AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

OLD HOUSES OF BEIRUT AS OBJECTS/SUBJECTS OF ATTACHMENT

by
MARIANA SALAM NAKFOUR

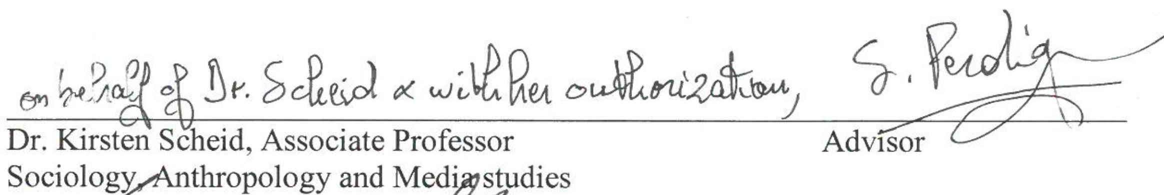
Beirut, Lebanon
June 2020

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

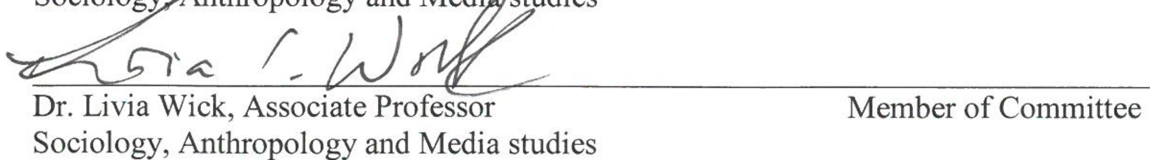
OLD HOUSES OF BEIRUT AS OBJECTS/SUBJECTS OF ATTACHMENT

by
MARIANA SALAM NAKFOUR

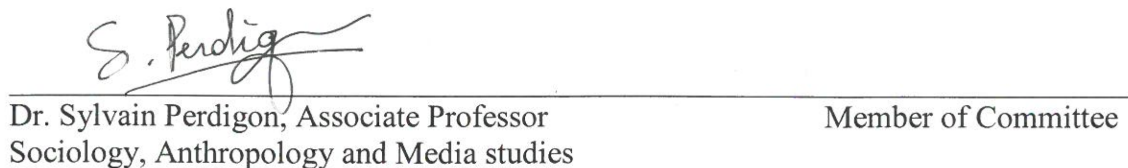
Approved by:



Dr. Kirsten Scheid, Associate Professor — Advisor
Sociology, Anthropology and Media studies



Dr. Livia Wick, Associate Professor — Member of Committee
Sociology, Anthropology and Media studies



Dr. Sylvain Perdigon, Associate Professor — Member of Committee
Sociology, Anthropology and Media studies

Date of thesis defense: June 18, 2020

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

THESIS, DISSERTATION, PROJECT RELEASE FORM

Student Name: NAKFOUR MARIANA SALAM

Last First Middle

☑ Master's Thesis ◯ Master's Project ◯ Doctoral Dissertation

☑ I authorize the American University of Beirut to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of my thesis, dissertation, or project; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes.

☑ I authorize the American University of Beirut, to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of it; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes after : **One ✓ year from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation, or project.**
Two ---- years from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation, or project.
Three ---- years from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation, or project.

29 June, 2020

Signature Date

// AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Mariana Salam Nakfour for Master of Arts
Major: Socio-cultural Anthropology

Title: Old houses of Beirut as Objects/Subjects of Attachment

Beirut's old houses have been gradually disappearing in order to make way for modern buildings. This has caused some Lebanese citizens a lot of pain and sadness, including my interlocutors. I did my fieldwork with a group of people who are absolutely fond of old houses. They go on house-visits around Beirut and beyond in order to photograph old and abandoned houses, and share their photographs on their social media pages. "We want to show people what we see in these houses, which they pass by every day without noticing," claimed Roy.

Through joining my interlocutors' house-visits and interviewing them, I wanted to explore their connection with and experiences of these houses. My interlocutors claim that by going on these trips they are simultaneously "going back to the roots." Old houses are the "real Beirut" according to them, and everything else is just a degradation and disfiguration of this Beirut. Old houses are rare traces of an urban experience they judge as better and more pleasant.

Through "going back to the roots," my interlocutors are not only going back to the original, untainted Beirut, but it's also a return to one's ancestry and to "nature" they claim. Old houses are more "natural," "humane," "soulful" than the other houses that make up today's built-environment. They are humble because they are closer to nature in their colour schemes, textures, entanglement and so on. They experience old houses as "made of earth," in contrast to the "artificial and soulless" Beirut.

The houses' materiality, along with the decay and transformation are important reasons for why my interlocutors experience them as "souls." (which was a prevalent theme during fieldwork) I argue that this "meeting of souls," is a reflection on the resemblances between them, the houses and nature, which is why I claim that my interlocutors are "ecologically aesthetic" (Bateson, 1979)

My interlocutors visit these houses in order to feel things, which is why I argue that their house-visits are “emotional-practices.” These practices guide their pursuits of a different Beirut and open up other possibilities of how space can look or feel like. Through their house-visits, they are trying to connect to the city in their own way and to temporarily feel intimate to Beirut, something they do not experience in their everyday lives.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT………………………………………………...1

Chapter

1. BEIRUT EXPERIENCES OF TIME AND ARCHITECTURE...4
2. THE "NATURAL-NESS" OF OLD HOUSES…………………….....23
3. EMOTIONAL-PRACTICES OF HOUSE-VISITING………......36
4. OLD HOUSES AND BATESON'S "ECOLOGICAL AESTHETICS" ……………………………………………………….........59

CONCLUSION…………………………………………………………..........72

BIBLIOGRAPHY…………………………………………………………....74

CHAPTER 1
BEIRUT EXPERIENCES OF ARCHITECTURE AND TIME

I presented my thesis interest last summer in a workshop in Amman to an audience including two Lebanese architects and academics from AUB who are involved in contemporary urban issues in the country. I opened by asserting, “The old buildings in Lebanon do not fit in the vision of the city.” Immediately, one of the architects interrupted me cautioning, “Be careful, it’s not the old buildings that do not fit in the city; it is the city that does not fit in these old buildings!” The other architect firmly nodded her approval. Similarly, my interlocutors speak of Beirut as a city in continual transformation; however, no matter what happens to it, regardless of the forms it takes on or claims as her own, the real Beirut will always be the “old houses.” The rest is just “noise,” “nonsense,” and “heartache,” expressions my interlocutors frequently used.

