It remains unclear how the four actors died there; however, just as after almost every other death in *Nancy*, they return to life. While the Lebanese Army found five weapons at Murr Tower, they only discovered four bodies. As Mroué explained to me, one person, who also came to Murr Tower, managed to flee and is consequently not present on the couch in *Nancy*.[243]

Only at the end of the play does the audience realise that they were spectators of a confession that the four actors have made about the crimes they committed during the *Wars*. However, these crimes are not legally crimes because they fall under the General Amnesty Law of 1991, and Rabih, Hatem, Ziad, and Lina were released. At the very end of the play, when the actors have already left the stage, original posters from the *Wars*—selected from the posters in Maasri's collection that served as underlying images for the visuals of *Nancy*—appear on all four screens.

3.6 Martyr Posters from the *Wars* and Their Appropriation in *Nancy*

The final aspect of *Nancy* that remains to be tackled in this chapter relates to the martyr posters. The makers of *Nancy* are picture-users who select, present, and recontextualise—in other words, appropriate—posters from the *Wars*. They are not replicating these images but are transferring them from a context of visual politics into critical art.

In the following, I will introduce the main theories of appropriation art and give an overview of the parties' poster formats during the *Wars* based on archival material, which is taken mostly from Maasri's collection signsofconflict.com and the library archives of the AUB. Then, I will outline how *Nancy* appropriates these and, finally, argue that by using strategies of appropriation art the play reveals that all parties involved in the conflicts used similar elements and schemes of image-making.

243 Ibid.

3.6.1 Underneath Each Picture There Is Always Another Picture: Introducing the Pictures Generation and Other Theories of Appropriation Art

The term 'appropriation' was coined by Karl Marx, who used it to refer to the violent takeover of goods and labour.[244] In visual art, appropriation art is conventionally understood as a term that

> refers to the taking over, into a work of art, of a real object or even an existing work of art. […] the term seems to have come into use specifically in relation to certain American artists in the 1980s, notably Sherrie Levine […]. Her aim was to create a new situation, and therefore a new meaning or set of meanings, for a familiar image. […] Appropriation has been used extensively by artists since the 1980s.[245]

Appropriation art is a theory-based art form that, through discursive reframing, imitates, quotes, changes, or combines other artworks or images of mass media and questions these very pictures from a critical-analytical perspective.[246] Appropriation art is grounded in the Pictures Generation, which was a group of artists, including Sherrie Levine, active in New York in the late 1970s and early 1980s who adapted pre-existing images from one visual territory to another. In doing so, they questioned notions of authorship, authenticity, and originality in images.

The theorists of the Pictures Generation—Craig Owens, Douglas Crimp, and Benjamin Buchloh—reflected on how one image can be read through another. Crimp responded in a seminal text to Michael Fried, who warned that art would deteriorate if the boundaries of the media became fluid. In this fluidity, or in other words, in the space between the different media, Fried locates the 'theatrical', which, according to him, presupposes time and the presence of viewers. These two aspects make the 'theatrical' non-artistic for Fried, who demands that the artwork should be available at any time and that it should not depend on the spectator. Unlike Fried, Crimp does not lament the dissolution of media. Rather, media become almost irrelevant for him, as they tell us little about the work as such.[247] Appropriation art requires the disclosure of 'structures of signification', which are to be found in the underlying, earlier picture—no matter what medium is being used. This entanglement with time, that is, the necessity of a preceding picture, together

244 Isabelle Graw, 'Dedication Replacing Appropriation', in *Remastered: The Art of Appropriation*, eds. Verena Gamper and Florian Steininger (Cologne: Buchhandlung Walther Koenig, 2017), 87.

245 Simon Wilson and Jessica Lack, *The Tate Guide to Modern Art Terms* (London: Tate Publishing, 2012), 20–21.

246 Johannes Meinhardt, 'Visuelle Brüche, Schichten und Stufen der Appropriation', in *Comeback: Kunsthistorische Renaissancen*, ed. Nicole Fritz (Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, 2019), 21–22.

247 Crimp, 'Pictures', 76–77.

with the abandonment of the significance of the medium and the need of a viewer who is able to identify the earlier picture, is what makes appropriation art postmodern.[248]

Crimp points out that the Pictures Generation emphasised the importance of relating images when writing: 'picturing what is always already another picture, [these] artists are, for the most part, picture users rather than picture makers'; and 'their activity involves the selection and presentation of images from the culture at large'.[249] Thus, appropriation art is primarily about re-using existing pictures rather than inventing new ones.

