10 Prospects For Civility

"Differences are held in suspension in successful communities of difference — what civic nations are when they succeed — and that entails a certain amount of studied historical absentmindedness. Injuries too well remembered cannot heal."
— Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld* (1996).

"While olive trees are essential to our very being, an attachment to one's olive trees, when taken into excess, can lead us into forging identities, bonds and communities based on the exclusion of others."
— Thomas Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (2000).

"The quality of our political and economic activity and our national culture is intimately connected to the strength and validity of our associations. Ideally, civil society is a setting of settings: all are included, none is preferred."
— Michael Walzer, *The Idea of Civil Society* (1991).

Lebanon today is at another fateful crossroads in its political and sociocultural history. At the risk of some oversimplification, the country continues to be imperiled by a set of overwhelming predicaments and unsettling transformations. At least three stand out by virtue of the ominous implications they have for the prospects of forging a viable political culture of tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

First, Lebanon is in the throes of postwar reconstruction and rehabilitation. Given the magnitude and scale of devastation, the country will almost certainly require massive efforts in virtually all dimensions of society to spearhead its swift recovery and sustained development. Processes of postwar reconstruction, even under normal circumstances, are usually cumbersome. In Lebanon, they are bound to be more problematic because of the distinctive character of some of the residues of collective terror and strife with which the country was besieged for so long. Among such disheartening conse-

quences, two are particularly poignant and of relevance to the concerns of our final chapter. Both were alluded to earlier but need to be underscored here: the salient symptoms of retribalization apparent in reawakened communal identities and the urge to seek shelter in cloistered spatial communities and a pervasive mood of lethargy, indifference, and weariness, which borders, at times, on collective amnesia. Both are understandable reactions that enable traumatized groups to survive the cruelties of protracted strife. Both, however, could be disabling, as the Lebanese are now considering less belligerent strategies for peaceful coexistence.

Second, Lebanon is grappling with all the short-term imperatives of reconstruction and long-term need for sustainable development and security, and it has had to do so in a turbulent region with a multitude of unresolved conflicts. Also the country remains largely impotent to act on issues destined to shape its political future. Ordinary Lebanese citizens, much like their political representatives, are still disempowered or not yet in a position to have a decisive impact on matters that directly affect their country's political destiny or national sovereignty. As we have seen, Lebanon's entry or exit from war, its involvement in the peace process, the outlines of its foreign policy; even the character of its electoral laws and local municipal elections, are still largely shaped outside its borders.

Impotent as the country might seem at the moment to neutralize or ward off such external pressures, there are measures and programs, already proved effective elsewhere, which can be experimented with. These will at least fortify Lebanon's immunity against the disruptive consequences of such destabilizing forces. Such efforts can do much to reduce the country's chronic vulnerability to these pressures while enhancing opportunities for empowerment and self-determination. As will be argued, any form of voluntarism that can provide venues for participation in public space and while nurturing some of the attributes of civility and collective consciousness will be welcome. Likewise, more accessible opportunities to participate in civic and welfare associations, competitive sports, rehabilitative ecological, environmental, public-health, and heritage programs can also be invaluable as strategies for healing symptoms of fear, paranoia, and transcending parochialism. More substantive perhaps are the nascent prospects for public intervention in areas like urban planning, design, architecture, archaeological heritage, and landscaping.

Finally, Lebanon as of late is also embroiled, willingly or otherwise, in all the unsettling forces of postmodernity and globalism: a magnified importance of mass media, popular arts, and entertainment in the framing of

everyday life, an intensification of consumerism, the demise of political participation and collective consciousness for public issues, and their replacement by local and parochial concerns for nostalgia and heritage.

Unfortunately, many of the public manifestations of nostalgia so rampant today in Lebanon have scant, if any, concern with what Christopher Lasch (1988) has called a conversational relationship with the past. Instead, they assume either the construction and embellishment of grandiose and monumental national symbols, or the search for roots, the longing to preserve or invent often contrived or apocryphal forms of local and communal identities. More disheartening, this valorization of or escape into the past, particularly at the popular cultural level, has taken on some of the garish symptoms of commodification of heritage into kitsch and the vulgarization of traditional folklore and indigenous artifacts.

Memory, Space, and Identity

Within this context, issues of collective memory, contested space, and efforts to forge new cultural identities begin to assume critical dimensions. How much and what of the past needs to be retained or restored? By whom and for whom? Commonplace as these questions might seem, they have invited little agreement among scholars. Indeed, the views and perspectives of those who have recently addressed them vary markedly.

As pointed out earlier, to Ernest Gellner collective forgetfulness, anonymity, and shared amnesia are dreaded conditions resisted in all social orders (Gellner 1988). Perhaps conditions of anonymity, he argues, are inevitable in times of turmoil and upheaval. But once the unrest subsides, internal cleavages and segmental loyalties resurface.

D. MacCannell (1989) goes further to assert that the ultimate triumph of modernity over other sociocultural arrangements is epitomized not by the disappearance of premodern elements, but by their reconstruction and artificial preservation in modern society. Similarly, Jedlowski (1990) also maintains that a sense of personal identity can only be achieved on the basis of personal memory.

Benjamin Barber, however, argues that successful civic nations always entail a certain amount of "studied historical absentmindedness. Injuries too well remembered," he tells us, "cannot heal." (Barber 1996: 167). What Barber is implying here, of course, is that if the memories of the war and its atrocities are kept alive, they will continue to reawaken fear and paranoia,

particularly among those embittered by it. Without an opportunity to forget, there can never be a chance for harmony and genuine coexistence.

Both manifestations — the longing to obliterate, mystify, and distance oneself from the fearsome recollections of an ugly and unfinished war, or efforts to preserve or commemorate them — coexist today in Lebanon. Retribalization and the reassertion of communal and territorial identities, as perhaps the most prevalent and defining elements in postwar Lebanon, in fact incorporate both these features. The convergence of spatial and communal identities serves, in other words, both the need to search for roots and the desire to rediscover, or invent, a state of bliss that has been lost; it also serves as a means of escape from the trials and tribulations of war.

Expressed more concretely, this impulse to seek refuge in cloistered spatial communities is sustained by two seemingly opposed forms of self-preservation: to remember and to forget. The former is increasingly sought in efforts to anchor oneself in one's community or in reviving and reinventing its communal solidarities and threatened heritage. The latter is more likely to assume escapist and nostalgic predispositions to return to a past imbued with questionable authenticity.

Either way, concerted efforts need to be made to reinvigorate or generate meaningful public spaces in order to diminish fear and transcend parochialism and the compulsion to withdraw into the compact enclosures of family, community, and sect. These are also, to a considerable extent, apolitical tasks; or at least ventures that retain appreciable residues of voluntary and participatory action unrestrained by political considerations.