> Some new buildings are nice, but they are not made in a context. Like the Bernard Khoury building in Mar Mikhail. It destroys the whole area; it’s a nonsense this building. NONSENSE! It doesn’t make sense. It has nothing to do with Beirut and the history.
>
> -Marie

Walking around Beirut, you find yourself surrounded by a multi-layered built environment, where low-rise old houses, often in decay, are scattered here and there, in between modern houses, hemmed in or merely noticeable. The sight of an old house covered in order to be destroyed, or a high-rise tower erecting in its place, has become a familiar, expected, yet still met with sorrow occurrence. Kanafani suggests the term “institutionalized neglect” (2017,51) to describe the decay of Beirut’s old houses, which she argues isn’t solely a “natural” one. It is more than the effects of time. The dereliction is often actively pursued by people in power (real estate agents, politicians and so on) or the owners of old houses, in order to indirectly evict the tenants, demolish the house, and renew it for economic profit. Kanafani sheds light on how abandon is socially created, whereas we usually think of it as the absence of the social.

The loss of these houses causes deep sadness and pain for many Lebanese citizens who are fond of them. I was interested in attending to the emotional-attachments people form with the built-environment, therefore, I chose to do my fieldwork with some of these people for whom old houses are vital in their experience of the city. Throughout my fieldwork, I realized that my interlocutors’ connections to these houses are thick, multi-dimensional and sometimes contradictory. I try to touch on these nuances in my thesis, while exploring the different aspects of old houses my interlocutors connect with and value.

My interlocutors consisted of young adults in their twenties and thirties (except for Marie), for whom photography is a hobby and a passion. They are university students and people working in different fields, such as graphic design, architecture, computer science,

nursing and so on, all of them sharing their love for old houses. I met with a community of amateur photographers, who go on communal trips once every week to photograph old and abandoned houses. Most of them dedicate an Instagram account specifically for these photographs. I also met with several people outside of this community, such as Yara, Youssef, Dani and Samar who also go on photography trips with one, two or three friends.

My interlocutors call what they do *"Urbexing",* which is the process of searching for and discovering untended urban structures such as abandoned houses in order to experience and photograph them. None of my interlocutors, however, are professional photographers. Many don't have a camera and use their phones, but still have an Instagram account just for these photos. Others invested much effort and money into buying a professional camera, even when their economic situation did not allow them. Roy, the community leader, explained that in the midst of everything they have going on in their lives, from professional careers and family to attending university while working full time jobs, they all still chose to put a lot of effort and time into visiting old houses. My interlocutors are involved in many pursuits other than the ones dedicated to the houses. Youssef for instance is a full-time nurse struggling to spend time with his family. He confessed to me and Yara that he is in an unhappy marriage and is in the process of filing a divorce. When we went on weekend trips, Elias tried hard not to come back home late because his two-year-old daughter and wife are waiting for him, and his wife gets upset whenever he joins these house-trips and leaves them alone, especially on Sundays. Yara has just finished her masters and is looking for a job to earn a living and help her parents. House visiting is both a meaningful way of spending one's time and a meaningful

pursuit they try to fit in their schedules, even if at the expense of an important duty, as Youssef claimed.

I joined my interlocutors on three house-trips where I watched them interact with and photograph several houses. I also interviewed five of them and walked with Dani around the streets of *"Mar Mikhael"* and *"Gemmayze,"* where we talked about the houses surrounding us. Going out with my interlocutors felt like I was going out with a group of friends. We were instantly comfortable around each other. They suggested that I'd interview them in places such as *"Em Nazih"* restaurant in *"Gemmayze"* and *"Badaro"* pubs which are places I occasionally frequented. The informal setting of our interviews eased us into our conversations and we ended up talking for two hours instead of thirty minutes as we had previously planned. Marie however, invited me for a cup of coffee in *"Le Gray"* restaurant, which is a fancy rooftop in downtown Beirut I had never been to. She was the only interlocutor that intimidated me and our interview ended after just thirty minutes. However, my fieldwork did not go as planned. By the time I really intended to do most of it, the revolution started in Lebanon and all house-visits were cancelled due to the road-blocks and the unstable situation of the country. I tried contacting photographers of old houses through Instagram in order to have a skype interview, but they did not respond. The *"Urbexing"* WhatsApp group fell silent and no one seemed to talk about the houses for a long time. Nevertheless, I decided to write my thesis with the data I had already collected.

Marie's story of coming to be aware of the houses tells us that the connection that coalesces between people and houses is often deeply personal and particular, and that a single

narrative of "nostalgia" or "identity" for example, fails. Marie "never had a thing" for neither photography nor old houses. She was going through a very hard time in her personal life and wasn't going out of the house. One day she forced herself to walk around the streets of 'Achrafiyeh', where she began to notice the beauty of old and abandoned houses dispersed around. She organically started photographing them and that is when she developed her love for it. This was "therapy" according to Marie, for whom photographing old houses "healed" her "emotional hurt" she claimed. Marie, like my other interlocutors, shared her photographs on social media and dedicated an account only for the latter. When I asked Roy about the purpose of sharing these photographs, he explained that the concept of the community is "to show people what we see in these houses, which they walk by every day without noticing." My interlocutors claimed that in addition to the latter, they are also "documenting the beauty of decay," a phrase they often used as a caption under Instagram photographs. Through our discussions, I understood that they are implicitly targeting people they judge as lacking aesthetic sensibility, and who are callous about their country's heritage. However, they are also the ones who are relevant enough according to them to have a say in the trajectory of Beirut. My interlocutors claim that through photography, they wish to foreground what others have failed to observe, which are the different and yet deeply entangled aspects of old houses I explore throughout the thesis. Not only is the camera their medium of communication, but the effects they chose to use say a lot about how they experience and view the houses, and what they want to say. When Dani says, "It seems like the city is somewhere and these houses are somewhere else," I believe him, because he shows it in his photographs, in which he enhances the out-of-time and space quality of the old houses through effects. The ultimate goal of the

community according to Roy is to host photo exhibitions and create an NGO for the preservation and maybe restoration of old houses. This possibility however, remains very hard and unlikely.

My interlocutors are frustrated with the “soulless” Beirut and its portrait, which is not a self-portrait apparently. According to Roy, “Old houses are the soul of Beirut. The beauty of the old house touches your soul, unlike other buildings that only touch your brain, with their use and function.**”** William interjected: “The architecture of today has no soul, only geometrical shapes. There is no life in the new built environment.” Throughout our discussions, they have expressed that they feel and experience the old houses (abandoned or not), as the true portrait of Beirut, which is being disfigured. By claiming that these houses are the portrait of Beirut, they disregard other things which people consider as portraits. So why does this portrait resonate with them? When I asked Karim about what he thought of the portrait of the city today, he exclaimed sarcastically: “We can easily change Beirut’s name; we have erased it. There is nothing left of it. It became ‘Beirud not Beirut, or actually, anything you want to name it, works.” They talked as if Beirut were a fixed entity that cannot be stretched into several forms, but can only be discontinued. It subvives now through its vestiges, the old houses, which my interlocutors seek to preserve. While Yara bemoaned the state of Beirut, she said, “Poor country, they are destroying it and ripping it away from us, before we even had the chance to get to know it.” She emphasized in this that the houses being destroyed are the real country, not just the real city, from which they were deprived of knowledge and experience.

