4.5.4 Martyr Posters and Celebrity Ruins as Markers of a Presentness Framed as Past

In this part, I showed that the inclusion of Murr Tower and the Holiday Inn in *Nancy* serves multiple functions. First, the buildings link the stories that Rabih and Hatem tell the audience about the Battle of the Hotels. However, the memories of the protagonists do not exactly match the historical events of the battle, and *Nancy* should not be read as another history of the *Wars*.

Second, *Nancy* injects time into the posters of the *Wars* by including the contemporary bodies of the actors, by adding Murr Tower, and by expanding the use of the Holiday Inn to the defeated parties of the Battle of the Hotels. Like the martyr posters, the premature historicist celebrity ruins of Murr Tower and the Holiday Inn are not limited to the realm of the past but indicate the unfinished business of the *Wars*, which is stretching into the present. They are temporal markers of presentness made past, as both point to negativities in the now.

This non-closure manifests itself through rumours, ambiguous stories, and potential histories that surround not only the buildings but also the martyrs and counter-martyrs, as I have demonstrated with the Holiday Inn sniper and Mekhdashi. Until the present day, polysemic emotions are attached to both wreckage and posters, which turn them into untouchable elements, as illustrated by the interventions of el Khoury at the Holiday Inn and Murr Tower, which drew remarkable attention and criticism. The notion of anachronistic time is also central to the next part, in which I will introduce the aspect of the future and the undead ghost in relation to the martyr.

4.6 The Time Is Out of Joint: The Martyr as a Spectral Ghost

Sectarian martyrs can be understood as spectral ghosts, since they are simultaneously absent and present, visible and invisible, dead and alive. The figure of the ghost has often been addressed by researchers when writing about images and artworks that deal with martyrs. Alam, for example, claims that 'martyrs are undead beings that haunt the living population'[636] and Gade has linked *Nancy* to Derrida's *Specters of Marx*. According to Gade, the actors are located on the thresholds between life and death and presence and absence because they repeatedly tell the audience that they die as martyrs but return to life shortly after.[637]

Responding to their texts, I will first focus on the ghostliness of the martyrs on the walls in Lebanon. Here, I will follow Bachir Saade's convincing strain of thought, which claims that Hezbollah martyrs can be linked to the figure of the

636 Alam, 'Undead Martyrs', 577.

637 Gade, 'Learning to Live', 341.

ghost as conceptualised by Derrida in his framework of hauntology.[638] Extending Saade's argument, I will show that Derrida's concept can be applied to the martyrs of all parties involved in the *Wars*. Like Derrida's ghosts, which I will call 'spectral ghosts', the shuhada of posters are neither fully dead and invisible nor entirely alive and visible. They arrive from the past, appear in a different form in the present, and point to the future, but they do not completely belong to one of these three temporalities.

Second, I will explore how the notion of the spectral ghost manifests itself in artworks and I will argue that *Nancy* does not necessarily help us fully understand the spectrality of the martyrs in pictures. Rather, a series by Hadjithomas/Joreige, called *Faces* (2009), reflects on the ghostly qualities of martyrs more than *Nancy* does.

Third, through a reading of theoretical texts by Hadjithomas/Joreige and Jalal Toufic, I will distinguish images of spectral martyrs from other images of present absence that often appear in Lebanese cultural productions. Specifically, I will differentiate them from latent ghosts, which are embodied by images of the missing, and from tradition that withdrew after a surpassing disaster, such as the 'living martyrs'.

4.6.1 Spectral Ghosts on the Walls and the Undead Lives of the Martyrs in Lebanon

Sectarian martyrs are simultaneously present and absent, dead and alive. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida writes about the haunting presence of Marxism in Europe after 1990, yet Derrida's hauntology also fits the ghostliness of the shuhada in Lebanon. He does not understand history as chronological but introduces the specter, which embodies an ambiguous temporality. A specter inhabits a 'non-present present' because it is here but never in flesh and blood, and 'one does not know if it is living or if it is dead'.[639]

This is also true for martyrs. After the person's death, their posters stay on the walls and are sometimes even reprinted. Therefore, the martyrs remain in a state between death and life, absence and presence. Bachir, as I have elaborated in 4.3, is still visible everywhere in the Christian districts of Beirut. Examples of this omnipresence are his image on Sassine Square (*Fig. 4.3*) as well as the photograph that shows him after his election victory, which I encountered in Gemmayzeh's rubble in the late summer of 2020 (*Fig. 4.52*). The placement in today's city of images of people who died in the past creates disjointed time. Derrida writes:

638 Saade, *Hizbullah*, 43–62.

639 Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 5.

> Before knowing whether one can differentiate between the specter of the past and the specter of the future, of the past present and the future present, one must perhaps ask oneself whether the spectrality effect does not consist in undoing this opposition, or even this dialectic, between actual, effective presence and its other.[640]

The time of the specter is ambiguous. Specters come into the present from both the past and the future; as arrivants, they point to what will be, and as revenants, they point to what was.[641]

Referring to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Derrida claims that the coming, going, and returning of the specter are unpredictable.[642] It disappears only to reappear. Ghosts are 'furtive and untimely', they do 'not belong to that time, it does not give time, not that one: 'Enter the ghost, exit the ghost, re-enter the ghost' (*Hamlet*)'.[643] The only thing that is certain is that the specter will come back to haunt, but 'one cannot control its comings and goings because it begins by coming back'.[644] Specters were already there before, but when they return, they do so in a different form.[645]

In Lebanon, shuhada of all warring factions continue to haunt the country to this day. In his discussion of Hezbollah martyrs, Saade remarks that the shahid is not to be located only in the past, present, or future but rather moves through and exists between these temporalities. Martyrs died in the past as revenants and remain in the present, where they are remembered via memorials or in operations that are carried out in their names. This again makes them—as arrivants—point towards the future, where Hezbollah's dream of Lebanon, for which the martyrs died, should be fulfilled. Furthermore, Saade claims that all Hezbollah shuhada are haunted by Hossein, who was the first martyr and therefore the first ghost among the Shia, and whose experience was then repeated by all shuhada that followed him.[646] Through every martyr of Hezbollah, Hossein comes back in a different form. What Saade writes about Hossein could also be applied to the Christian parties, and we could understand Bachir as a specter of Jesus, as I have discussed in connection with the depiction of Rabih in 4.1.

It is not only these archetypes of martyrs that haunt the present and call for the realisation of incomplete dreams for Lebanon, which are left open by the dead from the *Wars*. For example, the Hezbollah fighters who died in the War in Syria were trying to complete the party's cause. These more recent Hezbollah martyrs,

640 Ibid., 48.

641 Ibid., xix.

642 Ibid., 2.

643 Ibid., xix.

644 Ibid., 11.

645 Ibid., 107.

646 Saade, *Hizbullah*, 43–62.

who coexist on the walls with the old martyrs who died during the *Wars*, disjoint time. What is crucial is the sect to which the martyr points, not the year or decade of death. A poster of someone who was killed in the 2010s can be placed next to a poster of someone who was killed in the 1980s. What counts is that the martyr died in the past, no matter how recent or distant, and that the image is now here in the present, pointing to an unfulfilled dream that should be implemented in the future.

