Struggles over local and transnational interpretations of current events are playing out in the cultural sphere as well as in those of politics and media, and exhibitions and museums are one strategy within that sphere. "Tactical museology" (Buntinx and Karp 2006) is implicated in contestations over knowledge, history, meaning, value, blame, and morality, and in attempts to canonize one version of current events as "history." Yet this and other strategies to attribute meaning to events in a transnational public sphere must contend with contexts where U.S. discourses are backed by military and political-economic power. In this context, a U.S.-based definition of terrorism that defines it as violence against civilians perpetrated by *non-state* actors provides the legitimating discourse underlying dominant media representations of current events. This definition automatically places Hizbullah into the "terrorist" category as allegedly chronic instigators of military conflicts, while it exempts Israeli state violence against civilians. From this vantage point, Hizbullah's narrative is counter-hegemonic.

The trope of "writing history" emerged again and again in my interviews with people involved with the museum project. "This is part of our history, we are writing history," and, "This represents a victory that has to be narrated, historicized (*mu'arrakh*)." In his lament that photographs have become mere spectacle, John Berger notes that in the late twentieth century, "the judgment of history has been abandoned by all except the underprivileged and dispossessed" (1980: 58). On an international scale, history writing favors the United States and its allies. Through its archival and exhibitionary practices, Hizbullah is actively writing and documenting its counter-narrative.

To facilitate conveyance of this counter-narrative, plans for the museum include far more explanatory mechanisms than did the 2000 exhibition. One man likened it to the Louvre: "Have you been to the Louvre? Like in the Louvre, there will be people to answer questions, to discuss the exhibits with you, and information on the wall explaining things. The image or the artifact opens the door, but then people will explain their meaning. There will be discussions, and guided tours, and written materials."[51] Similarly, party members

[50] Recent political tensions have complicated the "external-internal" division, as evidenced by Shaykh Ali's explanation here, which relegates many Lebanese into the "external." Yet the discourses that dominate that external remain bound to transnational power relations (e.g., U.S. "war on terror" rhetoric).

[51] The model for an exhibition commemorating the 2006 war (called "The Spiderweb") demonstrated a move in this direction. Shaykh Ali emphasized that visitors would not be able to wander through the exhibition, but would have to join a tour so as to take in a carefully planned multisensory experience. While I was unable to see the exhibit before publication of this article,

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emphasize that the museum will not be located in the heart of the southern suburb, but rather along the airport road, "because that is a general place that someone coming from outside can reach." The expectation is that this site will eventually become the cornerstone of a growing political and religious tourism industry in Lebanon, in which Lebanese and non-Lebanese alike visit sites significant to the occupation, to Hizbullah, and to the Islamic sphere, as part of travels around the country. Already, tours to the south frequently stop at Khiam as well as the border, and groups visiting the ruins at Baalbek sometimes detour to the nearby memorial to Sayyid Abbas al-Musawi.[52]

The imperative to narrate history carries a different importance for those on the margins of sanctioned histories. Because Hizbullah's interpretation of events is seen within the dominant international political framework as "unacceptable," the party takes special care to present tangible evidence to document its narrative of both the accomplishments and losses of the Resistance as well as its technological and military abilities.[53] In this sense, both the exhibition and the envisioned museum participate in archiving various forms of "proof" for Hizbullah's nationalist narrative, and especially its basis in victory.[54]

In his discussion of political violence in Belfast, Allen Feldman notes that a remark made by one of his interlocutors taught him "that memory as a political commodity can also become highly disposable in the marketplace of insistent history" (2003: 60). Forgetting is always a possibility, one compounded in contexts of conflict where history itself is, in Feldman's phrase, "a political commodity." In the final section, I return to the point at which I began, and revisit Khiam in order both to explore its place in relation to the exhibition

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colleagues shared that visitors were in fact able to walk through it without being part of a tour group, albeit along set pathways. See also the *al-Akhbar* article that highlights the way this exhibition functioned as evidence in opposition to Israeli propaganda (Nasrallah 2007).

[52] Control over access to sites in the south seems to contradict efforts to develop this tourism. When I visited Khiam, a Lebanese army checkpoint simply waved us through; others I know have been turned back at that point. It is unclear what permissions are required, how one would secure them, and what Hizbullah's role in that process is. Despite this, one party member imagined the eventual inclusion of these sites on tourist maps of Lebanon: "We want to try to have the Ministry of Tourism put these sites on their map. If that works, it works. If not, we'll make brochures and distribute them ourselves."