However, they can still meet this being temporarily in particular gaps in the city. Preserving these older houses allows my interlocutors the possibility of frequenting what they experience as Beirut. They consider the photography trips, and generally the adventures of discovering and experiencing old and abandoned houses as a process of “going back to the roots”, an expression many of my interlocutors used. Experiencing Beirut as a disfigured portrait and old houses as the roots (the real portrait), suggests that the built environment and specifically old houses are anthropomorphic. The houses are part of human families and are always related to by my interlocutors as containing one’s bloodline or something of the self. The expression “going back to the roots” carries several meanings however, which I explore throughout the thesis. Yara continued “we didn’t have the chance to live in them, so at least keep them for us to contemplate and experience, to express how beautiful they are, and to say “this has been here for such a long time, it is so old, my grandparents have lived in it!”

My interlocutors described the estrangement they feel when they walk in Beirut, in the streets of Saifi Village for example. They reject the latter as a portrait of the city. They always wonder, “Who lives here? What is this??” They try to read on the interphones the names and family names of people who live there. “I want to know who are these people!”, asserted Yara. Youssef continued “So are they humans like us? I don’t understand!” These people Yara and Youssef are referring to also do not fit with the “real Beirut”. Both the built environment and its inhabitants are out of synch it seems. Youssef complained several times about the type of person he sees in Downtown, specifically “rich people” while giving me the example of “Gulf tourists” wearing the “Dechdeche,” which does not represent what Lebanon or a downtown is according to him. Downtown used to be a “شعبي “area, and the word “شعبي

"in Arabic invokes a non-hierarchical, inviting space which is the opposite of the alienation my interlocutors experience today. They complained that Saifi village is an enclosed, exclusive area which they cannot enjoy. "Normal people" like them aren't allowed to enter and benefit from the vast spaces and especially the green spaces inside the area, even though, it is literally empty they say. "You feel like it is deeply abandoned when you're inside. Dust is eating it away." These spaces also feel abandoned, but not the kind of abandon they enjoy. My interlocutors repeatedly complained about the lack of green and public spaces in Beirut. Yara recounted the time she was in Saifi village and saw a green area, which seemed to be empty. She was surprised and wondered "wow, we have such a thing in Beirut?", but she soon figured that it was a private space and no one was allowed inside. My interlocutors also recounted many experiences they and others had in Saifi Village and downtown when security guards kicked them out, told them they can't be there. Jad said that even one time him and his friends were walking in downtown and laughing, and one security guard reprimanded them "Lower your voices, you cannot laugh loudly next to the mosque!" even though they were very far from the mosque he claimed. They complained about the exclusivity, the surveillance and control they've been subject to inside these spaces, and that it's all about "prohibition, prohibition, prohibition," as Youssef grumbled. This experience of abandon which alienates my interlocutors is class-based. Their discussions of private spaces and their stories about being kicked out and monitored tell us that such spaces feel abandoned because of the boundaries in place, whether they be spatial, socio-economic or bodily restrictions. Whereas abandoned houses, which they enjoy, are approachable spaces with which they connect bodily and experience themselves as sentient beings. The way my interlocutors experience both kinds

of spaces is also deeply affected by the materiality of the built environment, which I discuss in the next chapters.

The frustration guiding my interlocutors into old houses is not just about the portrait of Beirut, but also about "the practice of the city." In part III of his book, *"The practice of everyday life",* De Certeau (1980, 102-118) looks at how people navigate the constraining urban setting of cities. Through their embodied experiences in the city, people create ingenious practices through which they resist encroaching urbanistic structures. The latter is important for the creation of healthy relationships with the city, he claims. De Certeau argues that the urbanistic system of cities is supposed to control, regulate and suppress behaviours and practices. However, once we look closely at the latter, we realize that many practices found a way to reassert and reinforce themselves by slipping through networks and systems. Therefore, I claim that old houses offer my interlocutors the space and time to slip through the city, both the physical city and its lived experience. In the Introduction and first chapter of their book "*Unfinished: the anthropology of becoming"* (2017), Joao Biehl and Peter Locke introduce Deleuze's concept of "becoming" while relating it to anthropology. They ask" how can anthropology methodically and conceptually engage people's becomings?" (42) Considering people as always in the process of becoming, opens them up and liberates them from the categories that are always binding them and rendering them "finished". By treating people as unfinished in anthropological research, we try to present them in a multi-dimensional form, with their complexities, the contradictions in their choices and desires, and the ambiguities that are characteristic of every human being. Peter Locke gives the example of the clinical diagnoses applied to populations in Sarajevo in the aftermaths of war, and argues

that such diagnoses tend to not only obscure the multiple social, economic and political causes for people's struggles, but they also prevent the opening up of alternative possibilities of existence. They conceal the gaps and "slippages" in everyday life where people are thinking through their conditions, and the numerous ways they attempt to escape them. Based on Deleuze's thought, they argue that humans are not over-determined by power and social structures. This realization I believe is important for understanding my interlocutors' attachment to old houses, and looking at their practices and pursuits without the categories of "nostalgia" and "shallowness" which they claim that people insert them in. The authors I mentioned help me challenge the easy explanation that my interlocutors are "living in the past" or "cannot accept the marks of time" and therefore their practices are not worthy of examination.

My interlocutors are indeed constrained in their choices and pursuits. It is not just houses they choose, but ways of "spending time" and living in the city. However, they are still inventive and creative, and can find fugitive or small gaps in time and space through which they can veer off of their conditions (and the city). In fact, throughout the thesis I argue that the human-house relationship in which my interlocutors are involved opens alternative possibilities of existence for them in Beirut. Furthermore, I explore the imagining of a group that is relevant to the becoming of Beirut. Most of my interlocutors already made or are in the process of creating a project about old houses, in addition to the other things they are involved in making (family, career, university, a living…). This "project" can take several forms. For example, Dana is collaborating with her friend in creating a virtual tourism application, where the user can discover all the old houses in Beirut, their locations and how to get them, their

history and other important information about them. She claims that it is a way for her friend and her to use their backgrounds in computer science and graphic design for creating awareness in people, and strengthening in them their connection to these houses. This imagining takes place in the “life bricolage with the limited choices and materials at hand” (2017, 81) that my interlocutors engage and indulge in throughout their pursuit of a better city. It consists of my interlocutors’ emotional-practices (Sheer, 2012) of house-visiting(chapter 3), the photography trips they regularly plan and try to fit in their schedules, the photos that they take and the effort they put into editing them, creating an Instagram account and publicizing it, collecting money in order to buy a good camera, planning an exhibition with the poor quality photos at hand (according to them), publishing a book of one’s photos, struggling to found an NGO, the university and after work projects they come up with and last but not least through their constant imaginations, fantasies and desires of an otherwise Beirut. It is important to note however, that in general my interlocutors’ social status and backgrounds allow them to be “relevant” to the becoming of Beirut. First of all, all of them are university students or have jobs, so even if they have limited choices and materials at hand to “change” the city, they still have more discretion over their time and money than others, such as manual labourers or people in a different age category. Moreover, they meet different people in their social circles who assist them along the way, which is very important in the kind of pursuit they are in.