More than in any other time in recent history, architects, urban planners, landscape designers and other environmental professionals and habitat advocates in Lebanon now have a rare opportunity to step in and assert and validate the reconstructive and radical visions of their profession. With all the disheartening manifestations of the war, we catch Lebanon at a critical and propitious threshold in its urban history. The massive reconstruction underway, particularly in the historic core of Beirut's Central Business District, has provoked a rare mood of nascent and growing public awareness of spatial and environmental issues. Perhaps for the first time growing segments of the Lebanese are becoming increasingly conscious and verbal about what is being done to the spaces around them.[1]

If there are visible symptoms of a "culture of disappearance" evident in the growing encroachment of global capital and state authority into the private realm and heedless reconstruction schemes, elements which are destroying or defacing the country's distinctive architectural, landscape, and

urban heritage, there is also a burgeoning "culture of resistance." Such a
culture is contesting and repelling this encroachment and dreaded annihi-
lation, as well as the fear of being engulfed by the overwhelming forces of
globalization.[2]

Within this setting, urbanists and others have considerable latitude for
advancing strategies to awaken and mobilize silenced, lethargic, and disen-
gaged segments of the society to become more vigilant and actively engaged
in pacifying some of the forces ravaging their habitat and living space. It is
my view that in this ameliorative interlude of postwar reconstruction, such
involvement can do much in healing and transcending sources of fear and
division in society. Also through such involvement, an aroused public can
begin to assist in transforming "spaces" into "places." After all, the way spaces
are used in a reflection of people's identities and commitments to them.
The more we live in a particular place — as we become part of it, so to
speak — the more inclined we are to care for it. It is in this sense that "spaces"
are converted to "places."

As concerned citizens, it is of vital interest to us to be involved in safe-
guarding, repairing, and enriching our experience of space. Indeed, these
are basic human rights, almost universal needs. If they are abused, we all
are diminished. Consider what happens when a country's most precious
heritage either is maligned or becomes beyond the reach of its citizens. This
is precisely what has been happening to many Lebanese. Their country's
scenic geography, its pluralistic and open institutions, which were once
sources of national pride and inspiration, things around which they wove
dreams that made them a bit different from others, have either become
inaccessible to them, or worse, are being redefined as worthless. At best, they
have been reduced to mere "spaces" for commercial speculation.

Some of the most unsettling transformations in postwar Lebanon con-
verge on the contingent interplay between collective memory, a virtual ob-
session with heritage (*tourath*), the redefinition of spatial localities, and ef-
forts to forge new cultural identities. This ongoing dialectics between
memory, space, and identity are naturally interrelated. All three are in a state
of flux and are being contested.

Clearly, not all these transformations are byproducts of civil strife. Many,
particularly those associated with rampant globalism, mass consumerism,
and popular culture were not there during the war. But they have in the
interim made their inroads into virtually all dimensions of public life much
too visibly. How this interplay between memory, space, and identity will be
resolved is not a trifling matter. It will most certainly prefigure much of the

emerging contours and future image of Lebanon's urban setting and spatial environment.

In preceding discussions we explored some of the striking spatial transformations, specially the way the country's social geography was redefined by protracted strife and concomitant displacement and population shifts. Two other related issues will be addressed here: First, an attempt is made to identify and account for how various communities are responding to the forces which are undermining their local heritage and identities. As will become apparent, various communities are evolving different strategies for resisting such threatening incursions on their local identities. Secondly, and at a broader level, we will consider the most likely set of actors or technologies particularly predisposed to play the role of pacifying or healing the country's fractured social fabric. This will also lead us to consider what and how much of the old heritage should be restored and rehabilitated.

The Cultures of Disappearance and Resistance

All wars, civil or otherwise, are atrocious. Lebanon's encounters with civil strife, we have been suggesting, are particularly galling because their horrors were not anchored in any recognizable or coherent set of causes. Nor did they resolve the issues that had sparked the initial hostilities. It is in this poignant sense that the war was altogether a wasteful and futile encounter with collective violence.

The muted anguish and unresolved hostilities of the war are now being compounded by all the ambivalences and uncertainties of postwar reconstruction and the encroachment of conglomerate global capital as it contests the efforts of indigenous and local groups in reclaiming and reinventing their threatened spatial identities. What we are in fact witnessing at the moment is a multilayered negotiation or competition for the representation and ultimate control of Beirut's spatial and collective identity. Much of Beirut's future image will be largely an outcome of such discrepant claims and representations. This is also largely true of other areas now in the throes of massive reconstruction. The contesting groups (i.e., funding and state agencies, planners, property owners and shareholders, advocacy groups, voluntary associations, and the concerned public), by virtue of their distinct composition and objectives, vary markedly in their proposed visions and strategies.

The ongoing competition and the public debate it has incited has also served to accentuate the fears of the public, particularly since the struggle

is now intimately aligned with the intrusions of global capital, mass culture, and consumerism. Hence the fears of disappearance, erasure, marginalization, and displacement are becoming acute.

The overriding reactions have much in common, in fact, with the three neurophysiological responses to fear and anxiety, namely: "freeze," "flight" and "fight." While the first two normally involve efforts to disengage and distance oneself from the sources of fear, the third is more combative since it involves a measure of direct involvement, negotiation, and/or resisting the threats of erasure.[3] All three, in varying proportions, are visible today in Lebanon.

The first, freeze, perhaps the most common, is a relic of the war. To survive all its cruelties, the Lebanese became deadened and numbed. Like other victims of collective suffering, they became as we have seen desensitized and overwhelmed by muted anguish and pain. During the war, such callousness (often masquerading as resilience) served them well. It allowed them not only to survive but also to inflict and rationalize cruelties on the "other." By distancing themselves, or cutting themselves off, from the "other," the Lebanese routinized the brutality of embattled communities. Violence became morally indifferent. People could engage in guilt-free violence and kill with impunity precisely because they had restricted contact with their defiled victims.

There is a painful irony in this mode of response. That which enabled embattled groups and communities to survive the atrocities of strife is clearly disabling them now as they are considering options for rearranging and sharing common spaces and forging unified national identities. We must here recall Collins's aphorism that "the point is not to learn to live with the demons, but to take away their powers" (Collins 1974: 416). The issue, here as well, converges on who is to mobilize or speak on behalf of those who have been rendered "frozen," namely, disengaged, inactive, and bereft of speech.