Owens understands the Pictures Generation in a manner similar to Crimp when he identifies it as including 'artists who generate images through the reproduction of other images'.[250] He calls such structures 'allegorical', describing them as follows:

> Allegorical imagery is appropriated imagery; the allegorist does not invent images but confiscates them. He lays claim to the culturally significant, poses as its interpreter. And in his hands the image becomes something other (allos = other + agoreuei = to speak). He does not restore an original meaning that may have been lost or obscured […]. Rather, he adds another meaning to the image. If he adds, however, he does so only to replace: the allegorical meaning supplants an antecedent one; it is a supplement.[251]

Appropriation artists recontextualise existing images by changing their meaning without inventing new pictures. According to Crimp, 'underneath each picture there is always another picture'.[252] To reference an existing image is, as Owens writes, to 'venture into proscribed territory',[253] and to interpret allegorical images, they must be 'deciphered'.[254]

In the framework of thought of the Pictures Generation, artists who use allegorical structures are not copying existing images, plagiarising them, or making aesthetic mistakes. Instead, they are critically engaging with the pre-existing images and their meanings. According to Buchloh, since the quoted images are usu-

248 Ibid., 87–88.

249 Douglas Crimp, 'About Pictures', *Flash Alt*, 88–98, 1978, https://flash---art.com/article/about-pictures/.

250 Craig Owens, 'The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism', *October* 12 (Spring 1980): 69.

251 Ibid.

252 Crimp, 'Pictures', 87.

253 Owens, 'Allegorical Impulse', 67.

254 Ibid., 70.

ally identifiable, 'the viewer encounters a decentralized text that completes itself through his or her reading and comparison of the original and subsequent layers of meaning that the text/image has acquired'.[255] The underlying image is still significant, as the context of the new meaning can be read only in relation to it. By displaying an image in another framework, new layers of meaning are added to it. Recontextualisation, as Martha Buskirk summarises, is a critical strategy.[256]

Appropriation art has also been practised after the Pictures Generation. Juliane Rebentisch argues it could, due to the artist's analytical, social, and cultural scientific approach, be understood as a forerunner to today's artistic research.[257] In the twenty-first century, appropriation art became popular because of the easy accessibility of image programs, such as Photoshop, along with digital photography and the internet. However, twenty-first-century appropriation art differs from that of the Pictures Generation because it is not primarily concerned with notions of originality, authorship, and authenticity. Instead, it is focused on examining how the meaning of images is generated and transported. As a result, some theorists, such as Johannes Meinhardt, argue that the art of appropriation after the Pictures Generation lost much of its analytical and artistic rigour.[258]

Others, however, still locate a subversive potential in today's appropriation art. Verena Gamper, for example, writes that works that reference and 'build upon a preexisting pictorality'[259] can be understood as 'speech meets counterspeech' and therefore as responses to preceding images.[260] Similarly, Isabelle Graw argues that appropriation art is still strategic and goal oriented.[261] She also points out that because images have agency and are able to strike back, they have the potential to undermine the intentions of the one who has appropriated them.[262] At the same time, she criticises Crimp for claiming that appropriation is immanently critical and subversive. According to her, appropriation art should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and so one cannot say that a work of appropriation art is intrinsically critical. It is certain that something has changed when a picture is appropriated, but 'what has actually changed can only be determined by investigating concrete, specific works'.[263]

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255 Benjamin Buchloh, 'Allegorical Procedure, Appropriation and Montage in Contemporary Art', *Artforum* (September 1982): 52.

256 Martha Buskirk, 'Appropriation Under the Gun', *Art in America* 80, no. 6 (June 1992): 37.

257 Juliane Rebentisch, *Theorien der Gegenwartskunst zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junius, 2013), 163.

258 Meinhardt, 'Visuelle Brüche', 21–23.

259 Verena Gamper, 'Appropriation as Dialogue: Artworks Among Themselves', in Gamper and Steininger, *Remastered*, 21.

260 Verena Gamper, 'Introduction', in Gamper and Steininger, *Remastered*, 9.

261 Graw, 'Dedication', 85.

262 Ibid., 83.

263 Ibid., 89.

In the following, I will investigate the posters of *Nancy* as individual cases of appropriation art. In doing so, I first trace the emergence of the posters among the different factions during the *Wars* and then identify visual strategies of appropriation used in the play.

3.6.2 Formats of Martyr Posters During the *Wars*

During the *Wars*, all parties that published and financed posters for their fallen militiamen issued ordinary formats, or obituary formats, as Maasri calls them. These ordinary formats usually encompass a photograph and the name of the deceased, a short biography, often the logo of the party, and a slogan. Ordinary formats were also serialised. In the serial format, posters consist of a template in which only the photograph, name, and biographical information are changed, while all other parts of the poster remain uniform. According to Maasri, the serial format was used not only because it saved time but also because it created a standard visual identity, which meant that it was clear at first sight which group had issued the poster.[264] On the other hand, Lara Deeb argues that the serial format makes martyrs 'faceless, like indistinguishable masks', because they are reduced to 'pieces of a collective'.[265]

The visual material I found in the archives suggests that Ahrar was the first party involved in the *Wars* to remember their martyrs in posters in serial formats. Posters from 1976 show the faces of the martyrs inside a cedar (*Figs. 3.55–3.56*), while the logo of the party—a cedar in a circle—appears on both the lower left and the lower right, with the name of the shahid written between. This format is not appropriated as such in the posters of *Nancy*. Yet I would suggest that the play gives Ahrar such a prominent role in the beginning—when five martyr posters of Rabih (*Figs. 3.7–3.11*) are shown—because Ahrar seems to be the first Lebanese party that organised the distribution of martyr posters serially.