<u>Concrete doesn’t say anything, it doesn’t call you</u> ” البتون ما بقول شي, ما بعيّطلك“

"Concrete doesn't say anything, it doesn't call you" said Yara. "Call you" (بعيّطلك) in Arabic means that it doesn't "draw you in" or you don't feel like you connect to it. I heard so many similar expressions, in which my interlocutors described the lack of communication between them and Beirut in general. My interlocutors deny Beirut's houses of life by expressing the lack of communication between them. On the other hand, they ascribe old houses life by attributing them the power of communication. I observed a persistent use of communicative verbs such as "قول" ,"حكي","عيط"(speak/shout/call) whenever my interlocutors spoke about their relationship to old houses or to the rest of Beirut. According to Yara, there is a sensation of cosiness when you are surrounded by old houses that doesn't exist in the other neighbourhoods. "It is like a space of refuge for me, where I can feel intimacy between myself and the city", she said. She continued, "A house with old stones warms the heart and body so much and warms whatever is around it. You are not scared of it, it calls you (ما بتخافي منه،بعيّطلك)." Discussions with my interlocutors were chock-full of descriptions of how old and abandoned houses are their refuge from a predatory city outside. They continuously praised the "warmth" of old houses that invite you and call you whilst complaining about the coldness of other "lifeless" and "soulless" houses that are mute. Their claim implies that the feeling of warmth and cosiness they experience is related to the communication that is happening between them and the houses. The connection between my interlocutors and the houses is embedded in their bodily sensations in these spaces, which I elaborate on throughout the thesis. However, this "lack of communication" my interlocutors complain about, could also be a form of communication. The other houses communicate a Beirut they do not want, or one

they consider illegitimate. Which is why they experience alienation bodily and emotionally, making them feel like they neither belong nor connect to the city.

After discovering Marie's social media account and her self-published book of her photographs of old houses, I sent her a message requesting to meet her. After listening for long about her love for old houses, I asked Marie to imagine an old house in Beirut, and describe her emotions for me upon seeing it. She smiled delicately, and with heavy-lidded eyes she said:

> I love the aesthetics of old buildings; they make me feel all kinds of things… I see the beauty of decay… of abandonment, but then, the emotion of fear becomes dominant, not aesthetic pleasure. *"Le Plaisir que je ressens, dans ce contexte devient de la tristesse, de l'anxiété, ce n'est plus poétique, c'est tragique! » (The pleasure I feel, in this context becomes sadness and anxiety, it is no longer poetic, it is tragic!).* We are losing an identity, an authenticity, and a way of life.

Marie, who lives in a renovated old house, imagined a decayed one to describe her pleasure, whereas she could have imagined an old one in good shape, whether preserved or renovated. When she returned to Lebanon six years ago, the drastic transformation of Beirut surprised her. She now avoids looking left or right when walking or driving, for fear of seeing another old house covered in green construction netting, ready to be destroyed and replaced. "My heart trembles, my heart aches, my heart breaks, it's like I'm losing someone I love", she repeated. In another instance for example, as I was having a drink with Yara, her friend hastily interrupted our conversation, and recounted the many times Yara burst into tears, upon seeing old houses covered. One time, she said, "While Yara and I were crossing a highway, she saw

an inhabited old house she liked and cried heavily as we walked, out of fear that its owners sell it to real estate developers." Inhabited old buildings are often experienced by my interlocutors with a sense of foreboding, as if slowly approaching disappearance. I asked Yara why she cries for old houses, and she replied:

> I cry, I am losing a part of myself and of my parents, and a part of my grandma and grandpa and of all the Lebanese people. I think about my children in the future, what will I say to them? What will I show them? And why will they stay here if these houses don't exist anymore? They can go to any other country.

She paused for a few seconds, then continued with a sad face "There is no soul, there is no life in this concrete and glass. There is nothing. *'Beton block'*. It doesn't say anything. "Yara emphasized on the expression *"beton block",* as she said it with a very terse and sudden tone, bringing into attention the "object", lifeless quality of the houses she is talking about. Just a block, like the "cans" and "boxes" my other interlocutors use to refer to Beirut. These houses don't communicate identity, past and belonging according to Yara, and don't communicate anything in general, they are just "facades", a word they frequently used. Accordingly, the old house carries around with it, the past in general, one's family and ancestry, the city's identity and people's identity and belonging in the city. It is a sign of all the latter. Old houses invite "semiosis" (Kohn 2012, 33) from my interlocutors, which they claim is not happening with the rest of Beirut. "Semiosis" is a process of interpretation, where the interpretant unveils some particular features of an object(sign) otherwise hidden from her. This brings me to Yara's intended project *"Plus qu'une pierre" (*more than a stone), in which she plans to write about all the reasons why the houses they seek to preserve are not merely stones, arguing against

some people's criticism of them, that they put "حجر فوق البشر" (stones over human beings). Accordingly, my interlocutors are claiming that the stone points to something beyond itself, while concrete is "just a block," It neither carries nor points to anything. However, this claim of non-communication is itself a semiotic act, since my interlocutors are making a point out of the concrete, and of Beirut generally.