There is, after all, something in the character of intense pain, Elaine Scarry tells us, which is "language destroying." "As the content of one's world disintegrates, so the content of one's language disintegrates. . . . world, self, and voice are lost, or nearly lost, through the intense pain." (Scarry 1985: 35). This is also a reflection of the fact that people in pain are ordinarily bereft of the resources of speech. It is not surprising that the language for pain should in such instances often be evoked by those who are not themselves in pain, but by those who speak on behalf of those who are. Richard Rorty expresses the same thought. He, too, tells us that "victims of cruelty, people who are suffering, do not have much in the way of language. That is why there is no such thing as the "voice of the oppressed" or the "language

of the victims." The language the victims once used is not working anymore, and they are suffering too much to put new words together. So the job of putting their situation into language is going to have to be done for them by somebody else" (Rorty 1989).

"Flight," second more interesting and complex response, is not purely escape, but involves an effort to distance oneself from the atrocious residues of protracted strife and the disenchanting barbarism of postwar times. This nostalgic retreat is a search for "re-enchantment" evident in the revival of heritage or the imagined nirvana of an idyllic past. Three manifestations of such escapist venues are becoming increasingly visible in various dimensions of daily life and popular culture: The first, and perhaps most obvious, the reassertion of communal solidarities and other forms of retribalization, was discussed earlier. Two other escapist venues deserve some elaboration here. — nostalgia and the proliferation of kitsch.

Escape into the past has obviously a nostalgic tinge to it, but such a retreat need not be seen as pathological or delusionary. It could well serve, as Bryan Turner has argued, as a redemptive form of heightened sensitivity, sympathetic awareness of human problems and, hence, it could be "ethically uplifting." In this sense it is less a "flight" and more of a catharsis for human suffering (Turner 1987: 149).

There is much in the vulgarization of traditional forms of cultural expression and the commodification of kitsch and sleazy consumerism, so rampant in postwar Lebanon, which needs to be curtailed and challenged. This nostalgic longing, among a growing segment of disenchanted intellectuals, is at least a form of resistance or refusal to partake in the process of debasement of aesthetic standards or the erosion of bona fide items of cultural heritage. Impotent as such efforts may seem, they express a profound disgust with the trivialization of culture so visible in the emptiness of consumerism and the nihilism of the industry of popular culture. They are also an outcry against the loss of personal autonomy and authenticity. Even the little commonplace, mundane things and routines of daily life — street smells and sounds and other familiar icons and landmarks of place — let alone historic sites and architectural edifices, are allowed to atrophy or be effaced.

Here again this nostalgic impulse is beginning to assume some redemptive and engaging expressions. A variety of grassroots movements, citizen and advocacy groups, and voluntary associations have been established recently to address problems related to the preservation and protection of the built environment. Earlier special-interest groups have had to redefine their objectives and mandates to legitimize and formalize their new interests. A succession of workshops, seminars, and international conferences have been

hosted to draw on the experience of other comparable instances of postwar reconstruction. Periodicals and special issues of noted journals, most prominently perhaps the feature page on "heritage" by the Beirut daily *An-Nahar*, are devoting increasing coverage to matters related to space, environment, and architectural legacy.

At the level of popular culture, this resistance to the threat of disappearance is seen in the revival of folk arts, music, and lore, flea markets, artisan shops, and other such exhibits and galleries. Personal memoirs, autobiographies, nostalgic recollections of one's early childhood, and life in gregarious and convivial quarters and neighborhoods of old Beirut are now popular narrative genres. So are pictorial glossy anthologies of Beirut's urban history, old postcards, maps, and other such collectibles. They are all a thriving business. Even the media and advertising industries are exploiting such imagery and nostalgic longing to market their products.

The other mode of retreat or escape from the ugly memories of the war and the drabness or anxieties of the postwar era is the proliferation of kitsch. While kitsch, as an expression of the appeal of popular arts and entertainment whose objective is to "astonish, scintillate, arouse, and stir the passions," is not normally perceived as a mode of escape, its rampant allures in Lebanon are symptomatic of the need to forget and, hence, it feeds on collective amnesia and the pervasive desire for popular distractions (for further details, see Calinescu 1987: 238). It is clearly not as benign or frivolous as it may appear. At least it should not be dismissed lightly. It has implications for the readiness of the public to be drawn in and become actively and creatively engaged in the processes of reconstruction and safeguarding the edifying beauty of their natural habitat and human-created environment.

It is not difficult to account for the allure of kitsch in postwar Lebanon: the need to forget and escape the atrocities and futility of a senseless war; the mindless hedonism and narcissism associated with an urge to make up for lost time; the dullness and trivialization of everyday life; the cultural predispositions of the Lebanese for gregariousness, conviviality, and fun-loving amusement. All of these have contributed to its appeal. So has the ready access to high technology and "infotainment." Lebanon is not spared the scintillations of such global incursions. Indeed, bourgeois decadence, mediocrity, and conspicuous consumption have compounded the public seductions of kitsch.

The fundamental allures of kitsch are inherent in its ability to offer effortless and easy access to the distractions of global entertainment. It is compatible with the public mood of lethargy, disengagement, and uninterest. It

is also in this sense that kitsch becomes a form of "false consciousness" and ideological diversion; a novel opiate for aroused and unanchored masses. To the rest, particularly the large segments who have been uprooted from their familiar moorings, kitsch feeds on their hunger for nostalgia. Altogether, it is a form of collective deception since it is sustained by the demand for spurious replicas or the reproduction of objects and art forms whose original aesthetic meanings have been compromised. As Calinescu puts it, kitsch becomes "the aesthetics of deception; for it centers around such questions as imitation, forgery, counterfeit. It is basically a form of lying. Beauty turns out to be easy to fabricate (Colinescu 1987: 228).

In Lebanon, the pathologies of kitsch display more ominous byproducts. These pathologies not only debase the aesthetic quality of high culture but also vulgarize folk art and architecture. National symbols, historic monuments, and cherished landmarks become marketable souvenirs or vacuous media images. This frenzy for the prostitution of cherished cultural artifacts and the consumption of pseudo-art cannot be attributed merely to the impulse for status seeking and conspicuous consumption, potent as these predispositions are in Lebanon today. What constitutes the essence of kitsch, as Adorno (1973) among others reminds us, is its promise of "easy catharsis." The object of kitsch, after all, is not to please, charm, or refine our tastes and sensibilities. Rather, it promises easy and effortless access to cheap entertainment and scintillating distractions.

Here again, there are vital implications for urbanists, architects, and other cultural producers, who must restrain and redirect the distracting allures of kitsch toward more redemptive and creative venues. This is not an easy task. Above all, it involves the incorporation or reconciliation of two seemingly opposing options: to tame the excesses of kitsch, while acting as sentinels who can arouse the disengaged and disinterested by infusing their world with some rejuvenated concern for edifying and embellishing the aesthetic quality of their environment.