The Phalange (since 1985, the Kataeb/the LF) also launched martyr posters for their dead militiamen in the early stages of the *Wars* (*Fig. 3.57*).[266] However, I could not detect any seriality across their posters in the 1970s. For well-known martyrs, the Phalange, like the other parties, designed more distinctive formats. As previously noted, the most prominent martyr of the Phalange is Bachir, who is the subject of numerous images. One of these posters, as mentioned above, shows up in

264 Maasri, *Off the Wall*, 89.

265 Deeb, *An Enchanted Modern*, 57. Deeb writes about Hezbollah posters, but her statements can be transferred to the standardised formats of all groups.

266 According to Maasri this is a poster issued by the Phalange. However, she gave the reference number 'NLP 14' to the image, which would indicate that it is an Ahrar poster.

Fig. 3.55: Ahrar, 'Our Souls in Ransom to Lebanon. The Martyr Hero Adel Jamil Tartturi', 1976, Poster, 16 x 22 cm, NLP 10, signsofconflict.com.

Fig. 3.56: Ahrar, 'The Hero Martyr of Love and Freedom. The Martyr Hero Khalil Hajula', 1976 (?), Poster, 16 x 22 cm, NLP 8, signsofconflict.com.

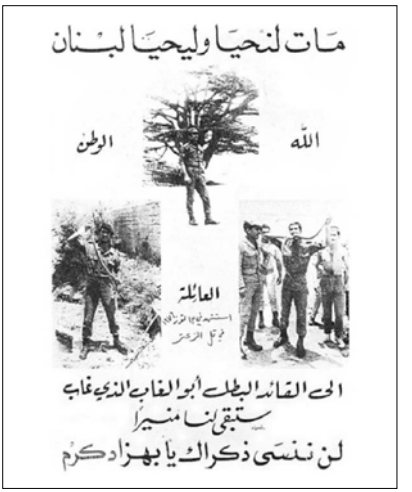

Fig. 3.57: Phalange (?), 'He Died So That We May Live and So Lebanon May Live. We Will Not Forget Your Memory Oh Bahzad Karam', 1976, Poster, 21 x 30 cm, NLP 14, signsofconflict.com.

Nancy—specifically, it appears simultaneously on each of the four screens that are above the actors (*Fig. 3.52*). I could not find many posters for individual martyrs commemorated by the LF or the Kataeb after Bachir's death in 1982, and therefore would argue that after 1982, the LF and the Kataeb remembered their martyrs through Bachir, who served, as I will elaborate further in 4.1, as the archetypal martyr, metaphorically embodying all fallen LF and Kataeb militiamen. This is reflected in *Nancy*, as the underlying images of many posters of Rabih, such as the depictions with muscular crossed arms and sunglasses (*Figs. 3.12, 3.13*), are images of Bachir (*Fig. 3.58*), as I will discuss further in 4.4.

Fig. 3.58: Phalange (Photographer Varoujan), Bachir Gemayel, 1980, Poster, 25 x 34 cm, WJA 37, signsofconflict.com.

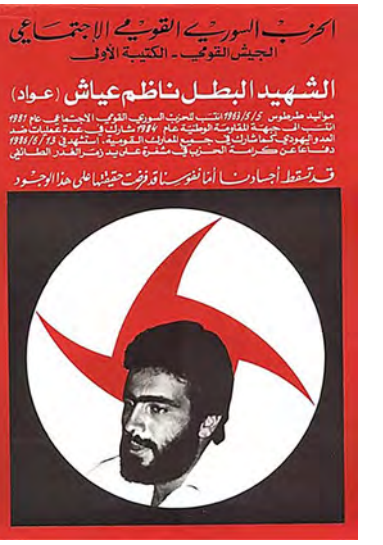

Fig. 3.59: SSNP, 'The Martyr Hero Nazem Ayyash', 1986, Poster, 47 x 68 cm, AAJ 43, signsofconflict.com.

In contrast, Lina's posters are not direct appropriations of the LF and Kataeb posters in terms of format. Rather, they are related to the role of female martyrs across various militias, a notion to which I will also return in 4.4. Posters of Rabih and Lina (*Figs. 3.12*, *3.13*, *3.48*) encompass a white background with a red stripe below. This points to the fact that serial formats existed but does not provide conclusive evidence of a direct appropriation of LF posters, as I could not find such a poster design in the archives I visited.

Around 1985, a general decline in the number of posters from the Kataeb can be observed. According to Jabre, the reason for this was the establishment of the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation, a television channel that the group used for communicating their political messages. Due to this new medium, images lost relevance.[267]

The SSNP had already commemorated its main martyr, Anutan Saadeh, before the *Wars* had started. He was the founder of the party and was killed in 1949.[268] Therefore, it is not surprising that the group's first martyr posters concerning the *Wars* date from 1975. The SSNP started to produce serial formats at the latest in 1980 and in the following years developed several versions of these, always in black,

267 Jabre, *Lebanese Resistance Posters*, 6.

268 For details about the life and death of Antuan Saadeh, see Bonsen, *Martyr Cults*, 98–100; Solomon, *In Search*, 11–32. The AUB library archives hold a large collection of letters and photographs from Saadeh's life.