But there are also spectral martyrs of other parties. Amal, which has not been involved in the War in Syria, barely announced new martyrs during the time of writing this book—with a few exceptions, such as after the sectarian clashes in Tayyouneh—and their posters mostly remember shuhada who died during the *Wars* or the 1990s. These martyrs, as Bonsen states, must be kept alive in Amal's memorial culture[647] in order to compete with Hezbollah martyrs, because Hezbollah still produces a large number of new shuhada.

For the Christian parties today, which have had very few new martyrs since the official end of the *Wars*, it is mostly Bachir who represents the spectral ghost, which he turned into right after his death.[648] In 1982, shortly after Bachir's murder, a Phalangist journalist wrote that 'Bashir Gemayel is not dead because he was us, and because we are still Bashir Gemayel. He is in all of us: (I am Bashir Gemayel) … You are Bashir Gemayel … They are Bashir Gemayel…'.[649] These words show that in the perception of the Phalange, Bachir is not fully dead but alive in his followers and successors,[650] who even become embodiments of Bachir—'little Bachirs', as I have argued in 4.1. Bachir is to be located in the blurred space between presence and absence. This is also emphasised with the slogan 'Bachir is living in us', which often accompanies his posters.[651]

The posters not only hold Bachir alive here in the present, even as he is past, dead, and absent, they also point to him as a revenant and to the ideas that he advocated for Lebanon when he was alive. Simultaneously, as an arrivant, he evokes the dream of a Maronite-dominated Lebanon, which should be implemented in the future.[652] This spectral presence is particularly emphasised in the poster of Bachir haunting the rubble of late summer 2020 (*Fig. 4.52*). It was as if Bachir, the 'dream of the Republic' (as the slogan labels him), had come back to insist after the explosion that his presence was needed to save Lebanon in the future.

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647 Bonsen, *Martyr Cults*, 249.

648 There are a few exceptions—for example, Pierre Gemayel, Bachir's nephew, who was assassinated by gunmen in 2006. Posters announcing him as a martyr can still today be encountered in Christian areas.

649 Hage, 'Religious Fundamentalism', 39–40.

650 Ibid.

651 Haugbolle, *War and Memory*, 179.

652 Ibid., 206. For the ghostly Bachir in the image, see also Maasri, *Off the Wall*, 62.

Furthermore, Bachir's depiction next to his successors, Nadim Gemayel (*Fig. 4.53*) and Samir Geagea (*Fig. 4.3*), points to his spectrality, as discussed in 4.3. He carries his dream, which he started to implement in the past and which is supposed to come true in the future with the help of his heir. This is also true for Hariri and is directly addressed by Mroué in *Make Me Stop Smoking* (2006; *Fig. 4.55*). In that non-academic lecture, he comments on the juxtaposition of father and son Hariri in a photograph that shows Rafic behind Saad as follows:

> This photo appeared in the streets right after the assassination of Rafic Hariri and before the elections. It shows the ex-prime minister standing behind his son. One can see the photo in different sizes hanging everywhere in Beirut. The assassinated father standing behind his son. It reminds me of Hamlet and the ghost of his father. But I wonder; does the son in this photo know that this is the ghost of his father standing behind him? If not, then one might say that the son is not able to see ghosts in a city full of ghosts, just as Hamlet's mother who can't see her husband's ghost. In this case, the son might think that what has appeared behind him in this poster is simply a photo of his father hanging in the living room.[653]

Mroué reflects upon the fact that not everyone can see ghosts when he claims that Saad fails to understand that the depiction of Rafic is not only iconic and indexical but that the image also keeps the ghost of his father alive. Derrida, who frequently refers to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, explains that only some people can see specters, and Mroué too refers to Hamlet's mother, who is unable to see the ghost of Hamlet's father. Likewise, Jalal Toufic establishes a connection regarding the poster of the Hariris and *Hamlet*, and terms the father-son Hariri poster a 'kitschy unintentional visual adaptation' of Shakespeare's play, which shows Rafic 'like a ghost' behind Saad.[654]

These spectral returns are not limited to Hariri and Bachir but apply to all celebrity martyrs. They all carry the unfinished business of the protracted *Wars* and are located between times. The *Wars* can return at any moment, as we have seen in

653 Rabih Mroué, 'Make Me Stop Smoking', in *Rabih Mroué*, ed. Alenka Gregoric (Ljubljana: Museum and Galleries of Ljubljana, 2014), 191.

654 Toufic, *Undeserving Lebanon*, 70. Here it should be noted that Toufic's conception of ghosts is different from Derrida's, although Toufic's ghosts share some similarities with spectral ghosts because they are in transit and do not stay in one place. Ghosts, according to Toufic, mostly appear in fiction and haunt the scene of a crime 'like an audiovisual record that each time plays back the same message' (Jalal Toufic, *Vampires: An Uneasy Essay on the Dead in Film* (Sausalito, CA: Post Apollo Press, 2003), 281). This means the ghost repeatedly returns with the same unfinished business, which he relays in a language that is difficult to understand. However, Toufic's ghost lacks the notion of being an arrivant, which is crucial for the conception of the martyr as a ghost that I am suggesting here.

2007 with the Arab University Shooting, in 2008 in West Beirut and other parts of Lebanon, and in 2021 in Tayyouneh. Those who think the *Wars* are over are, following Toufic, like zombies: half-asleep and unable to see below the surface, with no sensitivity for the still-violent atmosphere in Lebanon, and, like Hamlet's mother, unable to sense ghosts.[655]

Also, the ghostliness of the conductors of martyrdom operations should be considered, although not all have remained very visible as specters to this day. While martyrs such as Wajid Sayighi, whom I mentioned in 4.4, are not extensively venerated in images in the present, posters of people like Ahmad Qassir, who is considered to be Hezbollah's first istishahid, are still plastered around Hezbollah areas decades after their deaths.[656] Qassir still comes back. This is also true for Sana, whom I termed the poster girl of the SSNP in 4.4. Not only are her images reprinted, but new designs were even developed after her death, as is demonstrated by an example from 1998, which I found in the AUB library archives (*Fig. 4.64*). This poster no longer matches the standardised formats of the SSNP of the 1980s; in particular, the transparent layers, divided into four differently coloured quarters over her face, point to the disjointed time of her pre-Photoshop death and the time of the design of the image. The specter of Sana also appears regularly on her death date on the SSNP's Instagram page (*Fig. 4.65*). Like celebrities, as discussed in 4.3, the circulation of images of the dead needs to be continued to prevent the martyrs from dying fully and to keep them on the threshold between death and life.

The spectrality of the conductors of martyrdom operations is noteworthy on another level. As mentioned, before their operation they usually recorded farewell videos in which they announced their status as martyrs. Sana and her peers were self-conscious about the place and time of their physical passing. When Sana, with the knowledge that her speech would be broadcast only after she had physically ceased to exist, told her video audience, 'I am not dead but alive among you',[657] she herself pointed to her status as a specter in a Derridean sense because, at the time of the video's airing, she indeed would be dead and alive at the same time, absent as a breathing body and present as an image. Also, Jamal al-Sati, whom we have encountered throughout this book in the framework of *Three Posters*, said in his video testimony that he would abandon his country in body only.[658]

655 Toufic, *Vampires*, 104–05.

656 Saade, *Hizbullah*, 55.

657 Straub, *Das Selbstmordattentat*, 137. According to Toufic, Sana was the first to use such a phrase. See Toufic, *Vampires*, 358.