Providing outlets for the release of such creative energies should not be belittled or trivialized. As Nietzsche was keen or reminding us, an aesthetic solution through artistic creation could well serve as a powerful expression for releasing individuals from the constraints of nihilism and resentment. "It is in art that we appear to realize fully our abilities and potential to break through the limitations of our own circumstances" (G. Stauth and B. S. Turner 1988: 517).

By far the most promising in this regard are the strategies various communities have begun to employ in order to resist threats to their local heri-

tage and identity. Here responses to fear and uncertainty — whether generated by internal displacement, global capital, or mass culture and consumerism — have reawakened and mobilized local groups to reclaim their contested spaces and eroded cultural identities. The emergent spaces reveal more than just residues or pockets of resistance. There are encouraging signs of so-called "third spaces," found in hybridized cultures that have a mixed degree of tolerance.

This is, after all, what Bennett implied by "cultures of resistance," i.e., how a "local spatial system retains many of its traditional institutions and utilizes these to manipulate and control the extreme forces" (Bennett, as cited in Milnar 1996: 80). Hence, many of the public spaces, more the work of spontaneity than design, are in fact spaces of bargaining and negotiation for national memory and indigenous reemergence. More so than in other such instances of "glocalization," in Lebanon local groups are becoming increasingly globalized and, conversely, global incursions are becoming increasingly localized. In other words, we see symptoms of "inward shifts" where loyalties are redirected toward renewed localism and subnational groups and institutions. We also see "outward shifts," where loyalties and interests are being extended to transnational entities (DiMuccio and Rosenau 1996:80).

This is, incidentally, a far cry from the portraits one can extract from recent writings on the spatial and cultural implications of this global/local dialectics. For example, in his polemical but engaging work on the interplay between "jihad" and "McWorld, Benjamin Barber pits McWorld, as the universe of manufactured needs, mass consumption, and mass infotainment against *jihad* the Arabic word meaning holy war, as a shorthand for the belligerent politics of religious, tribal, and other forms of bigotry (Barber 1996). The former is driven by the cash nexus of greedy capitalists and the bland preferences of mass consumers. The latter is propelled by fierce tribal loyalties, rooted in exclusionary and parochial hatreds. McWorld, with all its promises of a world homogenized by global consumerism, is rapidly dissolving local cultural identities. Jihad, by re-creating parochial loyalties, is fragmenting the world by creating tighter and smaller enclosures. Both are a threat to civil liberties, tolerance, and genuine coexistence. "Jihad pursues a bloody politics of identity, McWorld a bloodless economics of profit. Belonging by default to McWorld, everyone is a consumer; seeking a repository for identity, everyone belongs to some tribe. But no one is a citizen" (Barber 1996: 8).

We see little of such sharp dichotomies and diametrical representations in postwar Lebanon. While many of the emergent spatial enclaves are cog-

nizant and jealous of their indigenous identities, they are not averse to experimenting with more global and ephemeral encounters and cultural products. Likewise, global expectations are being reshaped and rearranged to accommodate local needs and preferences. Expressed in the language of globalization and post-modernity, the so-called "world without borders," is not a prerequisite for global encounters. At least this is not what has been transpiring in Lebanon. Indeed, as Martin Albrow argues, one of the key effects of globalization on locality is that people "can reside in one place and have their meaningful social relations almost entirely outside it and across the globe." This, Albrow goes on to say, "means that people use the locality as site and resource for social activities in widely different ways according to the extension of their sociosphere" (Albrow 1997: 53).

Recent case studies of three distinct sites in Beirut (Ain al-Mryseh, Gemmayzeh, and the "Elisar" project in Beirut's southern suburb) provide instructive and vivid support of how local groups and communities have been able to resist, avert, and rearrange the powers of global agendas. Indeed, in all three instances, globalization has contributed to the strengthening and consolidation of local ties and, thereby, has reinforced the claims of Persky and Weiwel regarding the "growing localness of the global city" and the globalization of urban structures.

'Ayn al-Mryseh, arguably one of the oldest neighborhoods of Beirut, huddles on a picturesque cove on the waterfront of the western flank of the city center. It adjoins the hotel district devastated during the war. In the prewar period, 'Ayn al-Mryseh, like the rest of Ras Beirut, was a mixed neighborhood with fairly open and liberal lifestyles. Indigenous groups, mostly Sunni, Druze, Shi'a, Greek Orthodox, along with Armenians and Kurds, lived side by side. The location of the American Embassy and the American University of Beirut also drew a rather large portion of foreign residents—diplomats, intellectuals, journalists, artists, and other itinerant groups. The neighborhood's politics were progressive; its culture cosmopolitan and pluralistic. By virtue of its proximity to the city center and seaport, its inhabitants were mostly merchants, retailers, and clerks in the burgeoning tourist sector of hotels, nightclubs, bars, and sidewalk cafes. The bulk of its indigenous population worked at the port or were fishermen, serving as the mainstay of the neighborhood and its defining character.

The war, more so than in other neighborhoods of Beirut, profoundly changed its character. Because of heavy internecine fighting, Christians and Sunnis were compelled to leave, along with, of course, most of the foreign residents. They were replaced by displaced Shi'a, arriving mostly from the South and from Beirut's suburbs.

The massive reconstruction of Beirut's center and adjoining hotel and resort district has enhanced the economic prospects of the neighborhood. Real estate and land values have increased sharply. Traditional property holders and homeowners could not resist the tempting offers of conglomerate capital in collusion with local entrepreneurs. Hence, many of the edifying suburban villas and red-tiled roofs which once graced the shoreline have given way to high-rise office buildings and smart, exclusive resorts.

The influx of foreign capital is not only transforming the city's skyline, but also undermining its moral character and public image. The social fabric is becoming more fractious; its culture more raucous, strident, and kitschy. Shi'ite squatters, awaiting gentrification and other speculative projects, resist eviction from the premises they unlawfully occupy. Hence, fashionable hotels and global resorts stand next to dilapidated homes and squalid backyards. The most jarring event, perhaps, was the invasion of the Hard Rock Café, less than fifty yards away from two of the neighborhood's most imposing landmarks: the mosque and Gamal Abdul-Nasser's monument.

Armed with a city zoning law that bans the location of entertainment functions too close to religious establishments, the neighborhood association organized a protest movement to resist such intrusion. Its mobilization, however, failed to relocate the "offensive" café. Now, the muezzin's righteous calls to prayer are competing with the impertinent din of loud music just one block away.