Fig. 3.60: LNRF/LCP, 'Martyr of the LNRF. The Pearl of the Bekaa Lola Abboud', 1985, Poster, 28 x 68 cm, ASH 134, signsofconflict.com.

Fig. 3.61: LNRF/LCP, 'The Martyr of the LNRF. Hero Comrade Mohammad Mafuz', 1984, Poster, 27 x 57 cm, ASH 176, signsofconflict.com.

red, and white. For a death of Lina (*Fig. 3.44*), *Nancy* appropriates a poster used for commemorating the SSNP's martyr Nazem Ayyash (*Fig. 3.59*). It depicts the martyr's face on a red background and includes the party logo and slogans.[269]

The LCP employed a serial format in 1984–85 (*Figs. 3.60–3.61*).[270] This format is also the underlying image for a death of Ziad (*Fig. 3.33*). It shows the martyr in the centre of the image on a bright background, with black writing above and below the photograph and a turquoise-blue stripe containing a slogan in the lower part

269 For a discussion of martyr posters of the SSNP, see Maasri, *Off the Wall*, 94–96; Bonsen, *Martyr Cults*, 128–39.

270 These posters were issued in collaboration with the Lebanese National Resistance Front (Jammoul).

Fig. 3.62: LCP, 'The Martyr Leader Ahmad al-Mir al-Ayubi (Abu Hassan). Member of the Office of the Lebanese Communist Party', 1979, Poster, 48 x 70 cm, LCP 17, signsofconflict.com.

of the poster. Like the other parties, the LCP commemorated their high-ranking party members in distinct formats, as evidenced by a poster that was published in 1979 (*Fig. 3.62*). This image is appropriated in *Nancy* for a death of Ziad for the LCP (*Fig. 3.32*). Both pictures show the men directly looking at the viewer and include a flower with a cut stem.

The Morabitoun and the Arab Socialist Union, a Sunni Nasserist organisation that was closely allied with the Morabitoun, also distributed posters of their martyrs in the first years of the *Wars*, although to a lesser extent than did other parties discussed. Given the small number of Morabitoun posters that remain in the archives, it seems that the group was not as active in celebrating its martyrs visually as were Ahrar, the SSNP, the LF, the Kataeb, and the LCP. What is remarkable about the Morabitoun posters is the recurrent presence of the Holiday Inn after they won the Battle of the Hotels (*Figs. 3.63–3.64*). One of these posters has a collective format (*Fig. 3.63*). This kind of format, in contrast to the individual format, depicts not a single shahid but rather a group of martyrs, who often died in the same battle.[271] The poster in *Fig. 3.63* is the underlying image for a death of Hatem for the Morabitoun (*Fig. 3.20*). In another death of Hatem for this same militia, a serial format employed by the Arab Socialist Union (*Figs. 3.65–3.66*) serves as the underlying image (*Fig. 3.21*). The background of these posters is a dazzling green, and the photograph of the martyr is placed in a circle. Above and below his face, red text commemorates his martyrdom, and a black stripe with white letters is visible on the bottom of the image. In the remake in *Nancy*, the octagonal Morabitoun logo is added to the poster.

271 For collective martyr posters, see Maasri, *Off the Wall*, 89–91; Chaib, 'Hezbollah Seen', 125.

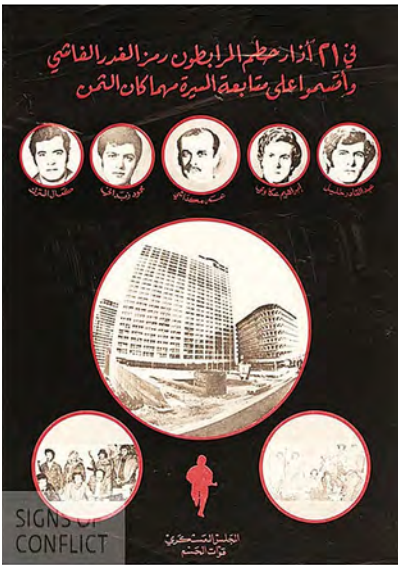

Fig. 3.63: Morabitoun, 'March 21, the Morabitoun Destroyed the Symbol of Fascist Treason and Pledged to Continue the Journey at Whatever Cost', 1976, Poster, 46 x 62 cm, AUB 107, signsofconflict.com.

Fig. 3.64: Morabitoun, 'March 21, the Morabitoun Destroyed the Symbol of Fascist Treason and Pledged to Continue the Journey at Whatever Cost – Ibrahim Koleilat', 1977, Poster, 50 x 70 cm, AUB 14, signsofconflict.com.