658 Straub, *Das Selbstmordattentat*, 124.

These two young people's words have nothing to do with heaven or paradise, as they were voiced by members of a secular party. Further, both are saying 'I am the martyr' and are thereby unconsciously hinting at the disjointed time of martyrdom. When uttering this phrase, they are clearly alive, but they point to their death in the future, as when watched on TV, their life will have been a thing of the past. At the time the video was broadcast, they were already revenants, as they belonged to the past and had physically ceased to exist. But they were also arrivants, as the cause they died for should be achieved in the future.[659]

As explained by Derrida, one cannot foresee when the ghost comes back. The specter of al-Sati also returned unexpectedly in *Three Posters*. Since it was broadcast on TV in 1985, probably almost nobody has seen his video—it was only fifteen years later, in the framework of the performance, that al-Sati returned. But the video came back in another form because it was appropriated from visual politics into critical art, and because Mroué now uttered the words in addition to al-Sati. Therefore, we could say that Mroué and Khoury helped the specter appear.

The incarnation of Derrida's spectral ghost through the martyrs in Lebanon is visible in images showing the absent bodies in present posters on the walls. The martyrs can return as specters in a different form. As an image and not as a body. Furthermore, the posters of the shuhada act as symbols of the militias they died for during the *Wars*. These military groups still exist in today's Lebanon but have now turned into political parties. Therefore, I understand the pictures of the sectarian martyrs as revenants from the past, where they lived physically, but also as arrivants from the future, who carry an unfulfilled promise, which consists of domination over Lebanon by the group they have died for.

It is the sectarian parties that do not allow the ghosts on the walls to rest. They use them to point to their sacrifices in the past and to remind their followers that the future dream still needs to be accomplished—if necessary, also with violence. Martyrs live on in the present in posters while being physically dead. Only when they disappear from the walls do they die fully.

659 See also Jeroen Coppens, 'How Images Survive (in) Theatre: On the Lives of Images in Rabih Mroué's *The Pixelated Revolution* and *Three Posters*', *The International Journal of the Image* 9, no. 2 (2018): 67–70.

4.6.2 Enter the Ghost, Exit the Ghost, Re-Enter the Ghost: Spectral Ghosts in *Nancy* and in *Faces* by Hadjithomas/Joreige

In *Nancy* the notion of the spectral ghost following Derrida's hauntology appears only partially, whereas *Faces*, on which I will focus below, can be read as a thorough reflection of the spectrality of the martyrs on the walls in Beirut.

(No) Spectral Ghost in *Nancy*?

Nancy is not necessarily suitable for re-tracing the spectral ghosts on Beirut's walls; when looking for them in the play, they can be located less on the visual and more on the textual plane. Gade is right when she writes that the blurred space between death and life is addressed in *Nancy* because death is not something that makes the actors incapable of action.[660] Rather, they seem to be very much alive in the tasks they do while they claim to be dead. Examples can be seen for all four protagonists, as when Ziad says, 'Thus, when I died, they asked me to fill out an application to become an official comrade of the Communist Party' (15); when Rabih, lying dead in the Holiday Inn, tells the audience, 'My rifle is still there next to me where it had fallen. Don't ask me how, but I grab it and spring up, landing square on my feet…' (16); when Hatem states after being killed by friendly fire, 'I go home dead…' (21); and when Lina narrates, 'After my slaughter in Moseitbeh, I thought, 'Enough!' I understood that staying in West Beirut was impossible for any Christian' (26). Even after having died, they are able to fill in forms to join a party, kill enemies, walk home, or decide to move to another part of town. The actors say they are dead but perform activities that presuppose they are alive.

There are other instances in the play where the realms of death and life become even more disjointed. In one part of *Nancy*, Lina, after she gets killed, does not return to life; rather, as a corpse, she travels to Zahlé to spy on Hobeika for the Geagea faction:

> as I was a corpse and thus unlikely to arouse suspicion […] I headed out to Zahlé and in a couple of days, I was found out. A member of Hobeika's mob—a corpse himself—recognised me… He reported me, they captured me, and—for the second time—they liquidated me. (29)

This death while dead is followed by a speech by Lina: 'After I was liquidated for a second time by Hobeika's mob, the Forces organised a tribute ceremony. Over 300 martyrs were invited, myself among them' (30).

660 Gade, 'Learning to Live', 341.

In another instance, after Ziad's failed martyrdom operation and the invasion of West Beirut by the Israeli Army in 1982, Ziad says:

> Seeing as my body had vanished, I said to myself, 'Why not join as a secret cell'? I called on some brothers and we proceed immediately with our undercover manoeuvre. I started preparing for an operation on Salim Salam Boulevard. I admit that the operation turned out to be a bit more complex than I had thought—due to certain mobility and communication issues—and especially due to the fact that my unit had been found out, and the whole lot of them arrested by the Israelis. They were transferred to the Ansar detention centre… As for me, I fled to my brother's house […] (22–23)

In these two passages, the dead-alive conditions of Lina and Ziad become even more blurred. Lina spies as a corpse and then gets killed by another corpse. Her state of being dead seems to be manifested by being killed again, although she was already not alive. After having died twice and being double-dead, she, together with other martyrs, is honoured in a ceremony.[661] On the other hand, although he no longer materially exists, Ziad plans a resistance activity against the Israeli Army and manages to flee in his immaterial state.

Gade reads these incidents as an undoing of the straight logic that divides death from life, which results in disorientation.[662] In particular, in these two instances, the realms of deadly absence and lively presence become totally entangled and impossible to distinguish, which is a characteristic of the spectral ghost.

However, the different times seem to be less blurry in *Nancy*. While I agree with Gade, who claims that the play points to the repetition of violence in different times and demonstrates how the present is haunted by the past, I do not agree that an outlook on future violence is immanent in the play.[663] Rather, I believe the future is merely absent in *Nancy*. In my understanding, there are only two overlapping times; namely, the now of the actors on the stage and the past, which is the temporality of the anecdotes they tell the audience. At no point in the play do the actors say that their goal is to keep fighting in the future.

661 Also the accompanying poster points to her being double-dead, as she is labelled as a shahida twice (*Fig. 3.49*).

662 Gade, 'Learning to Live', 342.

663 Ibid., 341–43.

Furthermore, the storyline is linear in time because the actors tell of their experiences in chronological order, beginning in the 1970s and ending in 2007. A connection to the time before the *Wars* is established only once, when Lina links the War of the Mountain to the violent fights between Christians and Druze in the Shuf in 1860 (24). At the end, when all the actors revive their wartime habits and meet at Murr Tower, the notions of past and present are blurred, but the future remains absent.

I am also hesitant to agree with Gade's claim that the actors are in a space in between absence and presence. She writes that the four protagonists are present in the theatre where they tell the audience that they are themselves but that, because they are actually acting, they are absent as individuals.[664] Usually actors are playing someone else. This means that all actors are present and absent simultaneously, but it does not mean that all actors are automatically Derridean ghosts. Therefore, I understand the actors in *Nancy* not as absent but rather as constantly present, sitting on the black couch.

Even when the actors come back to life through their speech acts, they come back in the same form, sitting on the sofa. Also, their faces in the posters are clearly the same as those visible in the previous poster. Sometimes their photographs are even identical, as discussed in 4.2. Their returns to life are predictable; we know after a few deaths that we can expect them to come back soon after they get killed.