The fishermen did not fare any better in their opposition to the construction of *Ahlam*, a towering forty-floor high-rise comprising an upscale residential complex with a direct underground passage to the Mediterranean and private landings for yachts and speedboats. *Ahlam's* site is none other than the traditional cove, a miniature harbor, that the fishermen of 'Ayn al-Mryseh have used for centuries to tend to their time-honored trade and only source of livelihood.

The Mosque Association and that of the Revival of Heritage of 'Ayn al-Mryseh came to the assistance of the fishermen by lobbying the authorities and mobilizing the support of local politicians to thwart the project. The outcome, after nearly three years of embittered negotiation, was naturally in favor of *Ahlam*. As compensation, the fishermen have been offered an alternative site as a fishing harbor (three miles farther south) which they refuse to recognize or use.

As this local–global tug-of-war has continued, two rather interesting groups or strategies for coping with global intrusions have recently emerged within the neighborhood. Both seem likely to prefigure or presage the di-

rection 'Ayn al-Mryseh is bound to take in the future. First, a growing number of young fishermen, enticed by the new and appealing jobs the global-resort sector is generating, no longer seem as virulent in their opposition. Indeed, quite a few, to the chagrin of the older generation, are beginning to break away and accept new jobs. A second group, largely members of the Association for the Revival of Heritage, have opted for a more nostalgic and retreatist response. Recognizing that they can do little to contain or tame the forces of global capital, they have taken shelter in preserving and rediscovering the threatened legacy of their history and culture. This is evident in a couple of makeshift "museums" and galleries established to collect and display items emblematic of its colorful past (Swalha 1997).

Gemmayzeh, at least spatially, is 'Ayn al-Mryseh's counterpart on the eastern flank of Beirut's city center. It also adjoins the port with its outlying resort attractions, warehouses, and traffic terminals. Much like 'Ayn al-Mryseh, the neighborhood emerged as the city's population started to spill beyond the confines of its medieval walls during the second half of the nineteenth century. Both also harbor strong communal loyalties and pride in their unique history and collective identity.

But this is where all similarities end. While 'Ayn al-Mryseh was confessionally mixed and socially heterogeneous, Gemmayzeh was predominantly an enclave of the Greek Orthodox and Maronite communities. It also remained as such: fairly prosperous Greek Orthodox propertied families were "invaded" by successive inflows of more modest Maronite craftsmen, retail, and small-scale merchants. This symbiotic association between the two rather distinct socioeconomic strata has been one of the defining elements of the neighborhood.

Although located on the demarcating lines separating East and West Beirut, Gemmayzeh was spared the devastations other comparable communities witnessed during repeated rounds of civil strife. Nor was it beleaguered by any dislocations or permanent displacements of its indigenous inhabitants. Except for two moderate high-rise apartments, at its remote eastern limits, its skyline has remained largely intact.

As the city center is being virtually reconstructed from scratch, Gemmayzeh is simply remaking and embellishing its original identity. Through APSAD (Association for the Protection of Sites and Ancient Dwellings) and other voluntary associations, efforts are being made to preserve the architectural character of the neighborhood. Plans are being finalized for a joint project with the European Commission to paint and beautify the facades of all buildings originally earmarked for restoration.

The neighborhood is experiencing more than just a cosmetic facelift. Voluntary associations, youth clubs, and local businessmen are collaborating in efforts to revitalize its image and cultural identity as the "Montmartre" of Beirut. This is in fact how some of the young generation speak of Gemmayzeh. A seasonal festival, Daraj al-Fann (Stairway of the Arts), now attracts a devoted following. So do the rehabilitated craft shops, sidewalk cafes, and upscale boutiques.

The neighborhood, finally, does not seem reticent or furtive about pronouncing its Christian character. Festive decorations during Christmas, graffiti of crosses and other religious emblems, adorn walls and windows. During the Pope's historic visit, his posters were decked with white and yellow ribbons. His only competitor was the equally imposing portrait of the late Bashir Gemayel, the neighborhood's deceased leader.

Altogether, postwar Gemmayzeh does not feel any threat to its identity or future prospects. In fact, the destruction and long term reconstruction of the city center is largely viewed with indifference and disregard, mixed with some derision and sarcasm. Indeed, Beirut's center is often contemptuously dismissed as "Solidere."[4]

While 'Ayn al-Mryseh and Gemmayzeh are neighborhoods rich in history and uncontested collective memory, the Elisar Project is an attempt to forge an identity for a suburban slum with no history to speak of other than the besmirched and defiled image of a squalid space. It is, to borrow Benjamin's apt label, Beirut's "site of dereliction," an eyesore defamed with every slur possible. Indeed, the neutral expression, *dahiya al janubiyya* (literally, the southern suburb) has been debased to become a synonym for degradation, squalor, anarchy, squatters, illegality, and aberrant behavior.

Late in the 1960s, as successive waves of displaced Shi'ite refugees were fleeing the chronically embattled villages in southern Lebanon, the *dahiya* quickly acquired the label of Lebanon's "Misery belt": a ghetto seething with feelings of neglect and abandonment and, hence, accessible to political dissent, mobilization, and violence. This constructed global image, spawned and reinforced by the international media, belies, of course, much of the reality of the suburb. It is not so monolithic in its composition or misery. Nor is it a hotbed of dissidents and marginalized groups eager to wreak vengeance on a neglectful government and an indifferent public. As an open, coveted space, though, it has always managed to attract a much larger share of the dispossessed than other marginal and impoverished suburbs. During the war, its demographic and sectarian composition was sharply altered as other displaced groups — predominantly from the Beqa' and the

South — sought it for shelter. Initially, for example, the Shi'ite–Maronite balance was slightly tilted in favor of the latter. Today, approximately 80 percent of the southern suburb's inhabitants are Shi'ites (for further details see el-Kak 1998).

The political mobilization of the *dahiya* began before the war. First, the relatively moderate Amal Movement, inspired by the late Imam Musa al-Sadr, gained considerable popularity. Early in 1980 it was joined by Hizbullah and other more radical "Islamic" factions. Hizbullah, by virtue of its aggressive outreach programs of social, educational, and medical welfare, has been able to gain great inroads and consolidate its virtual hegemony over the area. It is, however, still rivaled by other, lesser political factions in the production and management of urban services. Today, this plethora of political actors has to reckon with the growing efforts of the government to regain its legitimate presence.

It was largely part of such efforts, and to allay Rafik Hariri's public image as some-one obsessively and exclusively interested in the rehabilitation of downtown Beirut, that the Elisar Project was launched in 1992.[5] Conceived as an infrastructure rehabilitation works, it evolved by 1994 into a real estate company legitimized by the same law that established Solidere. Amal and Hizbullah immediately challenged and contested its formation as a private company. The ensuing power struggle resulted in some significant modification whereby the company was transformed into a public establishment with the state becoming, in effect, the major actor in the reorganization of the project. More important, perhaps, Amal and Hizbullah gained their own representatives on Elisar's board.