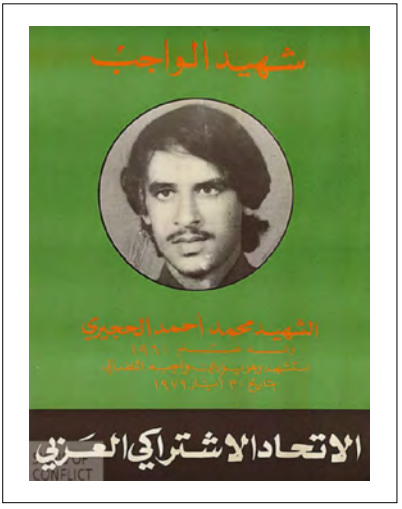

Fig. 3.65: Arab Socialist Union, 'Martyr of Duty. The Martyr Mohammad Ahmad al-Hujairi', 1979, Poster, 42 x 58 cm, ASH 13, signsofconflict.com.

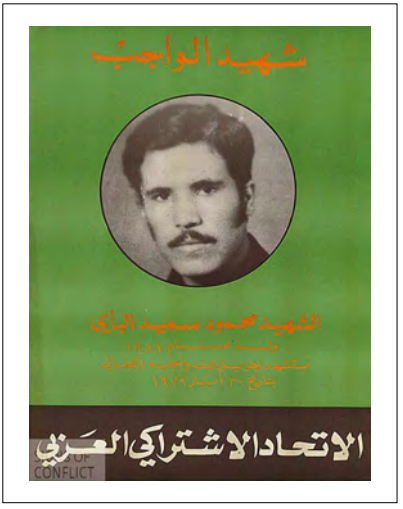

Fig. 3.66: Arab Socialist Union, 'Martyr of Duty. The Martyr Mahmud Said al-Bay', 1979, Poster, 42 x 58 cm, ASH 14, signsofconflict.com.

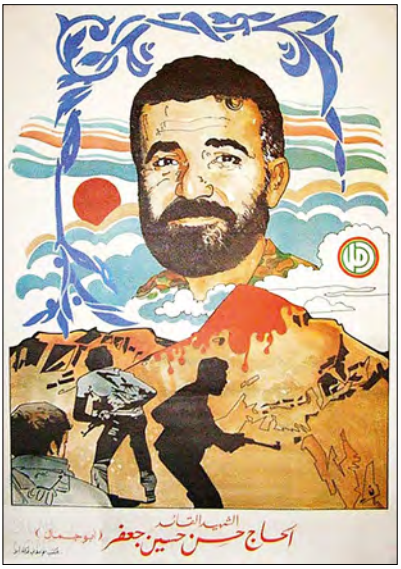

Fig. 3.67: Amal (Designer Nabil Kdouh), 'The Martyr Commander, Hajj Hassan Hossein Jaafar (Abu Jammal)', 1988 (?), Poster, 42 x 60 cm, BYR 013, signsofconflict.com.

According to Bonsen, the first martyr posters issued by Amal date from 1975.[272] Amal and Hezbollah often transferred photographs into paintings and drawings and employed elements of caricature (*Fig. 3.67*).[273] Both groups' posters are diverse in style, and I agree with Schmitt's claim that, among the various parties, Shia posters show the richest iconography and use the most dramatic effects.[274]

Hezbollah has developed different serial formats over time. One of these was invented in the 1980s and consists of the party logo, prominently placed in the centre of the poster, along with a photograph of the martyr, his name, and other biographical information, as well as a commemorative slogan (*Figs. 3.68–3.69*).[275] This format is appropriated in *Nancy* for a poster that accompanies a death of Ziad for Hezbollah (*Fig. 3.37*). Individual posters by Hezbollah serve as underlying images for posters depicting further deaths of this actor. For instance, the death of Ziad that is commemorated in *Figure 3.38* is based on a Hezbollah poster that includes a rising sun behind a black mountain and a yellow chain of flowers in front of the mountain (*Fig. 3.70*). Hezbollah posters also act as underlying images for the posters of deaths of Ziad for Amal. An example is a Hezbollah poster that depicts martyrs in front of a background showing the Dome of the Rock, birds, and flowers (*Fig. 3.71*) that is appropriated for a poster that commemorates a death of Ziad (*Fig. 3.36*) for Amal.

To sum up, many factions involved in the *Wars* venerated their martyrs in posters and used distinctive individual, but also serial and collective, formats. Some of these martyr cults, such as that of the SSNP, began decades before the *Wars* started; others, such as Hezbollah's, started during the *Wars*.

272 Bonsen, *Martyr Cults*, 329.

273 Chaib, 'Hezbollah Seen', 115–16; Maasri, 'Aesthetics', 169.

274 Schmitt, *Advertised to Death*, 69.

275 Straub briefly mentions this template (*Das Selbstmordattentat*, 82).

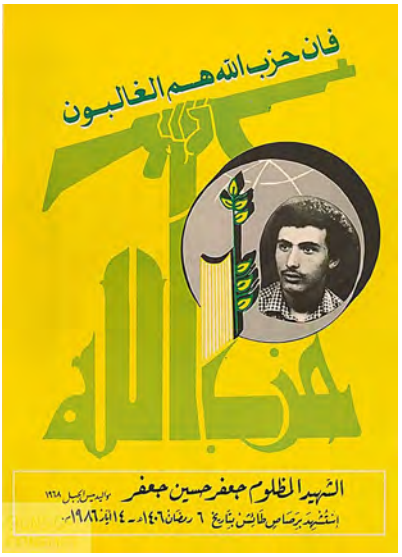

Fig. 3.68: Hezbollah, 'The Victimised Martyr Jafar Hossein Jafar', 1986, Poster, 40 x 55 cm, ASH 23, signsofconflict.com.