Because of the absent realms of the future, the linearity of time, the constant presence of the actors as images as well as persons, the return of the actors in the same form, and their predictable comings and goings, the only convincing manifestation of the Derridean spectral ghost that I see in *Nancy* is in the blurring of being dead and alive. This should not be perceived as a flaw of the play, but *Nancy* does not necessarily help us fully understand the spectral presence of the martyrs in posters in Lebanon. Therefore, in the following, I will discuss the artwork *Faces* (2009) by Hadjithomas/Joreige, where the spectral ghost is manifested with all its characteristics.

664 Ibid., 341.

Hadjithomas/Joreige's *Faces*: Re-Tracing Specters of the Protracted Wars

In my reading, *Faces* comments on the state of martyrs as ghosts of the protracted *Wars*. Hadjithomas/Joreige started working on *Faces* (*Fig. 4.76*) after the 2006 War. They took images of posters of martyrs of this war as well as of the *Wars*, and describe the work as follows:

> In Lebanon, we live surrounded by dead people looking at us. Since the beginning of the civil wars, posters have covered the walls of the city. They are images of men, martyrs who died tragically, while fighting or on [a] mission, or who were political figures and were murdered. For years, we have been photographing the posters of martyrs belonging to different parties, religions, or creeds […]. But we only select posters greatly deteriorated by time. […] these posters remain there, the features and names have disappeared. There remains the rounded shape of a face, a barely perceptible silhouette, hardly recognizable. We photographed these images at various stages of their progressive disappearance. Then, […] we attempted to recover certain features, to accentuate others, to bring back through drawing, the image of a face, a trace, matter, a lasting image.[665]

Hadjithomas/Joreige photographed weathered posters of martyrs of different sects in different phases of decay on the streets of Lebanon. They later returned: if the poster was still there, they rephotographed it to show the process of its disappearance. Afterward, they reconstructed fragments of facial elements according to the traces that were still left in the image.

Fig. 4.76: Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige, *Faces*, 2009, Digital Prints, Photographic and Drawing Works, Each Approximately 33 x 50 cm, Courtesy of the Artists.

665 Hadjithomas/Joreige quoted in Alam, 'Undead Martyrs', 578–79.

The prints of *Faces* are divided into groups; some include one image, some two, and some three, with each group showing the same poster in different temporal stages. When the group consists of only one image, it means not only that the poster has disappeared upon the artists' return, but also that the poster in the first image taken was in such a deteriorated state that no fragments of facial features remained traceable for the creation of drawings. When there are two images, the poster was no longer there when the artists returned, or they did not manage to go back. Therefore, traces of the face had to be found in the first poster they photographed, and the state of decay was not visualised in a separate image. Usually, when there are three images, the photograph was still there upon the return of the artists, who photographed it again, and the drawings in the third image were made after traces that were found in the second image.[666]

The artists explained the drawing process as follows:

> In one case, you have just an eye left. You can imagine there was another one, but there is not enough information in the image, there is no possibility to draw the other eye. Meaning it is not inventing the image; it is to reinforce what was lasting in the image. For us, it is really a reflection […] on the photographic image […]. In the beginning, we even thought we could use digital tools, for example, Photoshop, but this was not good enough because we needed something more human, illustrators or artists that could give their interpretation.[667]

The artists hired two illustrators who had not seen the previous image.[668] Importantly, the illustrators did not imagine what the poster could have looked like, rather they were searching for traces in the posters and highlighting them.

Looking at one group of *Faces* (*Figs. 4.77–4.79*), the three portrait-format posters seem to show the same motif at first glance. The shape of a men's head and shoulders is still clearly recognisable, but details can only be guessed due to the weathered condition of the images.

In the first picture (*Fig. 4.77*), traces of torn paper are visible on the entire image. On the top right-hand side, a bright circle, which was probably once the party logo, is depicted. The man's eyes, eyebrows, nose, and mouth are faintly visible. His black hair can be seen against a blue background. The martyr's grey-black clothing is no longer clearly identifiable due to the poster's poor state. The collar is rounded at his neck and has the shape of a jagged semicircle below. Again below,

666 Hadjithomas and Joreige, Zoom, 23 and 30 March 2021.

667 Ibid.

668 Contrary to Naeff's statement, Ghassan Halwani was not involved in this project (*Precarious Imaginaries*, 224). One of the illustrators was Stéphanie Saadé, an artist whom we will encounter in Chapter 5.

paper remnants can be seen. In the lower third of the picture, there is a black band, extending just beyond halfway across, where the poster has been partially torn from the wall. In the small residual section at the bottom left, four letter fragments remain: a red trace with black outlines, and a little further from it on the left, three black letter fragments in a different font.

The second image (*Fig. 4.78*) shows traces of time. The circle in the upper right corner has faded almost completely; the rest of the red letter with the black outline is no longer visible. The man's nose and mouth have disappeared; the eyes and eyebrows are bleached out. The entire background appears darker, while the letter fragments at the bottom left are no longer visible, and the peeling paper below the man's neck seems to have fallen off. Overall, the poster is more damaged, and fewer physiognomic features can be identified than in the previous poster.

The third image (*Fig. 4.79*), unlike the previous two, includes the illustrators' interventions. The circle in the background at the top right is again plainly visible. The eyes, eyebrows, chin, and ears are clearly defined, and the nose and mouth are now partially shown. The jagged bottom of the collar and the golden paper remnants underneath it are visible, as are the rest of the red letter with a black outline and the paper residue in the black area in the lower right of the image. In general, facial elements in *Figure 4.79* that disappeared due to weather and time in *Figure 4.78* are in the same position as in *Figure 4.77*, but are emphasised through details and contrast, which means that these interventions and reappearances go beyond reconstruction and can be described as

Figs. 4.77–4.79: Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige, *Faces Number 1–3*, 2009, Digital Print, Photographic and Drawing Works, 35 x 50 cm, Courtesy of the Artists.

modification. Although *Faces*, like *Nancy*, uses the strategy of twenty-first-century appropriation art, it is not changing the poster but rather is capturing what is left.[669] Crucially, the face comes back not as it was but in a different form.

In my reading the artwork comments on the status of the martyrs as specters of the protracted *Wars* in Lebanon. Alam is right to argue that *Faces* is not about commemoration or restoring an image to what it once was. This would have been an easy task, as the posters of the martyrs of the *Wars* are accessible in archives, whereas images of more recent martyrs can be encountered in a 'healthier' state on another wall.[670] The names of the martyrs shown in *Faces* are no longer legible, and the party logo is no longer recognisable. In other words, the shahid's identity and faction affiliation become secondary. Therefore, Hadjithomas/Joreige are not restoring the image in order to remember or mourn individuals; rather like Mroué in *Nancy*, they are appropriating posters and recontextualising them from visual politics into critical art. In doing so they theoretically engage with the image and the figure of the martyr.

Noor Sacranie links *Faces* to the barzakh, which is a space between two metaphysical realms, 'the earthly and the spiritual, the known and the unknown, the actual and the imaginary'.[671] While these ambiguities touch on the spectral, a more direct connection to the ghost is made by Nat Muller, who calls the images of *Faces* ghost-like and haunting. She also locates the posters in the spectral, in-between space of presence and absence, which, in her reading, is illustrated in *Faces* because Hadjithomas/Joreige bring the dead back as if the artists were engaged in 'visual forensics'.[672] It seems Muller had Derrida's hauntology in mind when writing on *Faces* but had not dug deeper in her thought, which I will do now.