Despite the sharp antagonisms among the three major rivals (Hariri, Amal, and Hizbullah), the project was uniformly conceived and perceived as a scheme for development and modernization. The vision and underlying ideology of the overall design comply with other such urban "utopias" intended to introduce a hygienic element of "cleansing" and relocation through social housing and supportive rehabilitative strategies.

The Social Technologies of Pacification

Lebanon's troubled history with pluralism leaves little room for further experimentation. Of all encounters with many of its varied forms — coexistence, guarded contact, compromise, and integration — the political management of separate, exclusive, and self-contained entities has always been

the most costly and short-lived. Expressed more concretely: if at times it has been difficult for the Lebanese to live together, it is extremely unlikely that they can live apart. The calls for cantonization, federalism, or other partitioning and dismantlement schemes, like earlier such experiments, are byproducts of xenophobic fears and vengeful impulses. They were impelled by a merging of parochial interests and short-term political expediency, not by genuine efforts to coalesce identities.

Even the reluctance of certain displaced communities to return to their original towns and villages does not seem today as resolute or intransigent as it did a few years back. Though such wavering in some instances, particularly in regions like Beirut's suburbs, Aley, and the Chouf, is understandable given the residues of fear and distrust still visible in these areas, they are clearly exceptions. These, like all the other symptoms of retribalization, cannot and should not be made to become once again sources of socioeconomic and political mobilization. Nor can they inspire any cultural rejuvenation. Like all other monolithic and cloistered communities, they can only inculcate further dogmatism and intolerance. More disquieting, they are inclined to stifle cultural and intellectual experimentation and generate obfuscating milieux germane for the spiritless, joyless lifestyles symptomatic of all closed and homogenized societies. Pluralism is, after all, an antidote to collective amnesia.

Another veritable reality also affirms itself. As a fragmented, diminutive state entrapped in a turbulent region, Lebanon will always be made more vulnerable by forces beyond its borders. This is the fate of many such tiny republics. Hence, Lebanon is destined to remain at the mercy of its neighbors' good will and the compassion of international organizations. Much can be done, however, by the Lebanese themselves to merit and consolidate such redemptive concerns. Furthermore, tasks of reconstituting or reconstructing a society are much too vital to be left to local politicians and embattled groups or to the impervious whims of officious international organizations. The former are much too vengeful, and the latter are too distant and often obsessed with intricate diplomatic haggling over matters such as bilateral or multilateral agreements, constitutional reforms, demilitarization, peace keeping, border controls, and the like.

The Lebanese can at least begin by putting their internal house in order. There are measures and programs, already proved effective elsewhere, which can be experimented with to fortify their immunity against the disruptive consequences of external destabilizing forces. Such efforts can do much to reduce the country's chronic vulnerability to these pressures, particularly if

directed toward two basic objectives: to broaden and incorporate the participation of seemingly indifferent and lethargic groups in society, and to consider alternative dimensions thus far overlooked or dismissed as irrelevant.

I take my cue here from two seemingly incongruent sources almost a century apart: a classic nineteenth century liberal (Spencer 1898) and a postmodernist (Rabinow 1989). In addressing exigent public issues and pressing problems, Herbert Spencer implored us to recall the analogy of the bent iron plate. In trying to flatten the wrought-iron plate, it is futile, Spencer pointed out, to hammer directly on the buckled area; we only make matters worse. To be effective, our hammering must be around, not directly on, the projected part.

The implications of such strategies are obvious. Rather than focusing almost obsessively on issues directly concerned with peace accords, conflict resolution, political and constitutional reforms, and the like, we could reach out to other seemingly irrelevant components or areas. For example, urban planning, architectural design, the rejuvenation of popular culture and the performing arts, curricular reform, competitive sports, and the wider participation of indigenous groups in local rehabilitation projects — thus far overlooked because of excessive reliance on regional and international initiatives for conflict resolution — can do much in pacifying and healing sources of division and thereby expedite the transformation of the salient geography of fear into a culture of tolerance (see Khalaf 1993; Khalaf and Khoury 1993).

Paul Rabinow's (1989) analysis of the sociocultural history of France between 1830 and 1930 offers equally instructive hints. He delineates the constellation of thought, action, and passion underlying what he terms the "social technologies of pacification" as tools for reforming and controlling the inherent antagonisms between space and society, and between forms and norms that France was undergoing during that eventful century. Rabinow identifies a set of actors — ranging from aristocratic dandies, governors, and philanthropists, to architects, intellectuals, and urban reformers — who were all infused with this passion to "pacify the pathos" and, consequently, articulated a set of pragmatic solutions to public problems in times of crisis (e.g. wars, epidemics, strikes, etc.). Despite their divergent backgrounds, they shared two common perspectives: bitterness about the institutional and cultural crisis of their society, and an unshaken faith in the production and regulation of a peaceful and productive social order.

One can easily glean from Rabinow's analysis several persuasive examples of such successful consolidation. Urban designers, architects, intellectuals, humanists of all shades and persuasions, along with other outraged but

muted groups, are particularly qualified to play this role in Lebanon. Will-
fully or otherwise, they have thus far been shunted aside and trivialized.
They have to shed their timidity and reclaim the credibility of their profes-
sions and legitimate interests. By mobilizing aesthetic sensibilities and other
artistic energies and popular cultural expressions in everyday life, they can
do much to arouse the public to redeem its maligned heritage. More im-
portant, they can prod the Lebanese to turn outward and transcend the
parochial identities to connect with others. City life, after all, is an ideal
environment for acting out and working out personal and social conflicts.

As suggested earlier, these enabling forms of voluntarism and mobiliza-
tion — competitive sports, performing arts, reviving interest in national the-
atre, museums, and efforts to rehabilitate the country's neglected landmarks
and historic sites — can do much in this regard. Recent such instances of
public mobilization are legion. They are also beginning to spill over to other
areas of the public sphere.

Most visible, perhaps, are environmental campaigns to clean up beaches,
river basins, natural preserves, and increase public awareness about toxic
waste and industrial pollution. Equally strident are the calls made to protect
local agricultural produce and to regulate unfair competition from foreign
and migrant labor. The Association of Agricultural Products, Importers and
Traders recently has been urging the government to adopt protective mea-
sures and tax exemptions on local produce and to prohibit the entry and
dumping of foreign products. Even students have staged public demonstra-
tions in support of such efforts.