My interlocutors speak about Beirut today as a cold and alienating space. They contend that the "real Beirut," which they can still experience fleetingly in old quarters or upon seeing old houses, is warm and inviting. In order to explain to me their alienation, they describe their bodily sensations and experiences while they are surrounded by towers, glass and concrete, or, in places such as Saifi Village, Downtown and Zeituna Bay. "There is a very chilly sensation in my body", says Yara as she recalls walking in downtown. "Our downtown should be different, because we should be experiencing a different sensation." My interlocutors base "what a downtown should be" and generally how Beirut should be on such bodily sensations. I found it interesting how bodily experiences are so clearly and openly used by them as processes of interpretation, guiding their relation to old houses and Beirut, their judgments, choices and how they are thinking through their conditions. Some of these choices and judgments are bodily ones, gut-known ones, that only become possible by frequenting old houses, which may happen through venturing in or by just experiencing a house from outside. Yara continued "When I go there, I am the one who feels abandoned, not her. It's not downtown that is a ghost city, but I who feel like a ghost!" This description sounds like an inversion of the abandoned or old house experience, which as I will discuss throughout the thesis, enhances my interlocutors' bodily sensations. Moreover, Yara is expressing the

submersion of herself with the built environment, but also the subversion of herself by the latter. The suffocation of the self versus the expansion of the self by urban space was a recurrent theme in all of my interlocutors' experiences. Yara added, "It is so vast and empty, and yet I feel constricted. I have goosebumps. However, no matter how tight and dense old quarters are, I experience profound warmth and relaxation." The houses are "gaps" partly because they have the opposite effect on my interlocutors' bodies and emotions than the rest of Beirut. Engaging with an old house (contemplating, touching, smelling, dreaming, writing poetry etc…) makes them feel more connected to the city and shapes how they experience it. This experience of Beirut however, is framed by time and space.

Dani has a thing for old stones, whenever he walks in the city and sees an old house, he stops just to contemplate its stones. I asked him why, what's so particular about old houses' stones that makes you stop and observe. He replied "It's beautiful, how ancient it is. You feel like there are memories in it. Many souls have passed it. Generations. It makes me feel safe, how many people have been here. My grandpa might have been here, my father, my grandma." The stone is according to him a material accumulation of time. It was also interesting to me how my interlocutors always ended up making the old house personal. The stone becomes personal, carrying something intimate and familiar. One can meet one's self in an old house; There is something of me accumulated in it as well. If they lose the house, they also lose all that it carries, which is why they repeatedly claim that they are losing "parts of themselves". As well as going through the emotional and bodily pains they tell me about, such as the "severing of the heart" (بينقطع ألبي) Jad describes. This brings me back to the portrait and "going back to the roots" section, since my interlocutors are anthropomorphizing space and

relating to the latter as either part of one's being or not. It is important to note that bodily reaction to something we see is by itself a process of interpretation. In this case, the bodily pain is a sign process that conveys something about the house (the sign). It might be an interpretation of all the things that the house carries, and that all the latter are being destroyed. This does not mean however, that the house intrinsically carries all of these things. Meaning arises in the interpretation of a sign and not in the sign itself. The house carries different things for different people, and for others(who are not my interlocutors) it might carry nothing.

Marie, who lives in a renovated "triple-arch" house, still dreams of decayed ones and finds pleasure in being-with them. The temporal aspect of the houses seems very important to my interlocutors. I wondered how they reconciled this with their desire to ultimately renovate abandoned houses and their fantasy of living in a city that is made up of such houses they loved. For that reason, I thought it important for me to discuss with them their thoughts about renovation/restoration and preservation, since the latter can be undertaken in several ways. I knew that they despised downtown and Saifi village, so I wanted to look into the kind of renovation they liked, and why they liked it. So I asked them what they thought was a proper renovation technique and whether they had an example in mind of a house that has been properly renovated, so Youssef gave me the example of Sawfar hotel.

> They are renovating this hotel in a very professional way. They are not changing at all the landmarks and features of the hotel. You can still see the fading of colours and the details of age. How beautiful it is to be in such an old place, with all its history. Each stone tells you so much about it ("هلأد كل حجرة بتحكي عنه").

Just like the stones Dani talked about, these stones are also filled with information (in the forms of memories, emotions, events and so on). Which is an aspect of the "profundity of an old house" they constantly speak about. It is profound not only because of its sensorial materiality, which I elaborate on later, but also because of how much it has to communicate to my interlocutors specifically. This is why they prefer old houses over new houses which look like the old (they call "façade"): with old houses there is more semiosis going on. And this is due to the age of the houses. When my interlocutors say that a main purpose of their practices is to document the beauty of decay, they are saying that "time" is a core element in their connection to the houses. The value of the old house then, is beyond its physical, aesthetic value, because the same house could be replicated today, and they don't want that. It extends into its "symbolical", "indexical" and "iconic" values, all of which relate to the age of the house.

A sign is something that stands for something else. It stands for it either symbolically, indexically or iconically, as Pierce distinguished in his writings on semiotics. (Deacon 1997, 70) According to my interlocutors, old houses stand for the real Beirut. They are a symbol of national identity and sensibility, civilization, culture, greatness of the past and belonging, all of which are words my interlocutors have used. A symbol, writes Deacon, is based on "social convention, tacit agreement, or explicit code which establishes the relationship that links one thing to another" (1997, 71) and that is "irrespective of any physical characteristics of either sign or object." (70) However, when we call something an "index", "we mean that it is somehow causally linked to something else, or associated with it in space or time." (71) They are mediated by "some physical or temporal connection between sign and object." (70) Hence,

the old house indexes the passage of time, past generations, civil war, survival but also abandon and the absence of the social. It also indexes the" greatness of the past" according to my interlocutors, in the way its aesthetic beauty points to the "refined artistry" of the people back then, before the exorbitant urban developments and the consequent dissolution of Beirut's identity. I want to add that old houses index "ethics." Although my interlocutors did not use this word, they made it very clear that they despised other buildings for their imputed disregard of nature, humanity and the "soul", while old houses are extensions of nature. Houses are experienced as extensions of nature by my interlocutors also in the way they are iconic of nature. Deacon writes that "Icons are mediated by a similarity between sign and object," (70) and I argue, based on my interlocutors, that the old house's iconicity to nature, living beings, souls and bodies are mediated by the processes of growth, decay, life-cycles and entanglement that my interlocutors encounter in an old house, which I explore throughout the thesis.

My interlocutors' authenticity discourse and musings about old houses as the real, better Beirut make me wonder, "which parts of the past are they rendering visible and which are they obscuring?" Beirut's old houses are enmeshed in a history of war, displacement, destruction and poverty which are aspects my interlocutors rarely attend to in their pursuits. I heard references to these things happening outside of the houses, the "soulful" and "humane" house surviving them. My interlocutors are willing to let themselves imagine people living in these houses, having dinner and throwing parties but rarely imagine in which conditions these houses have been left. Hence, it is necessary to bear in mind as I explore my interlocutors' connections to these houses, that there are parts they let themselves see and parts they don't.