669 *Faces*, unlike *Nancy*, does not comment on the gendered martyr because, as Hadjithomas/Joreige explained, at the time they photographed the posters, they did not find female martyrs on the walls. Moreover, unlike *Nancy*, *Faces* does not place special emphasis on the hierarchy of martyrs. Celebrity martyr Bachir appears in the series but is artistically treated in the same way as the ordinary martyrs. Therefore, in *Faces*, all martyrs are made equal. Bachir is only integrated into the presentation of *Faces* when shown abroad, as the artists do not want him to be recognisable immediately, which would be the case in Lebanon. Furthermore, Hadjithomas/Joreige only sell *Faces* as a whole series. This means people with certain political preferences are forced to buy all images and cannot buy, for example, only the portrait of Bachir. Hadjithomas and Joreige, Zoom, 23 and 30 March 2021.

670 Alam, 'Undead Martyrs', 580–81.

671 Sacranie, 'Alternative Remembrances', 16–17.

672 Nat Muller, 'On Being Contemporary – Re-Activating the Present: Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige in Conversation with Nat Muller', *Art Papers* (January/February 2013), https://sc-uat-bucket.ams3.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/1b8b9c2cf881e1a3dc09a102a0a88626.pdf. Also, Omar Kholeif, in 'Dreaming Our Way to the Future: Unfolding the Work of Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige', *Mousse* 53 (2016): 252, notes regarding *Faces* that 'all that remains is the empty shell of an oval face, peculiar ghosts lingering and lining the city streets'.

Derrida's claim that specters are present and absent simultaneously is visible via the state of the images in *Faces*. The picture is clearly here, but it is also absent; parts of its surface have disappeared, although it has not yet vanished entirely. The overall composition can be adumbrated, but details can only be guessed. By being only partly perceptible, the martyrs in *Faces* are like spectral ghosts, visible and invisible at the same time. Even in the images, which were modified by the illustrators, not all elements can be seen. The posters show people who have physically ceased, lived in the past, but are being kept alive. As long as the poster is on the wall, the martyr is not fully dead, even when the image is no longer clearly visible, as *Faces* shows. And, as mentioned, ghosts can return.

The coming and going of the ghost is indicated in the groups of *Faces* that include three images; this is specifically signified by the disappearance, fading, and bleaching of certain elements in the second image and the partial return of these elements through the interventions of the illustrators in the third. This also points to the disjointed time; parts of the first poster reappear in the third poster so that some of its original form is reactivated by enhancing the traces, still visible in the picture, that were already thought to be lost. But *Faces* also demonstrates that the ghosts return in a different form, as not all modifications correspond to the first image that the artists took of the poster. Some elements are lost, some reappear. Hadjithomas/Joreige thereby reflect that posters often come back in a different form, either with a change in design, as in the example of Sana (*Fig. 4.64*), or because someone else is continuing the cause, as in the recent images of Hezbollah martyrs who died in Syria, which can be understood as a comeback in a different form of Hezbollah's previous martyr posters (*Fig. 2.10*).

However, the groups that consist of only one image seem to point to the fact that not all ghosts return, or that there are ghosts that are not yet there. In Lebanon, too, not all martyrs return, like the thousands of ordinary martyrs whose images at some point left the walls and were never reprinted. But, just because they are not here yet does not mean that they will never return. Al-Sati, for example, came back in *Three Posters* fifteen years after his martyrdom.

As mentioned above, 'zombies', such as Hamlet's mother, cannot see ghosts. When Hadjithomas/Joreige claim that they needed humans because Photoshop was not good enough, we understand that sensation is needed to feel the absent presence of the ghost. Not everyone can do so, and a non-human programme like Photoshop surely cannot.

The artists said that *Faces* questions the idea of the return of the image. Seeing the posters deteriorated so badly would make them wonder if in those vanishing images, the dead people looking at us were not trying to escape, but to rest.[673] However, in my reading, by bringing the martyrs back in the second and third images

673 Hadjithomas and Joreige, Zoom, 23 and 30 March 2021.

of *Faces*, Hadjithomas/Joreige do not immediately lay the ghosts to rest, but they also do not ignore or expel them. There is a temptation to do so because, as Derrida writes, there is a fear that the specter will come back.[674] Nevertheless, by trying to chase ghosts away, one actually chases after them. Thus, Derrida advises learning to accept them, to live with them, to speak of and with them, to keep them close, and to allow them to come back, as only this will make our lives different and better.[675]

> One must have the ghost's hide and to do that, one must have it. To have it, one must see it, situate it, identify it. One must possess it without letting oneself be possessed by it, without being possessed of it.[676]

One should catch the ghost, be willing to see it, locate it, identify it, and finally gain power over it. This is precisely what Hadjithomas/Joreige seem to do in *Faces*: they allow parts of the ghost to re-emerge but are still controlling how much appears—namely, only parts of the image, of which traces are still detectable. In doing so, it could be argued, Joreige/Hadjithomas avoid being possessed by the ghost.

This, however, happens to Khalil Jaber, the father of the LCP militiaman Ahmad in *White Masks*. Khalil became obsessed with his son's posters after his son's death. He was concerned that the posters could become damaged when it rained, and when they deteriorated, he hung up new ones. By putting up more pictures, Khalil did not allow the ghost of Ahmad to rest. According to Sonja Mejcher-Atassi, 'the image of the martyr has become more real than his death. […] It was as if Ahmad had not died. Reality (Ahmad) was replaced by its image (the poster). The poster became the man, the man the poster'. [677] When the poster production for Ahmad was ceased by the LCP, as Mejcher-Atassi mentions, Khalil realised that his son was really dead.[678] But the ghost remained, and Khalil wanted to expel him by destroying the dozens of posters of Ahmad he still had at home. First, he tried to remove his son's image with an eraser, then he shredded the posters and chewed them into little paper balls until no trace of Ahmad's face was left. At the end of the novel, Khalil dies, but shortly before he was seen while attempting to paint over the posters of other martyrs on the walls.[679] This means that Khalil first tried to kill the specter of Ahmad, who lived on in images, with different means of violence, and then attempted to kill other ghosts on the street. Finally, it could be argued that trying to kill the ghosts eventually killed Khalil.

674 Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 2.

675 Ibid., 109.

676 Ibid., 165.

677 Mejcher-Atassi, 'Martyr and His Image', 350.

678 Ibid.

679 Naeff, *Precarious Imaginaries*, 220–22.

In *Faces*, however, Hadjithomas/Joreige do the opposite. They allow the ghosts to appear and, it seems, they follow Derrida's advice to welcome them. Unlike Khalil, who tried to exorcise the ghosts, Hadjithomas/Joreige try to embrace them by re-tracing them without copying them. Drawing them as a copy would indeed have been a form of commemoration similar to what the parties do when they reprint posters of their martyrs. But Hadjithomas/Joreige are not bringing the ghosts back in the same form; they seem to question where all these ghosts that are roaming around Lebanon come from and how to best deal with and live with the ghosts' present absence.

Hadjithomas/Joreige make the martyrs' sectarian affiliations unrecognisable by reducing them to mere silhouettes. By doing this, and by juxtaposing martyrs of the *Wars* with those who died during the 2006 War, they seem to point to the fact that the *Wars* are protracted and that the current situation has been created by all sectarian parties equally. The sects did not forget the *Wars*, and neither many of its martyrs. This issue of sectarian memory cannot be solved by plastering the city full of faces that are pointing to a dream of the past and the future, a dream that is a hope for one group and a threat for the group's political opponents.