Most vociferous, doubtlessly, are the activities launched by students affil-
iated with the Free National Movement (FNM) headed by exiled General
Michel Awn. Evocative banners and leaflets were very explicit in their out-
cries: "Lebanese production, Lebanese workers, equals more money" . . .
"where do labor leaders stand on the illegal competition of over 1 million
Syrian laborers who are taking the livelihood of impoverished Lebanese
workers?" A spokesperson for the group saw the protest as more than just a
futile symbolic gesture at a time, as he put it, when Lebanon is "reeling
under the worst economic crisis since the turn-of-the-century famine." He
went further to express his dismay at the presence of more than a million
untaxed foreign workers. He also called upon the government to stem the
relentless hemorrhage of the country's young talented professional and
skilled manpower (Daily Star, May 11, 2000: 3).

Women activists have been audible in lobbying to garner support for the
amendments of discriminatory laws against women or those which violate

international conventions. The National Boy Scouts Association, one of the rare nonsectarian and nonpolitical movements in the country, has also taken steps lately to reactivate and extend its prewar programs. Equally compelling is the emergence of new organizations such as the Youth Association for Social Awareness (YASA). In cooperation with the Internal Security Forces and Civil Defence, they have been hosting a series of workshops and meetings across the country to raise awareness of the hazards of speeding and reckless driving.

These and other such forms of public mobilization are clearly redemptive in more than just mundane and cathartic terms. They can be effective outlets for releasing groups from constricted and "total" sociocultural settings and, hence, serve as transcending and liberating encounters. Though still formative in some instances, they do evince encouraging manifestations of remedial and emancipatory public action. At the least such outlets will draw participants closer to the distant "others" and render them less indifferent to them.

It is pertinent to note that the sources of inspiration, initiative, leadership, and frames of reference of many of these movements are not exclusively indigenous in character. Indeed, many of the active participants are drawn from itinerant groups and "returnees" who had spent varying interludes of time outside the country.

One can advance a few added considerations by way of justifying why such groups are ideally suited today to act as the focus for the mobilization of a political culture of tolerance, civility, and coexistence. Hence, they are better equipped to articulate this new language and vision on behalf of their besieged compatriots. First, a disproportionate number of such groups have been, for much of the duration of the war, in diaspora. Every culture has its own diaspora. Lebanon's trials with exile and dispersal have been quite acute. They were, however, also enabling. Mavericks, as histories of itinerant populations tell us, rarely stay at home. Just like the traditional Lebanese *makari* (peddler), who always wandered beyond the narrow confines of his bounded village and came back with tales, goods, tidbits, of the world beyond, we have today the making of a growing generation of global multiculturalists. Both established and younger cohorts of gifted professionals and entrepreneurs have been deepening and extending their skills and experiences abroad. Many are rightfully disillusioned, perhaps bitter, but have not been rendered speechless by the harrowing events. They only experienced the war vicariously, from a distance. Hence, they have not been as numbed or cynical. Nor do they harbor deep-seated hostility toward other groups.

Second, though exiled, they have not severed their ties or nostalgia to their native culture. They bring in comparative vision, not the alien constructs of "foreign experts" imposed on unfamiliar and unreceptive milieux. Finally, by virtue of such multicultural sympathies, they are less likely to perceive their projects as efforts for privileging or empowering one group or community in opposition to another. Hence, they are more predisposed to transcend their parochialism as an antidote for doing away with the geography of fear and its demarcating lines and enclosures.

Pacifying Lebanon's pathos, though intricate, is not insurmountable. Much can be done to prepare for this blissful eventuality. Foremost, the Lebanese must be made to realize that massive postwar reconstruction and development can and must be accomplished without added damage to the environment. Given its size, Lebanon clearly can ill afford any further environmental abuse. Spare and menaced, the country's dazzling landscape is, after all, its distinctive legacy, a source of national pride and resourcefulness. Indeed other than the ingenuity of its human resources, the good will of its neighbors, and gratuitous guarantees of geopolitics, the country has little else to sustain its vulnerable existence. In an existential sense, there are two inescapable realities that homogenize the Lebanese today: geography and fear. We have no choice but to invoke the captivating beauty of the country's habitat as an antidote to fear.

Here as well, much can be done to stop the defoliation of open spaces and reconnect disinherited and denationalized groups with their country's national treasures and collective memory. Likewise, much can be done to assuage those roused with fear that they need not be fully appreciative of the "others" to be able to live with them. Some of the liveliest cities in the world are, after all, those that managed to live with tolerable conflict among their diverse communities. Many in such places express violent aversions toward those with whom they do not identify. Yet they recognize such differences as a given, something they must live with (Fischer 1982, 206). Louis Wirth, in his classic essay "Urbanism as a Way of Life," expressed this same reality when he declared that "the juxtaposition of divergent personalities and mode of life tends to produce a relativistic perspective and a sense of toleration of differences" (Wirth 1938, 155).

Likewise, the Lebanese must also be reassured that their territorial commitments are understandable and legitimate under the circumstances. But so is their need to break away. Being spatially anchored, as we have repeatedly observed, reinforces their need for shelter, security, and solidarity. Like other territorialized groups, they become obsessed with boundary delinea-

tion and safeguarding their community against trespassers and interlopers. The need for wonder, exhilaration, exposure to new sensations, world views, and the evaluation of our appreciative sympathies — which are all enhanced through connectedness with strangers — are also equally vital for our sustenance. Witness the euphoria of kids in an urban playground as they cut themselves off in play from the ties of family and home, or the excitement of visitors in a bustling city street. The village *makari*, in admittedly a much different time and place, played much the same role. He, too, broke away, crossed barriers, and was a cultural broker of sorts precisely because he exposed himself to new sensations and contacts. He had no aversion to strangers. He wandered away but always managed to return home. We need to revive and extend the ethos of the *makari* as the prototype of an idyllic national character. With all his folk eccentricities, he epitomizes some of the enabling virtues of a "traveler" and not a "potentate."

Edward Said employs this polar imagery to construct two archetypes for elucidating the interplay between identity, authority, and freedom in an academic environment. In the ideal academy, Said tells us, "we should regard knowledge as something for which to risk identity, and we should think of academic freedom as an invitation to give up on identity in the hope of understanding and perhaps even assuming more than one. We must always view the academy as a place to voyage in, owning none of it but at home everywhere in it" (Said 1991, 18). Are these not also the attributes or paradigms we should seek in restoring a city or the places and institutions within it to render them more permeable for this kind of voyaging?