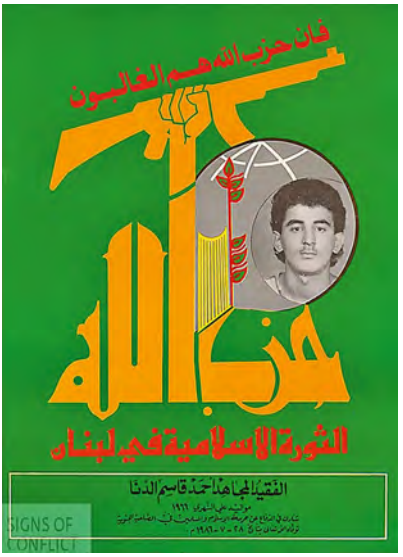

Fig. 3.69: Hezbollah, 'The Lost Fighter Kassem al-Danna', 1986, Poster, 39 x 54 cm, ASH 22, signsofconflict.com.

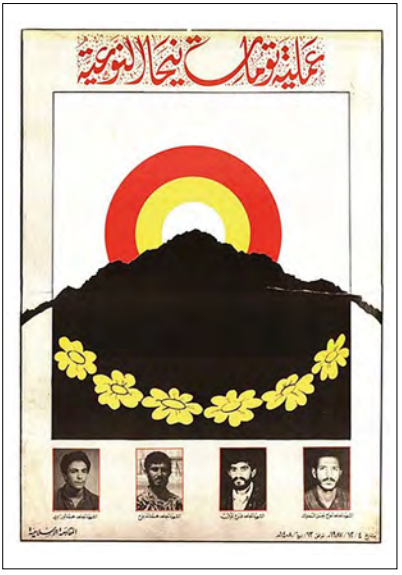

Fig. 3.70: Hezbollah (Designer Mohammad Ismail), 'Toumat Niha's High-Quality Operation', 1987, Poster, 50 x 70 cm, HZB 17, signsofconfllict.com.

Fig. 3.71: Hezbollah, 'Martyrs on the Path to Jerusalem', 1987, Poster, 49 x 70 cm, HZB 14, signsofconflict.com.

3.6.3 Visual Strategies of Appropriation in *Nancy*

In tracing the history and types of martyr posters from the *Wars*, I have also shown examples where *Nancy* appropriates them. In most cases, the underlying image is a poster of the faction for which the actors died. This is the first appropriation strategy that I have identified in *Nancy*. I call this mode direct appropriation.

A second strategy, which I term cross-appropriation and which I also have hinted at above, is that where a poster from another faction is used as the underlying image, as I have shown with the Hezbollah poster (*Fig. 3.71*) that serves as the underlying image for an Amal poster (*Fig. 3.36*) in *Nancy*. Another example is a poster accompanying a death of Rabih for the SLA. This poster, in which he is standing next to a map of Lebanon (*Fig. 3.15*), seems to be an appropriation of a poster by the Lebanese Army (*Fig. 3.72*) that also shows a man with a Lebanese map. Another example is a poster accompanying Lina's death for the LF (*Fig. 3.48*), which appropriates a poster of the Lebanese National Resistance Front (*Fig. 3.73*) by depicting the same kind of vehicle.

A third visual strategy employed in *Nancy* is the fusion of posters. In this case, elements from two posters from different parties involved in the *Wars* are merged into one poster in *Nancy*. This can be seen in an image that accompanies a death of

Fig. 3.72: Lebanese Army, 'The Army Is You Is Us', Poster, 45 x 60 cm, ASH 74, signsofconflict.com.

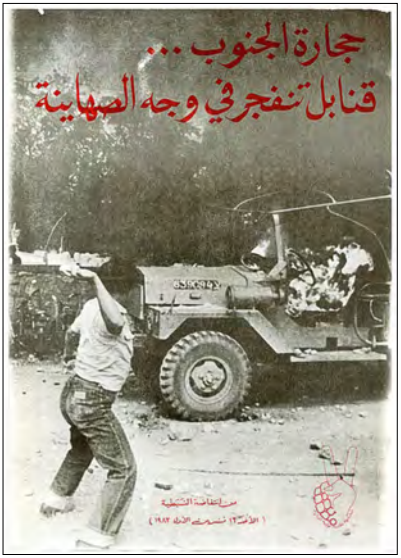

Fig. 3.73: LNRF, 'Stones of the South... Bombs Explode in the Face of the Zionists. From the Nabatieh Uprising 16 October 1983', 1983, Poster, 32 x 45 cm, AAJ 106, signsofconflicts.com.