The way Hadjithomas/Joreige treat the ghosts could be linked to Walid Sadek's conception of the *Ruin to Come*, which I have already introduced in 4.5. Sadek suggests that the Lebanese should refrain from rushing into the future or remaining obsessively stuck in the past and instead should come together in the present and talk about what they have seen and experienced. From this chorus of contrasted speeches and fragmented accounts of experiences of the *Wars*, the *Ruin to Come*, which is 'necessary for building a livable future', could be gradually created.[680] But to do so, the ghosts must be welcomed. This is because the

> dead of a past that refuses to simply pass away can be renamed. Not as martyrs, heroes, victims or accessorial casualties but as cornerstones for a making to be recognized by those who come after as a ruin poised to be built.[681]

If the *Ruin to Come* is built, the dead would not be glorified or victimised, but accepted as being here, as having died, and as having effects on the present. They would be the cornerstones of the *Ruin to Come*, a time that would then be free of revenge and sectarian dreams and would acknowledge the past for what it was. The dead, like the past, could be viewed from a different perspective, as the martyrs would not stand for a dream not yet achieved that needs to be accomplished in the future, nor would they symbolise a threat that could resurface at any moment. This is wishful thinking, of course.

680 Sadek, *Ruin*, 164.

681 Ibid., 174–75.

In *Faces*, it seems, Hadjithomas/Joreige propose not ignoring ghosts but welcoming them in a non-sectarian manner and literally re-tracing their origins. They show us not only the martyrs, who are dead physically but alive in the image, but also—due to the partly vanished surface of the posters—the way that the martyrs are visible and invisible, present and absent at the same time. An image of the past comes back in a different form after the interventions of the illustrators, who can see the different ghosts. But not all ghosts returned—sometimes the artists did not find the image and sometimes there was not enough information from which to draw. *Faces* thereby illustrates that the ghosts' comeback is unpredictable. By embracing the martyrs of different sects without copying them, Hadjithomas/Joreige are not like Khalil in *White Masks*, trying to extinguish them out of grief or disappointment, and Hadjithomas/Joreige also do not want to use the image of the martyr for political purposes like the parties do. It seems, they prefer to invite the ghosts to return, but not to finish their business, which is the sectarian dream the martyrs died for. In my reading, for Hadjithomas/Joreige, the point of the invitation is to accept that the ghosts are here and thus to prevent them from causing trouble in the present, which is sometimes embodied through clashing images, as I have discussed in 4.3. The martyrs can be laid to rest only when the *Ruin to Come* is built, and this can be done only when the martyrs are no longer glorified or demonised but instead recognised as what they are: hauntings of the past and the future that have effects on the present.

4.6.3 Images of Present Absence: Other Ghostly Images

In Lebanon, we find different kinds of ghostly figures and images. This corresponds to Derrida's claim that ghosts are varied and heterogeneous.[682] I will now explain why the images in *Faces* and the pictures of the martyrs on Beirut's walls are spectral and neither latent ghosts nor images that withdrew after a surpassing disaster. To understand that images of martyrs fit into neither of these two concepts, I will make a distinction between these three ghostly pictures and show that the crucial difference between the latent and the spectral image is that the latter has already been visible whereas the latent picture might appear for the first time at some point. Furthermore, in contrast to the withdrawn image, the spectral picture returns in a different form.

682 Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 95.

The Latent Image: The Missing

Joey Ayoub claims that 'the disappeared will always be present, as 'ghosts'.[683] This is also true for the martyrs, who share iconographic similarities with the missing, as I have elaborated in 4.3. However, the martyrs and the missing are different ghosts because the missing are in a state of latency, meaning their images are still waiting to become visible in the streets. In contrast, the posters of the martyrs, although sometimes invisible, have been there already. While *Faces* has been linked to latency by Alam and Naeff,[684] I argue that posters of martyrs are usually not latent.

Hadjithomas/Joreige explain the concept of latency, which they coined in a Lebanese context, as follows:

> Latency is the state of what exists in a non-apparent manner, but which can manifest itself at any given moment. It is the time elapsed between the stimuli and the corresponding response. The latent image is the invisible, yet-to-be-developed image on an impressed surface. The idea is that of the 'dormant'—slumber, slumbering—like something asleep, which might awake at any moment. Latency has connotations with […] the idea of the repressed, the hidden […] it is […] a diffused state, […] underground […] as if all could resurface anew.[685]

Latency is therefore an invisible, hidden, and suppressed presence of a fact or image that is absent but is in a waiting position; it can emerge from this position, but it has not done so until the present. Also, Hadjithomas/Joreige explicitly refer to the undead and the revenant when offering their explanation of latency:

> This is a story about the return of the undead, the revenant of something resembling the capacity of remembrance that makes us human. […] Being haunted is refusing the mechanical state […] it is something that resists. Being here, today, is accepting to live with our ghosts, to long for them, to feed them.[686]

Like spectral ghosts, latent ghosts should not be expelled but welcomed. In Hadjithomas/Joreige's body of work, an example of latency connected to martyrs is …*A Faraway Souvenir* (*Fig. 4.25*), which I have already introduced in 4.2. Here, the artists not only photographed the images of martyrs that were inside the frames on the

683 Joey Ayoub, 'The Civil War's Ghosts: Events of Memory Seen Through Lebanese Cinema', in *The Social Life of Memory: Violence, Trauma, and Testimony in Lebanon and Morocco*, eds. Norman Saadi Nikro and Sonja Hegasy (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 56.

684 Alam, 'Undead Martyrs', 580; Naeff, *Precarious Imaginaries*, 225.

685 Hadjithomas and Joreige, 'Latency', in Tohmé and Abu Rayyan, *Homeworks*, 40.

686 Ibid., 48.

lampposts in Ouzaï but also took pictures of empty frames that were on these same lampposts. The artists call these empty frames latent because they are next to the spectral martyr, waiting for the shahid to come.

> The post anchors these two temporalities in a kind of reality, of continuous present. Whereas juxtaposing these temporalities creates a time lag which cannot be easily represented. Just like the ceremonial adopted for the video pre-taped farewell of the fighters before their suicide operations. In this farewell shown on [a] TV news program, the fighter introduces himself in these terms 'I am the martyr' followed by his name. His status of martyr precedes the suicide operation he will carry out.[687]

This intermingling of times on the lampposts of Ouzaï is comparable to the videos of the conductors of martyrdom operations, which I have already discussed above. The video is latent in the time between its recording and its being broadcast on TV. The individual announces himself or herself to be a martyr, but only becomes one when the video is shown on TV, and not necessarily when carrying out the operation.

On the lampposts in Ouzaï, each empty frame is latent and points to a future martyr who is still invisible, yet to be. The empty frames are placed next to spectral martyrs who died in the past and who are still present via their images. These are already here and therefore not latent. A picture can only be latent if it still needs to manifest itself. Images, once revealed, do not return to their latent status.