CHAPTER 2

THE “NATURAL-NESS” OF OLD HOUSES

As Youssef, Yara and I first arrived to Sawfar village, we parked the car and decided to explore houses by walking around the village. We soon came across an old abandoned house, with a long stair spiralling into the entrance of the house. The stair was enmeshed in weeds, broken branches, dead yellow leaves and fresh luscious green ones, of different colours and shapes. This is how our first meeting with an abandoned house typically looks like; a bundle of flora paving the way into the house. The stair was so huddled in nature, that we stood for a while, wondering and asking one another if it was dangerous, or even possible for us to climb it all the way up, as we didn’t know what could be lying under the piles of yellows and greens. The house’s façade was draped in dark green climbing vines mixed with shades of bordeaux. It was too beautiful that Youssef and Yara felt that “it would be a loss to let it go!” What they would lose is the opportunity to experience a house with such a beautiful state of abandon. So we decided to give it a try. We clambered up the stairs very slowly, and I remember trodding on whatever was on the ground, from stalks to plants spiralling up the handrails, as I listened to the crackling of the crisp leaves under our feet. We arrived at the entrance and walked around the house before entering it, contemplating its façade. As if on cue, we suddenly became taciturn and solitary. Youssef asked me “Are you feeling what we are feeling, or not?”. Youssef spoke on behalf of Yara, establishing group boundaries between

them and me. I am here as a researcher and not as an old house aficionado, so I may not have the same sensibilities and attunement to the houses as them. I chose to use the word “attunement” to describe the intimacy they claim to have with the houses. This intimacy I realized is mostly a form of bodily knowledge. They know how the house looks like when it is decaying, how it feels like and they know its materiality. In brief, they know what to expect when they venture into an abandoned house.

My interlocutors constantly show their awareness of their attunement through asking me questions such as “Do you see this? Do you feel this? Do you smell this? How beautiful is this Mariana?” and inviting me to notice details “Mariana you have to come and see the colours on this wall! You have to look at this and that” and so on. Through these nudges, they try to bring me into the abandoned house experience, which they believe they are more in touch with than others. They ensure that the appropriate kind of connection is being shaped between the house and me. To return to Youssef’s question, “Are you feeling what we are feeling, or not?”, I assumed he meant to ask, if I was absorbed in the beauty of what I saw, so I nodded in agreement. Yara chimed in “This is so magical, I can stay here for hours, just walking and taking photographs!”

We then entered the house and there was a tall, elegant plant, sprouting out of the ground, alone on the vast floor. The sunlight from the broken window was casting its light right on this plant, and we found ourselves all of us expressing and sharing our delight in the stillness of the scene. We were all surprised at seeing this, it was an uncanny image. One plant in the midst of the grey, dilapidated space. Yara and Youssef kept on repeating “مش معقول”

(this is unbelievable). We contemplated the space, and then took photos of the lone plant with our phones.

While we walked around Sawfar, we passed both abandoned houses and old ones that were still inhabited. All were made of stone and had peculiar looking balconies and designs. Many had ornamental railings with playful and creative shapes. We stood in front of one house we delighted in and tried to decode the shapes of the ornaments. Some resembled harps, roses, the sun and even a *narguileh.* As we walked, Youssef and Yara repeated "These are magical", "'عنجد' Lebanon is beautiful". Although I focus on Beirut-based practices, old houses according to my interlocutors represent the nation and not just Beirut. When Yara frustratingly exclaimed " What will I show my children?!! Why will they want to stay here? They can go to any other country!!!" she reflected on the houses as instruments for building a national identity, whereas the destruction of these houses renders Lebanon, as well as our identity as Lebanese citizens, bland.

Later on that day, while the three of us contemplated an old house still in a relatively good shape, I asked them whether they could imagine such houses in Beirut now. Yara replied bitterly: These houses wouldn't fit in Beirut anymore, because there is no nature in Beirut. Such houses go hand in hand with nature. My interlocutors talk frequently about the lack of nature in Beirut. They express their frustration and anger at the government, architects and the portrait of Beirut in general, in regards to the escalating disappearance of old houses, the excess of concrete and the "barely existing nature in the city", as they all complained. These three phenomena are all directly correlated according to my interlocutors, hence the desire for

the preservation of old houses and the building of similar ones goes hand-in-hand with making space for more nature in the city. My interlocutors speak as if they are experiencing a "suffocation by concrete", an expression Samar used to describe her experience in nature-less Beirut. She is very conscious of the lack of nature and its effect on her experience of Beirut, and that is why she chose the word "suffocation" by concrete, reflecting on the life-giving powers of nature, allowing us to breath literally. But also on her bodily experience in a city that lacks both nature and old houses, causing her alienation or feeling like "a ghost", as Yara complained. But still, why do my interlocutors feel that old houses go hand-in-hand with nature? In this chapter, I look at how my interlocutors experience old houses as part of "nature" or even its very essence.

"The house is beautiful in its natural state" "البيت حلو يكون على طبيعته"

My interlocutors argue that they experience old houses as much less artificial than others, and according to some, not artificial at all. The materiality of the house retains its natural state and qualities, which they claimed was the reason for the latter's value and beauty. The alleged "naturalness" of old houses depends on a variety of features according to my interlocutors, one of them being the materials houses are made from. "In the past, people used to build houses out of clay, they were so close to nature. Now there is no way you could find something like that", complained Youssef as he expressed discontent towards the trajectory architecture has taken. "The house is beautiful when in its natural state, (البيت حلو يكون على

طبيعته) stones, clay, different types of rocks like *oud, mawraj* and so on. This is called nature! Without them, the house is no longer in its natural state (بلاهن، مابأ على طبيعته البيت)." Dani's statement implies that a house is essentially a form made of nature, one you can experience through all your senses as natural and nonsynthetic. Moreover, when I asked William why he loved old houses so much, he simply replied "They are made of earth!", asserting that his experiencing the house as made of earth is enough for justifying his attachment. I learned to think of the people who constructed the houses as "moulders," because I am following through my interlocutors' perception of old houses as nature that is merely moulded into a form. Once the "moulders" of houses depart from this "original" state, it is no longer a house but "a box or a can", as Fadi and others complained.

The "naturalness" of old houses also depends on their materials' associated characteristics, such as colour, smell and texture. According to my interlocutors, one can experience the "nature" of old houses through the earthy colours. For instance, the abandoned house next to Samar's building "has this beautiful brown reddish colour, how do I explain it to you... [she paused thinking] it is like mud!" The old house is perceptible to Samar also as an element of earth. They experience nature in the texture (sense of touch) and the scent of the house as well. I remember walking with Dani in Beirut, when he abruptly stopped in front of an old house, just so that he could touch what looked to me as a rugged surface, sensing the different textures with his palm. "Look how old this stone is! It has become like *khoffen (a reddish volcanic rock)* due to wind and rain. It's so beautiful! It mirrors the weathering of rocks in nature."