> The image of traveler depends not on power, but on motion, on a willingness to go into different worlds, use different idioms, and understand a variety of disguises, masks, and rhetorics, Travelers must suspend the claim of customary routine in order to live in new rhythms and rituals. Most of all, most unlike the potentate who must guard only one place and defend its frontiers, the traveler *crosses over*, traverses territory, and abandons fixed positions, all the time (Said 1991, 18).

Ideally, this could well serve as the leitmotif of those entrusted with educational reform, cultural rehabilitation and political resocialization, i.e. to create the conditions germane for this transformation of "potentates" into "travelers." When we are implored to find some way of making "ghettos" and all other cloistered spaces more respectable, we are in effect making a

plea to keep them open to facilitate the voyaging, traversing, and crossing over. They should be, in other words designed in such a way that people can move on when the need for communal support and shelter is no longer essential. Any form of confinement, in the long run, becomes a deprivation. Conversely, open urban spaces can also be rendered more congenial to cushion groups against the tempestuousness of city life.

The image of the Lebanese as a spatially anchored creature, compulsively huddling and defending his domains (i.e. the compact enclosures of family and neighborhood) against potential trespassers, needs to be modified. He is also (or at least was until the war terrorized his public spaces) a creature of the outdoors. Design can do much to restore the conviviality of such open spaces. Street life is emblematic of urban provocation and arousal precisely because one lets go, so to speak, and drops one's conventional reserves toward others. As Richard Sennett puts it, as "one goes to the edge of oneself, he sees, talks and thinks about what is outside. . . . By turning outward, he is aroused by the presence of strangers and arouses them." Sympathy in such instances becomes a condition of "mutual concern and arousal as one loses the power of self-definition." It is also in such instances that "differences" are reinforced without sustaining "indifference" to others (Sennett 1990, 149).

Prospects for Restoration of Civility

The Lebanese at the moment, and for understandable reasons, seem bent on "retribalizing" their communal and spatial identities. This is not, as we have seen, unusual. In times of disaster, even in cultures aversive to propinquity, traumatized groups are inclined to reconnect with family, home, and community for security and shelter. Pathological as they now seem, such territorial solidarities need not continue to be sources of paranoia and hostility. If stripped of their bigotry and excesses they could be extended and enriched to incorporate more secular and plural identities. Thomas Friedman, in more graphic terms, is making the same plea when he implores us to avoid the excesses of strong attachments to one's roots. Essential as these tribal loyalties to one's "olive trees" are, "when taken to an excess, can lead us into forging identities, bonds and communities based on the exclusion of others" (Friedman 2000: 32). There is still a faint hope, given the tenacious survival of religiously mixed communities, that the country might still evade this fateful crossover into that barbarous logic of enclosure and intolerance to differences.

Even in times of fierce fighting, when all crossings between the two halves of Beirut were either cut off or became hazardous, people continued tenaciously to cross over. Hence, differences between the two sides were "staved off," as Jean Makdisi put it, "by those sullen people who stubbornly cross over, day after day by the thousands, some to go work, others to visit friends and relatives, and *many just to make a point*" (Makdisi 1990: 77; emphasis added). A more telling indicator of the resistance to succumb to pressures of partition are the marked differences in real estate prices. Land values in religiously mixed areas, regardless of their aesthetic or urban quality, continue to be higher than in exclusive or homogeneous areas. So is the volume of construction activity and other manifestations of economic enterprise. That proverbial "invisible hand" of the market appears to be sending the Lebanese a prophetic an astute message; namely, that a mixed and heterogeneous political culture is at least more economically viable.

Lebanon's experience, treacherous and perplexing as it has been, is not all that unique. In considering the preferred setting, the most supportive environment for what Michael Walzer calls the "good life," he arrives (after reviewing predominant socialist and capitalist ideologies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries) at a similar conclusion. To "live well," he tells us, "is to participate with other men and women in remembering, cultivating and passing on a national heritage" and that such a "good life" can only be realized in a civil society. "The realm of fragmentation and struggle but also of concrete and authentic solidarities where we fulfill E. M. Foster's injunction of *only connect*, become social or communal men and women" (Walzer 1991, 298).

Walzer goes on to assert:

> The picture here is of people freely associating and communicating with one another, forming and reforming groups of all sorts, not for the sake of any particular formation — family, tribe, nation, religion, commune, brotherhood or sisterhood, interest group or ideological movement — but for the sake of sociability itself. For we are by nature social, before we are political or economic beings, . . . What is true is that the quality of our political and economic activity and of our national culture is intimately connected to the strength and vitality of our associations. Ideally, civil society is a setting of settings: all are included, none is preferred (Walzer 1991, 298).

Other equally sobering voices (e.g. Dahrendorf 1990; Konrad 1984; Havel 1985) have also been making similar appeals for the restoration of

civil society. All three remind us that the task of reconstruction will require more than political reform, physical rehabilitation, and economic development. More compelling and problematic is the need to restructure basic loyalties. By its very nature, this is bound to be a long and fragile process. Dahrendorf is, perhaps, most assertive: "It takes six months to create new political institutions; to write a constitution and electoral laws. It may take six years to create a halfway viable economy. It will probably take sixty years to create a civil society. Autonomous institutions are the hardest things to bring about" (Dahrendorf 1990: 42). In almost identical terms, all three caution us that the reproduction of loyalty, civility, political competence, and trust in authority are never the work of the state alone, and the effort to go it alone — one meaning of totalitarianism — is doomed to failure.

Three parting thoughts: now that the prospects for recovering a free and autonomous Lebanon seem imminent (indeed that recovery is heralded as a momentous milestone presaging a new order), we must bear in mind, lest we get disillusioned again, that cities, civilizations, and citizenship share a linguistic and historical root. Where communities, cities, nations — great or small — are not hospitable to the multiplicity of groups, voices, and the interplay of viewpoints, civil society will always suffer. Second, creating such a political culture of tolerance demands, among other things, that every Lebanese today should change his perception of the "other." Only by doing so can we begin to transform the geography of fear into genuine but guarded forms of coexistence. Third, pathological as they may seem at times, communal solidarities need not continue to be sources of paranoia and hostility. They could be extended and enriched to incorporate other more secular and civic identities. If stripped of their bigotry and intolerance, they could also become the bases for more equitable and judicious forms of power-sharing and the articulation of new cultural identities. Here lies the hope, the only hope perhaps, for an optimal restructuring of Lebanon's pluralism.

This is not another elusive pipe dream. Just as enmity has been socially constructed and culturally sanctioned, it can also be unlearned. Group loyalties can, after all, be restructured. Under the spur of visionary and enlightened leadership, groups through a revitalized voluntary sector can at least be resocialized to perceive differences as manifestations of cultural diversity and enrichment; not as dreaded symptoms of distrust, fear, and exclusion.