Contrary to *Faces*, where the poster was here and faded, the images in the empty frames in Ouzaï have still not been there. Also, when speaking about *Faces*, Hadjithomas/Joreige do not understand the fading posters of martyrs as latent:

> It is not latency. Sometimes images don't last, meaning in time images can be altered […] Images are not going into latency but into fading, obturations, off-screen obliteration, scratches, dissolving, whatever. Images become figures of absence. Absence and latency are not the same.[688]

To understand the difference between the latent image and the spectral image better, I will return to *Lasting Images* (*Fig. 4.40*), which I introduced in 4.3 when I discussed the differences and similarities between the visuals of the martyrs and the missing.

As mentioned, the artists developed the last film that Joreige's uncle shot before he went missing during the *Wars*. The results were barely visible figures on a white surface. These pictures are ghostly in a latent sense because they were there before, on the film roll, but have never been exposed. Through the act of developing,

687 Hadjithomas and Joreige, 'A State of Latency'.

688 Hadjithomas and Joreige, Zoom, 23 and 30 March 2021.

Hadjithomas/Joreige freed them from their latent status and made them visible. At the same time, Hadjithomas/Joreige tried to stay haunted.[689] Here, to be haunted means to accept living with latent ghosts, and to refuse the state's—and also the militias'—attempts to forget the missing, who are not visualised in posters and therefore not acknowledged on the city's walls.

Although their images have, with the exception of the above-mentioned UMAM poster, never been visible on the walls, the missing are here. Many people in Lebanon know about them; many of the disappeared are buried in unmarked mass graves in Beirut, and people walk over them on a daily basis. While the martyrs are haunting the living due to their visibility on the walls, which creates problems in the present, the missing are haunting due to their visual absence. Only Halwani, who dug out the UMAM posters and added biographical information to the anonymous faces, gave the missing a small amount of visibility on Beirut's walls, even if today only one trace of his work remains in Gemmayzeh (*Fig. 4.47*). Of course, the images of the missing have never been absent for their relatives. The martyrs and the missing might share a space in a living room, but they do not share space on the walls on the streets.

Although the fact that only fragments are left in *Faces* makes it similar to *Lasting Images*, the mode of present absence is different because the posters of *Faces* were visible on the wall. These images disappeared and reappeared, but they were not waiting to appear for the first time in a hidden position, like the image on the film rolls in *Lasting Images* and the future posters in the frames seen in *…A Faraway Souvenir*.

The Image Withdrawn Past a Surpassing Disaster: The Living Martyr

Some researchers link *Faces* to Jalal Toufic's notion of withdrawal past a surpassing disaster. For example, Sacranie suggests that *Faces* could be thought in the framework of this concept because, in her reading, Hadjithomas/Joreige 'attempt to restore some of what was lost'.[690] However, I would argue that images of martyrs usually do not withdraw past a surpassing disaster, as images that experienced such an event remain in the same form, which is not the case in *Faces*.

689 Hadjithomas and Joreige, 'Latency', 48.

690 Sacranie, 'Alternative Remembrances', 9.

A surpassing disaster is defined by Toufic as follows:

> whether a disaster is a surpassing one (for a community—defined by its sensibility to the immaterial withdrawal that results from such a disaster) cannot be ascertained by the number of casualties, the intensity of psychic traumas and the extent of material damage, but by whether we encounter in its aftermath symptoms of withdrawal of tradition.[691]

Toufic claims that after a surpassing disaster, certain things, which he calls 'tradition'—such as films, videos, music, art, paintings, and different forms of texts—withdraw immaterially, although it appears that they have survived. They look the same, but they are no longer the same.

After a surpassing disaster, artists should either resurrect the tradition that has been lost, or 'record this nothing' and reveal and acknowledge the loss; for example, artists can take photographs of the withdrawal of the referents, so that they are available for people in the future who might be able to resurrect the tradition.[692] This is because 'art acts like the mirror in vampire films: it reveals the withdrawal of what we think is still there'.[693] According to Toufic, the withdrawal of tradition past a surpassing disaster is comparable to the undead figure of the vampire, who, as he elaborates, is not reflected in the mirror. After surpassing disasters, tradition, like the vampire, seems to be here but is not.

Just as some cannot see spectral ghosts, some do not realise that a surpassing disaster has taken place, and therefore not all people are able to sense the immaterial withdrawal of the tradition. Some people think the tradition is still available and continue living in a time that has already gone by, while others consciously choose to be oblivious to it.[694] Toufic writes that this is wrong—in a manner, I would add, that is similar to the way that Derrida claims it is wrong to ignore the spectral ghost. It is crucial to recognise that something has vanished, although it seems to be here.

An example of an artwork that deals with the loss of tradition is Walid Raad's/The Atlas Group's *Appendix XVIII* (2008–12; *Fig. 4.80*), which has been discussed by Fares Chalabi. Raad considers the *Wars* a surpassing disaster, not because they killed, wounded, and traumatised thousands of people, but because they affected forms, colours, lines, and shapes, which sensed the danger and therefore withdrew and hid in letters, numbers, circles, and squares, as well as in other colours, but

691 Jalal Toufic, *The Withdrawal of Tradition Past a Surpassing Disaster* (n.p.: Forthcoming Books, 2009), 11–12.

692 Ibid., 57–60. See also Naeff, *Precarious Imaginaries*, 168–69.

693 Toufic, *Withdrawal*, 57.

694 Chalabi, 'Present', 119.

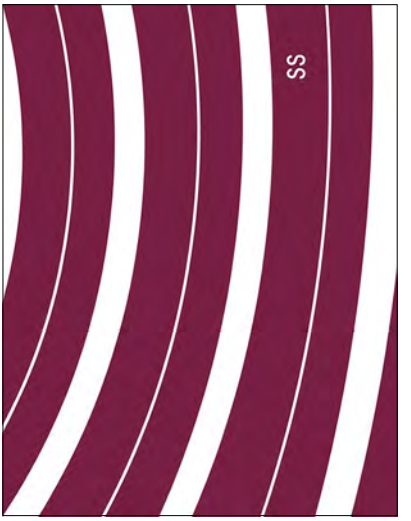

Fig. 4.80: Walid Raad/The Atlas Group, *Appendix XVIII, Plate 199_A History of a Nomination*, 2008–12, Inkjet Print on Archival Paper, 42 x 54.2 cm, © Walid Raad, Courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery New York.

also in catalogues and dissertations. In other words, the forms, colours, lines, and shapes appear to be present even though they have withdrawn. Raad photographed and documented the withdrawals to make it possible for people in the future to resurrect them.[695]

The withdrawal of tradition past a surpassing disaster is also addressed in Hadjithomas/Joreige's text 'A State of Latency' (2001), in which the artists reflect upon Mayla Soufangi, a woman who conducted an unsuccessful martyrdom operation in the South of Lebanon, which led the Israeli Army to send her to the notorious Khiam detention centre. A TV programme then labelled her a 'living martyr', because she had already recorded her martyr video using the stock phrase 'I am the martyr'. After her release, Soufangi was no longer the same, as Hadjithomas/Joreige tell us in the text. She started to take drugs and question her sexual identity. Her failed martyrdom operation and imprisonment could be termed a surpassing disaster because when she returned from jail, a part of her had withdrawn, although she looked the same as before.

The artists do not resurrect the tradition of Soufangi but document the loss of her personality. Hadjithomas/Joreige write that 'he who proclaims himself a martyr, who projects himself onto one of the empty frames of the electric posts of Ouzaï, cannot come back himself, but [as] another. There is no return from the realms of death'.[696] Soufangi had planned to become a martyr and probably envisioned herself in a martyr poster. Via the act of naming herself a martyr in a video and by taking the action to turn into an istishahida, along with the following imprisonment, she entered the realm of the undead in Toufic's sense.