My interlocutors are also looking at the physical relation of old houses to their settings, which is another feature of “naturalness” according to them. Dani and I were walking in Beirut one day, discussing the lack of public and green spaces in the city. We claimed that it was one of the reasons why our generation feels detached, emotionally and sensorially from the city. Then Dani pointed to the concrete houses on the green hills from afar, and said “look, look how disjointed these houses are from the nature around them. There is no harmony, no connection, unlike old houses and village houses.” He continued “We are part of nature, but we created concrete and barriers grew between us and nature.” So in old and village houses, we were still part of nature, or more “in nature” than we are now. The houses of Beirut then, are a mirror of both the city’s and the people’s disconnection with nature and the environment, whereas old and village houses are a mirror of our interconnection. In his conversation with me, Dani contemplated the discontinuity between nature and the houses. My interlocutors’ musings remind me of Pallasmaa’s (1993, 41) statement “Architecture is essentially an extension of nature into the man-made realm.” According to my interlocutors, this “extension” is severed especially in Beirut, whereas they experience old and village houses as continuous with nature. Because of the materiality of old houses along with the aging of the house and its continual process of decay or just transformation, one can more plainly experience it as “an extension of nature.” The “naturalness” of old houses then, is based on features that they take to be metonymic of nature, or “iconic” to nature as I discussed in the previous chapter.

I remember walking around old houses and noticing the dead leaves piling up on the floors from different passing life-cycles. The crisp fresher leaves were on top, covering the bottom ones which are decomposing into that same soil whence green lush trees around them have already carried on with their life-cycles and are blooming with life. We have encountered so much diversity in nature inside the houses such as trees, shrubs, vines, flowering plants, grass and so on with different colours and different life stages. From trees tilting into the windows of the houses, to climbing vines creeping in, wrapping their tendrils around the dilapidating walls, or dripping down from windows and broken structures. Nature overflowed into the house. I remember one particular house was completely entwined with climbing vines, that the plants would stick out of a particular gap in the wall and then stick back in another gap and then in and out, as if they knitted themselves unto the house. We also met with seedlings growing out of cracks in the floors, beginning their lives amidst stones and falling roofs. We also experienced withering nature, in all its pastel shades, from light green to

yellow to washed out beige decaying into the soil. Whilst inside, some houses looked like a stretch of beige-coloured earth, blending in with the horizon. The houses' proximity to and interaction with nature are prevalent features of old houses, that make my interlocutors experience them as "nature." Now that these houses are old or abandoned, they are also metonymic of "natural" forces and processes, such as decay and transformation.

The abandoned house is so deeply entangled with nature that there is no separation according to my interlocutors. They reflect on this during house-visits, wherein they constantly comment on nature, decay and change. It takes up more of their conversations than the talk about the house as a structure. It also shows in the photographs they choose to take and share, which capture the entwinement of the house with nature. Nature is an agent in the houses' transformation. The house isn't decaying on its own. So we cannot speak of the house's abandon, without speaking of its becoming- with- nature. Just like the rotting leaves that fertilize the soil, the decay of the house unfolds into many other lives and deaths. I remember when Yara, Youssef and I ate from a mulberry tree that had grown inside a roofless house, how pleasurable it was for the three of us as we contemplated all the forms of life that had emerged along with the abandon. This kind of juxtaposition is also a metonymic feature of the "naturalness" of abandoned houses.

Throughout out trips and discussions, as my interlocutors spoke of nature, they identified it as anything that has a life cycle, or that they consider as having a life-cycle. It is any sign of decay, growth, change, reproduction and intermingling just like the house that mingles with the environment in which it is built. “Nature” according to them also stimulates the senses through its texture, colour, scent and so on. Their understanding of nature stretches out into the abandoned house, since they are treated by my interlocutors as natural bodies undergoing life-cycles. The house is considered as an open whole, meaning the man-made structure is enmeshed in a network beyond its boundaries, rendering it an interconnected being, and not just an isolated, man-made entity. This interconnection is what makes it “magical” and “other-worldly” to my interlocutors, since even though it is “man-made”, they experience it as diverging from their everyday life. This is a theme that stays with me throughout the thesis as I elaborate on it along with other themes.

What does an extension of nature into human habitation mean for my interlocutors? One possible answer comes from Scheid’s paper “Divinely imprinting prints” (2015), in which she explores how “Lebanese Landscape painting” played a significant role in shaping understandings of the self’s relation to piety, nature, the divine and to citizenship in mandate Beirut. These landscape paintings depicted village scenes including traditional village houses and “natural views”. “Paintings of “al-manazir al-tabi’iyya, literally “natural views” “were judged by the artist Moustapha Farrouk as “Good Lebanese art, which he distinguished for “its piety, love of nature, freedom from materialism, and distance from politics.” (349) Scheid writes “The artist who “discards Nature” does not recognize his place. He arrogantly and loudly sets himself up as a rival of the “true creator”. Arrogant artists depart from “natural”

colour schemes."(360) Likewise, my interlocutors blame today's architecture for separating the self from nature, setting ourselves up both against nature and God. In fact, my interlocutors mentioned God frequently during house-visits, which I elaborate on shortly. They judge the architects and architecture firms of today for having "poor taste", claiming that they are not "true artists", in contrast to the "refined artists in the past, who put so much of their soul into the houses and all its intricacies" said William. He averred "No one does this anymore. You cannot find this soul in the houses anymore." My interlocutors also argued that old houses are humble, in contrast to other forms of architecture. They are humble for they are both closer to nature and to human beings. "They are more humane", claimed Roy. My interlocutors' experience of these houses as closer to nature makes them simultaneously experience them as closer to human beings, which I thought was interesting and very telling. This will be the basis on which I build my last chapter on the relation between the houses' "soul" and Bateson's "ecological aesthetics" (Bateson 1970).

My interlocutors claimed that when they are at such sites, where nature has "taken over" human dwellings, they cannot help but feel humbled, but also fearful. "I cannot help but think, *'Sobhan Allah'* "said Ralph, and explained that by humility, he also means the acceptance that some things are larger than our control. "Look at how nature eats, when no one takes care," repeated Yara. Each time we stood in a new corner or space, she would say in a pensive tone "Ce que la nature nous donne, la nature nous prend"," what *nature gives us, nature takes away from us"* recognizing that whatever we were experiencing and seeking to preserve, is nature and from nature. Her constant expressions sounded religious to me, in the lines of "the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away". In fact, my interlocutors invoked God