Ziad for the LCP (*Fig. 3.32*): while both the man (who is facing the viewer) and the rose with the cut stem originate from a poster by the LCP (*Fig. 3.62*), the mountains in the background seem to be appropriated from an Amal poster (*Fig. 3.67*), which could be a hint that Ziad will join Amal later in the play. A fusion of underlying images also occurs in another poster of Ziad, one in which he—as the visual suggests via the inclusion of both logos and the mentioning of the names of both parties—dies for the PFLP and LCP jointly (*Fig. 3.33*). The overall design is reminiscent of a serial LCP template (*Figs. 3.60–3.61*), as discussed above. However, the actor's pose is not one usually assumed in ID photographs; rather, because of his crossed arms and his gaze, which is directed upwards to his right, it resembles a poster of Bachir issued by the Phalange (*Fig. 3.58*).

A fourth visual strategy is the multiplication of one poster. In this case, one or more underlying images are appropriated for several posters in *Nancy* in such a manner that the re-made versions differ only in minor details. Examples of multiplications are detectable in two images showing Hatem and Ziad as martyrs for Amal and the IUM, respectively (*Fig. 3.25*, *3.36*). Both pictures are appropriations of a Hezbollah poster (*Fig. 3.71*), as they depict the Dome of the Rock, a moon, birds, and a red rose with green leaves in the background. Only the corpse in a shroud is omitted from the posters in *Nancy*. Crucial is that both posters look the same in *Nancy*; only the photograph, the name, and the party branding differ from each other.

Other examples of multiplications are three posters that accompany Rabih after having died for Ahrar and Hatem after having died for the Morabitoun (*Figs. 3.8–3.9*, *Fig. 3.19*). All three posters show the same image structure, namely a man standing in front of a ruin. While the placement of a ruin (though the ruins are different, as I will elaborate in 4.5) visible in the background is an appropriation of a Morabitoun poster (*Fig. 3.64*), the man standing in front of the building could be traced back to two underlying images; namely, images of a fighter of the PSP (*Fig. 3.74*) and of Mustafa Marouf Saad, the founder of the military wing of the Popular Nasserist Organisation, a Saida-based group allied with the Morabitoun (*Fig. 3.75*).

Multiplications can also be detected in two posters that accompany deaths of Hatem and Ziad (*Figs. 3.24*, *3.35*). In both images, the logo of the party—in one case Amal and in the other case the Morabitoun—is placed below the head of the martyr. The writing inside a beige strip announces the deaths as martyrdoms. Red rays come from above, and green (*Fig. 3.35*) and black (*Fig. 3.24*) rays emanate from below the photograph, while nine drops of blood are visible at the bottom of the poster. The rays are appropriations from a PSP poster that depicts three martyrs' faces and red rays emanating from a sinking sun in its upper half, and black stripes in its lower half, where five drops of blood can also be seen (*Fig. 3.76*).

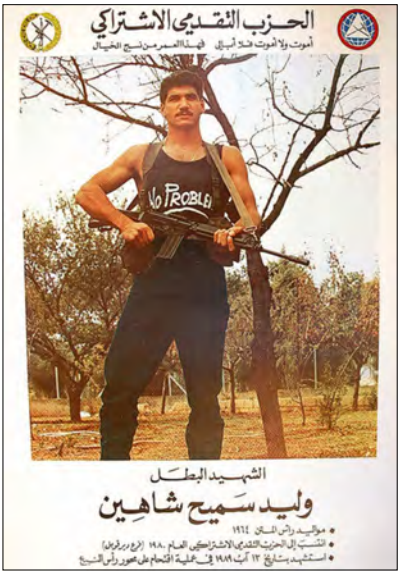

Fig. 3.74: PSP, 'To Die or Not to Die, What Care I. For This Life Is but a Figment of the Imagination. The Martyr Hero Walid Samih Chahin', 1989, Poster, PSP 63, signsofconflict.com.

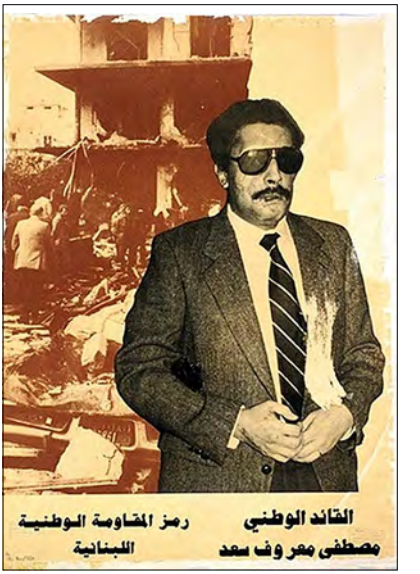

Fig. 3.75: Popular Nasserist Organisation, 'The National Leader, Mustafa Marouf Saad. The Symbol of the Lebanese National Resistance', Poster, 50 x 70 cm, 320-PCD2080-077, American University of Beirut/Library Archives.