[53] For example, since 1992 Hizbullah has published an annual book—*safahat 'iz*—containing information about political events, military operations, Israeli attacks, battles, and martyrs. In addition, the "martyrs' artifacts" committee does not only collect objects, but also investigates the details of martyrs' deaths and establishes evidentiary documentation of associations between martyrs and certain objects—essentially forensic work.

[54] In addition, Hizbullah's exhibitionary practices themselves serve as evidence of the community's technological abilities. Five years after the Rijalat al-Majd exhibit, a designer who had worked on it spoke about it to me with pride, noting that it was the first time they had put together a large-scale exhibition with that level of technical expertise.

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and museum, and to insist that we continue to ask what happens when, in the "marketplace of insistent history," sites of meaning in a landscape of political memory/history are targeted and destroyed.

RECONSTRUCTING KHIAM

I first visited the Khiam detention center on the day after Liberation in 2000, the day after its wardens had abandoned it, leaving the townspeople to free the prisoners within. At the time, it had simply been left as is—books lay open on the mattresses where prisoners had been reading them, damp laundry hung on lines crisscrossing cells, graffiti on the walls marked moments, and the dank smell of pain hovered. Less than a year later, the prison had been transformed into a museum to a living memory, with a committee of former prisoners working on as volunteers to maintain it and give tours to visitors. Much was left in its original condition, though the site was cleaned and the walls whitewashed selectively; a conscious effort was made to strike a balance between maintaining palatability and conveying the raw despair of the place. The torture methods—a pole where electricity was run through one's body, for example—were labeled with signs, and posters remembered those killed during such interrogations. A commodification ensued as well, with a café near the entrance and a small store selling Hizbullah memorabilia: books, key chains, posters, video and cassette tapes, and flags. Money to maintain the site came entirely from these sales; neither the party nor the government provided funds due to a stalemated conflict over who would run it (and, if admission were charged, who would keep any profits). At its moment of destruction, Khiam detention center was a barely-maintained site that had become a standard stop on informal Resistance tours through the south. It held a quality that was un-sterile and raw, which evoked the "just-lived" aspects of the history it represented, and also a potential to become a more formal museum and part of Hizbullah's vision for Resistance tourism. This potential was foreshadowed in art exhibitions and events occasionally held there.

When I returned to Khiam in May 2007, Husayn and Sa'id met us at the center's entrance, the same former prisoners who had been our guides in years past. "Prepare yourselves for a shock," Husayn said, as we walked through the gate. Despite having just driven through the town of Khiam, where the bombardment had destroyed one-third of the buildings, the wreckage that greeted us explained his warning (see Image 4). As we walked along paths cleared through broken concrete, Sa'id reminded us of what each pile had once been, pointing to where walls had stood, and, most poignantly, the torture pole—slightly askew, but somehow still standing. In the sole cell block that retained a semblance of its former structure a few key places had been reassembled—one small solitary confinement cube, a typical cell with its cots—so as to have something to show the visitors who began to trickle back soon

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after the war's end. Sa'id explained, "We used to give experiential tours. We would focus on the torture, and now we give the same tour with the same focus on torture, but we have added a sentence: 'It was destroyed because they were trying to erase what they did.'"

This sense that it was important to continue to give tours of the former prison was shared by Shaykh Ali, whose office had been allotted responsibility for overseeing the site's reconstruction. A plan to develop the detention center into a formal tourist attraction with a parking lot, café, theater, and research center had been in the works prior to 2006, and had since been modified to include the recent destruction in its narrative. The preliminary model now calls for a partial rebuilding, along with a restructuring of the visiting experience itself. The least-damaged cellblock is to be restored to a state as close to original as possible, while another area will be used to display exhibits related to the Resistance. Approximately half of the destroyed buildings will be left as rubble, their stones and concrete shards structurally contained by netting so visitors can safely walk among the wreckage. As Shaykh Ali described it to us, the latter areas "will become a part of the witnessing: that Israel tried to erase this memory (*dhakira*)."

Shaykh Ali showed us in his Beirut office the preliminary model for Khiam's reconstruction. In keeping with the transformation of Hizbullah's exhibitionary practices to gradually focus more on external spectators, the model asserted a more structured experience of historical tourism, one that prioritized teaching outsiders more than incorporating those who have experienced the events of concern. If these plans are implemented, visiting the prison site will become a more codified experience. Thus far one has been able to wander the grounds at will, perhaps with a former prisoner who is likely to share not only scripted information but also his personal experiences in detention. The projected site, by contrast, would insist that visitors move along a formal path, at least through its first half. The narrative would begin with a film shown to visitors, and continue as they walked past cell rooms furnished with life-size model prisoners, with light and sound once again providing a multi-sensory recreation. While former detainees will continue to lead tours, it is unclear how much room will remain for sharing individualized experiences, though it is precisely this possibility for the personal to punctuate the collective narrative that holds the Khiam site within the realm of the just-lived past, and prevents its complete sedimentation.