According to Chalabi's reading of Toufic, the undead are physically alive but aware of the fact that they are dead while alive: 'Realizing that, the one who died before dying wakes up and becomes a lucid dreamer because he sees that the others, those who didn't experience death before dying, live in a dream thinking that

695 Ibid., 120. For the presence of the notion of withdrawal after a surpassing disaster in Raad's work, see also Saadawi, 'Rethinking the Witness', 110–11.

696 Hadjithomas and Joreige, 'State of Latency'.

they are just alive'.[697] By entering the realm of the undead, which is usually accessed through extreme situations, such as drugs or imprisonment, one becomes a witness to death. There, in the realm of the undead, one can collaborate with one's own dead double; this process is subject to constant anxiety, word salads, glossolalia, theft of thought, and other disturbances, and therefore one is unable to focus or write.[698]

Toufic criticises the fact that Marwan Hamadé, a former PSP member of parliament, is considered a 'living martyr' just because he survived an assassination attempt. This survival, according to Toufic, has not brought Hamadé into the realm of the undead, because the undead withdraw from the world in order to survive an extreme situation.[699] As an example of a living martyr, he instead suggests Riad al-Turk, who was imprisoned in Syria for seventeen years and lost his ability to dream and his connection to his life outside prison, which made him enter the realm of the undead.[700] Mark Westmoreland has expanded on Toufic's ideas, suggesting that Soha Bechara, who was imprisoned in Khiam for ten years after her failed assassination attempt on Antoine Lahad, turned into a living martyr because she survived despite torture and captivity.[701] Undead beings experienced another realm while still being physically alive and, by entering this realm, they changed into someone else, although this is not visible on the outside.

I should mention here that my concept of the undead, with which I describe the martyrs on the walls who are unable to die fully, does not match Toufic's conception of the undead. According to Toufic's critique of *Nancy*, which I introduced in 3.2, the dead, like the undead, are lost and disconnected from the living. Toufic notes that the four actors in the play, however, are living people who only pretend to be dead, because the dead do not hold inner monologues or wait for each other to stop talking before they start speaking; the dead hear only voiceovers, which are the voices of all the other dead. Also, Toufic claims that the absence of glossolalia points to the fact that the actors in *Nancy* are not dead.[702]

Whether *Nancy* has failed to embody Toufic's conception of the dead should not concern us too much here, but I would like to note that *Faces* does not address withdrawals of traditions that should be documented or preserved. This is the case because, as mentioned above, the posters of *Faces* in different stages do not look the same. Rather, the deterioration and return of elements is clearly visible.

697 Chalabi, 'Present', 125.

698 Ibid., 124–25.

699 Ibid., 125.

700 Toufic, *Undeserving Lebanon*, 24–27.

701 Westmoreland, 'Catastrophic Subjectivity', 199.

702 Toufic, *Undeserving Lebanon*, 73–75.

As a result, I do not think that Hadjithomas/Joreige resurrect a tradition past a surpassing disaster in *Faces*. What would this tradition be? If we understand the *Wars* and the 2006 War, after which *Faces* was created, as surpassing disasters, then the martyr posters are a result of the conflicts. They were produced by them. Can a surpassing disaster create images?

Images of Martyrs: Not Latent, Not Withdrawn, but Spectral

There are various images of present absences with only slight but important nuances. The posters of martyrs in general and of *Faces* in particular are not latent because they have previously been visible, and they are also not images that withdrew after a surpassing disaster because they change form and usually do not look the same when they return.

Via the conceptions of the latent and the withdrawn image, the figure of the martyr also differentiates itself from the missing, who are usually in a state of latency, and from the figure of the so-called living martyr, who withdraws after having experienced a surpassing disaster. While the images of the missing have never been widely revealed on the walls, the images of the living martyrs, in particular the videos they recorded, look the same but lost their tradition after the martyrdom project failed and the martyr was imprisoned.

4.6.4 The Martyr as a Spectral Ghost

I understand martyrs as undead beings due to their present absence. They died in the past but are still on the walls of the present, and despite the non-existence of their physical bodies, they are still alive and visible in pictures. Martyrs, like ghosts, move through time. As arrivants, they point to the future because they carry an unfinished dream for which they died . This dream, like the martyrs, comes from the past, which turns them into revenants. Martyrs haunt the present in a different shape, not only because they are now here in a different form, not as beings in flesh and blood but as images, but also because, through time, their posters are redesigned and redistributed or because someone else continues their cause in a different body as a specter of the predecessors.

There are several reasons that *Nancy* is not especially well suited to reflect the ghostly presence of the martyrs in Lebanon: the absence of a future realm, the linearity of time, the constant presence of the actors as images as well as persons, the return of the protagonists in the same form, and their predictable comings and goings. Only the actors' deaths and returns to life correspond to Derrida's hauntology.

I have argued that *Faces* is a better example of the reflection of the ghostly presence of the martyrs. Posters of shuhada from different decades are set next to each other, and their unpredictable comings and goings are visualised. Due to the partly

vanished surface of the posters, the martyrs are visible and invisible, present and absent at the same time. An image of the past can return in a different form. This seems to symbolise the sectarian dreams regarding Lebanon that the shuhada carry; these dreams originate from the past, where they were conceptualised, and the future, where they should be implemented.

Hadjithomas/Joreige embrace the martyr in *Faces*; unlike Khalil in *White Masks*, they do not become possessed by the ghost or try to extinguish it. They also do not want to use the image of the shahid for political purposes, like the political parties do. Rather, they seem to say that the martyrs can only be laid to rest when the *Ruin to Come* is built, and this can only be done when the martyrs are accepted as what they are: hauntings of the past and the future that disturb the present, but not beings that should be glorified or demonised. However, to identify the martyr's haunting, it is important to differentiate the martyr's image from other images of present absence, meaning from other ghosts. Unlike the missing, martyrs are usually not, latent because their posters were previously visible, and their images also did not withdraw after a surpassing disaster, because they change their form and may have been created as a result of such an event.

4.7 How *Nancy* Shows Us via Appropriation That the Martyr Image Is Fabricated

My interpretation of *Nancy* differs from previous writings on it, which primarily understand the play as a as a reflection on the memory and history of the *Wars*. In contrast, I argued that *Nancy*, via the visual strategy of appropriation, questions the picture and the figure of the martyr and shows us how images of shuhada, as fabricated remembrances, are used in the framework of visual politics.

By selecting underlying images from various parties for the re-made posters, *Nancy* shows that the anatomies of the martyr posters of all sects involved in the *Wars* consist of similar components: the party logo, other symbols, slogans, and an image of the deceased. All sects, in an act of uncritical appropriation, turned ID photographs into images of martyrs after the death of the referent. Unlike the parties, *Nancy* does not copy or replicate these images, but transfers them from the context of visual politics into critical art. Images of martyrs speak only when embedded in a truth claim. This has also been pointed out by Tony Chakar in *Four Cotton Underwear for Tony*. Simply by replacing one or a few elements, an image can become a picture for a martyr of another party. The imagery of the martyr, although of course differing with regard to religious or sectarian-cultural peculiarities, is in its basic structure the same among all Lebanese factions.

Also, the same photograph can be presented as an accusation image or as a trophy image, depending on who is publishing the poster with which intention,