A fifth visual strategy can be detected in what I call the Green and Blue Groups, posters accompanying deaths of Lina and Hatem, which I will discuss in detail in 4.3 (*Figs. 3.21–3.23, 3.44–3-46*). In Hatem's case, the underlying image is a serial poster of the Arab Socialist Union (*Figs. 3.65–3.66*); in Lina's case, the underlying images are the poster of the SSNP member Ayyash (*Fig. 3.59*) and, due to the presence of a female face, Sana Muhaidly, who is also a martyr of the SSNP (*Fig. 3.77*). In both cases, the underlying images are chosen from either the party the actor died for or an allied party. Crucially, the elements of the *Nancy* posters in both respective groups gradually disappear or reappear.

Finally, there are also posters that are appropriated as found, without any changes. This applies to the posters of Hariri and Bachir (*Figs. 3.52–3.53*) and the press clipping of Rabih's humiliation (*Fig. 3.14*).

By using—sometimes also combining—these six strategies of appropriation and thereby demonstrating that many pictorial elements of the posters can be transferred from one political faction to another, *Nancy* makes evident that the visual language of the martyr poster is very similar among the parties involved in the *Wars*. Common elements in posters among the parties are the logo of the party,

Fig. 3.76: PSP, '1st Annual Commemoration of Their Martyrdom in the War of the Mountain', 1984, Poster, 50 x 70 cm, PSP 20, signsofconflict.com.

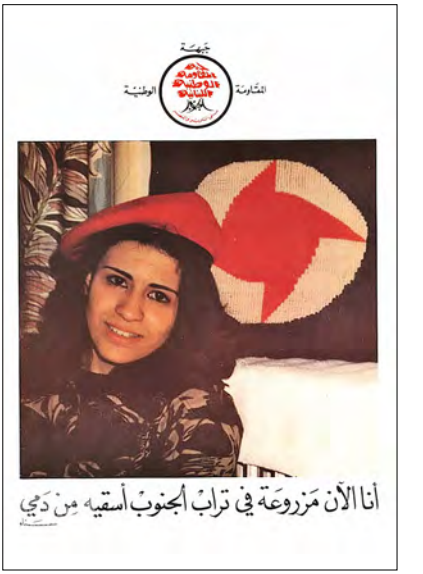

Fig. 3.77: LNRF/SSNP, 'I Am Now Planted in the South, I Soak Its Earth with My Blood – Sana', 1985, Poster, 45 x 60 cm, AAJ 24, signsofconflict.com.

an image of the deceased person, symbols, and slogans. Further, the multiplications that involve only minor changes could be read as a nod to the seriality of the poster production.

3.6.4 Underneath Each Poster There Is Always Another Poster

The posters of *Nancy* are not isolated pictures; they are engaging and communicating with already existing images. Their meaning can be grasped only when they are thought in relation to the posters of the *Wars*. Like the artists of the Pictures Generation, the makers of *Nancy* do not take images as given but appropriate them critically. Although most of the visuals in *Nancy* have been changed and modified, they are still clearly identifiable as originating from martyr posters of the *Wars*. The original context remains relevant for the new interpretation of the pictures because the images need to be read through each other. In doing so, a new meaning is added to the image, which replaces the previous meaning. *Nancy* does not replicate the posters of the *Wars*. Instead, through its references to visual cultures of martyrdom surrounding the *Wars*, the play transfers martyr posters from a context

of visual politics into critical art, where the use of the martyr poster for various political purposes is questioned and reflected on. Therefore, *Nancy* shows that appropriation art in the twenty-first century has not lost its subversive layer and can still act as 'counterspeech'.

Mroué is a picture-user who selects and presents existing pictures. He has commented on his image-making practice as follows:

> maybe the role of artists and even intellectuals is not to produce images but to take iconic images and try to deconstruct them. To 'de-sacralise' them. There are a lot of images that have become icons that have in turn become untouchable. For example, when I talk about the street posters of martyrs, […] these images impose themselves on society and it's difficult to question their presence and impact on our daily lives. […] My work is trying not to produce new images but to find and take these images and deconstruct them through reflection and by re-reading them in a human, personalised manner.[276]

For *Nancy*, we could say that Mroué reflects which ideas and messages the underlying images were intended to transmit and in which discourse they were aimed to function. By changing the context of their presentation, he transfers the posters into the territory of contemporary art, and this allows critical examination of the posters. In doing so, he provides a reading of these images that does not follow the originally intended reading.

3.7 Similar Stories, Similar Visuals, and a Common Meeting Point

In this chapter, I first offered an outline of the recent and current state of Beirut's art scene and argued that the state of research on art production in Lebanon frequently includes discussions on the Post-War Generation, of which Mroué and *Nancy* are part, but often in the framework of trauma and amnesia. I will contest these two modes of thought in the following discussion of *Nancy* and of other artworks dealing with topics that are similar to those of the play.

Then, I introduced different aspects of *Nancy*. The stage of the play was consciously conceptualised as an overkill of speech, written text, and image in order to resemble the situation during the *Wars*. Moreover, the element of dying and coming back to life that is similar to a videogame reminds Mroué of the situation in Lebanon now and then.

276 Anthony Downey, 'Lost in Narration: A Conversation Between Rabih Mroué and Anthony Downey', *Ibraaz*, 5 January 2012, https://www.ibraaz.org/interviews/11.