Like the proposed museum, the Khiam detention center is envisioned as both part of a public historical and Islamic sphere in Lebanon, and also a key piece in an historical archive to be shared through formalized tourism. As with the exhibition and museum, it will play a role not only in the formation of communities, but also in the conflicts between (and within) communities, on national and geopolitical levels. Within Hizbullah's own constituency, the gradual transformation of Khiam from a just-lived site into a part of this

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archive exemplifies the development of the party's exhibitionary and historical production practices. Within Lebanon, Khiam remains a structural example of the effects of having multiple nationalist narratives in play, and of the divide between Hizbullah and the state, most strikingly in the lack of state support for the site.[55] Khiam's destruction and planned reconstruction raise questions regarding both the trajectory of the growing Islamic cultural sphere within the Lebanese context, and the effects the war and its political aftermath will have on Hizbullah's cultural-political project. The increased emphasis on structuring the exhibition experience may represent one effect.

Another question is about silencing through erasure. Allen Feldman notes that the narratological model of history reminds us of the potential for experiences and events to remain un-narrated (2003: 61). I would add that it also alerts us to possibilities for silencing and/or erasure as a consequence of narrative competition in contexts of disparate discursive power. The destruction of the Khiam detention center can be read as just such an erasure.

It is this understanding of the targeting of Khiam that both Sa'id and Shaykh Ali highlighted in their statements quoted above. Yet by erasure I mean more than just the destruction of evidence, though the stakes in erasing evidence of torture undertaken in the service of Israeli occupation should not be underestimated. Israel's targeting of the site does not merely reveal a potential anxiety about its concreteness—the (near-) permanence of a built monument to the occupation and its crimes. Khiam's remains represent the broader imbrication of military power in the discursive and historical landscape, in two ways.

The first is best understood by noting that Khiam did not stand alone in this erasure. Cultural destruction more broadly remains a scarcely told element of the war. To the corpse of the detention center one can add the Rijalat al-Majd exhibition, portions of the martyr artifacts collection, and other works of art and media that were being stored for the planned museum. Nor are the ruins limited to Hizbullah-related cultural objects and sites. Over twenty publishing houses and research institutes were targeted and destroyed by Israeli bombardment (Hodeib 2007). "Cultural erasure" is a phrase I also heard from several Lebanese scholars, as they noted that it was the centers of towns in the south that were systematically destroyed during the war—the oldest neighborhoods, containing traditional stone architectural forms.

The second way brings us back to the archive. Like the exhibition and museum plans, the Khiam site is a part of Hizbullah's efforts—and those of the living historical actors who were detained there—to make an archive of

[55] Prior to 2006, the site had received no support from the Lebanese state, due to a combination of hesitancy to back what was viewed by some as a Hizbullah-specific site of importance, a general lack of state-sponsored memorialization, and a profit-oriented conflict over which ministry should oversee the site. Today, support for rebuilding the prison is plagued by the same political divisions that have stalled rebuilding across the southern suburb and south Lebanon.

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historical facts about the occupation and Resistance. Michel-Rolph Trouillot refers to four potential moments at which silences enter historical production (1995). Employing his schema, we can read the destruction of Khiam as an effort to not only undo the "moment of fact creation" by destroying a "source," but also to disrupt the "moment of fact assembly (the making of *archives*)" (ibid.: 26). Such an archive is important to the narration of history, since "Historical narratives are premised on previous understandings, which are themselves premised on the distribution of archival power" (ibid.: 55). Attempts to disrupt the formation of an archive amount to efforts to disrupt the narrative, to relegate it to the realm of unacceptable history, "terrorist" history.

Contemporary warfare includes battles over the representations and meanings of "current events" and the just-lived past, over the images of parties to the conflict on a transnational stage, and over broader spheres of cultural production and meaning making. "Disappearing" archives is one tactic in these battles.[56] It is within this context that we must understand the silencing of museums, exhibitions, and sites of history/memory, the inscription, through erasure, of muteness on landscapes, like that heard in the ruins of Khiam.

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[56] See also Laleh Khalili's detailing of Israeli silencings of Palestinian historical narratives, including ongoing systematic destruction and theft of Palestinian archives by Israeli forces (2007).

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