frequently during our trips and discussions, especially when in the midst of experiencing an abandoned house entangled with nature. Their invocations of God sounded like expressions of acceptance and letting go of control, which is the underlying meaning of "ce que la nature nous donne, la nature nous prend." "From dust and unto dust you will return", said Dani as we tottered around a collapsing house. I notice how my interlocutors' understanding of "nature" also echoes Mandate Beirut citizens' view of nature and the self. Nature is recognized as an imprint of the divine, and the paintings as the print of this imprint, hence the title "divinely imprinting print". Scheid quotes an artist who advocated for nature-painting as something audiences should look at to develop ethical behaviour. She writes "The artist who "thrills" at "Nature" recognizes the poverty of his means. He is humble. Artists who are proud strive for "creation and construction"; artists who "love Nature" do not." (361) I add that artists who made these houses used their human skills just to extend nature into a dwelling, whereas the proud architects my interlocutors look down upon are constructing something "irrelevant", a "nonsense" that has nothing to do with the "context" of not only Beirut, as Marie argues but also nature, the earth. When my interlocutors claim that "Old houses, village houses are more humane than other ones," they are also claiming that the former are humbler than the latter. So what are we to make with the replacement of "God" with "nature"? Similarly to Scheid's claim that nature is an imprint of the divine, here nature is also the physical manifestation of God**.** My interlocutors couldn't stop commenting on how "magical" and "other-worldly" the houses were, denaturalizing the man-made quality of the houses. In his book " *Art and Agency,*" Alfred Gell (1998,16) argues that because the technical aspect of making art isn't enough for explaining how beautiful an artwork is or how it touches and delights the viewer,

the viewer is "abducted" to the power that they think is behind the artwork. Hence, the beauty of the houses "abducts" my interlocutors to the origin they assume created them. In addition to being "abducted" to the "refined artists of the past who poured their soul unto the houses", they are also abducted to "nature" and "God". This makes me reflect on what Roy told me "We want to show people what we see in these houses, which they pass by every day without noticing." I want to make it clear however, that Roy's use of the word "see" (منشوف) here isn't literal, i.e. the sense of sight, but the bundle of experiences they go through bodily and emotionally while in the houses, that make them deeply connected to them. That includes the abductions to the powers behind the artwork. My interlocutors' discussion of humility, acceptance, architecture's separation of the self from nature and God or its reconciliation of the latter and so on connect with Scheid's argument about audiences learning ethical behaviours from the paintings, or the houses in this case. Scheid argues that exhibitions were ritual zones, during which audiences received ethical imprints from the paintings. (363) By that she means that the latter informed the audience's relation to nature, God and citizenship as I mentioned in the beginning of the section. Like the landscape paintings, old houses also influence my interlocutors' understanding of their relation to God, nature and citizenship. I interpret the house-trip itself as a Turnerian ritual (Turner, 1967), wherein my interlocutors reconsider their desires and thoughts on architecture, urban experience, the body in the city, nature, God, citizenship and so on. It is also a time-space that shapes my interlocutors' relation to Beirut and leads them to take on new social roles. I come back to this theme in the coming chapter where I elaborate on it in more details.

I claim that my interlocutors' perception of old houses as "nature" is associated with their view of them as carrying the essence of the "real Beirut, "or even the real Lebanon. Both "nature" and the "real Beirut" are conceptualized by my interlocutors as original, untainted states. When they claim that old houses are the souls of Beirut, they suggest that real Beirut is a snapshot of some moment and place in the past that is captured in old houses. The rest, which is the "soulless" as they claim is also the "Unnatural", the arrogance that departs from nature. When my interlocutors such as Yara tell me this "Ideally, I would love all Lebanon to be old rocky stones because it is more beautiful and because we are going back to the roots", I suspect that they are also saying "going back to nature, to the city and to the country". Therefore, "nature" connects to the city and then the country. The expansion to Lebanon as an entity in Yara's ""عنجد" Lebanon is beautiful" while she complimented old houses, intimates that appreciating these houses is a sign of national sensibility. National identity then, is also the essence that is captured in old houses, and that is "imprinted" on my interlocutors.

CHAPTER 3

EMOTIONAL-PRACTICES OF HOUSE-VISITING

Yara spoke so passionately about old houses and their importance in our relationship to Beirut. She fervently asserted that the only way one can feel connected to a space is “if they see the stones, smell and even lick them!” gesturing her hands as if she was carrying a stone close to her face. She claimed that, that is why most Lebanese citizens do not feel intimate with Beirut and do not connect with it as their city. Beirut doesn’t tantalize the senses enough. Listening to her, it would be hard to believe that she has not always felt this way. In fact, When Yara started venturing into old houses, she felt disgusted while inside because of the stench and dampness, “but I grew to delight in all its materiality. I now love to smell and touch it.”

This anecdote of Yara’s passion encapsulates Sheer’s (2012) argument that emotions are not immanent to us, internal and inherent but are achieved through practices and things that we do which involve our bodies. Sheer uses the term “emotional-practices” to best capture her argument. The body here is not considered as a biological universal organism, but as a socially moulded being; Employing the term “emotional-practices” to discuss feelings integrates the “material, bodily facets of emotional processes” (220) while also accounting of the social aspects. Sheer argues that emotional-practices are “practices involving the self (as body and mind), language, material artefacts, the environment, and other people.” (193)

Wanting to explore emotional practices through ethnographic work might seem ungraspable and naïve. How do we access the bodily/emotional experiences of people who aren't us? Sheer writes that emotional practices are basically "doings and sayings," we are not just experiencing internally an emotion but we are ""doing emotions" in a performative sense" (194), which can include "speaking, gesturing, remembering, manipulating objects, and perceiving sounds, smells, and spaces." (209) For instance, when Yara says that she "grew to delight" in the house's materiality, she is pointing out that delight is practiced through her sustained house-visits and interactions with the houses, wherein she familiarizes herself with them. Yara is performing the emotional-practice of delight as she smells, touches, photographs and simply engages with the house's materiality. Sheer argues that emotions arise through practices that involve naming, communicating, mobilizing, and regulating them. She claims that expressing our emotions, through attributing them a name, is part and parcel of the experience of the emotion. (212) Emotions do things in the world, they are not just contained within oneself. And that is also why we name them, in order to communicate and exchange them. (214) Moreover, emotional-practices are "mobilizing" (209) in that they are "habits, rituals, and everyday pastimes" wherein we manipulate our minds and bodies in a way that helps us attain a desired emotional state, or to change one already there. They are also "regulating" (215) because of the implicit knowledge of a group of particular patterns of behaviour in specific contexts, through which we learn to acquire an emotional style (sensibility) or the "feel for the game." In fact, Yara's anecdote is a perfect example of regulating emotions, in this case disgust, to cultivate another instead, delight.

Karim claims that old houses “fill me up with emotions much more profound than my normal daily emotions.” This is proof that the emotional-practices model is relevant to my interlocutors’ house-visits. Through the latter, my interlocutors are also pursuing an emotional repertoire that they claim Beirut lacks. William chimed in eagerly on my conversation with Karim, “When you enter an old house, you are stepping into magic, you experience magic!” When considering the state of buildings in today’s cities, Pallasmaa mentions that the architectural landscape of today “tends to be engaged with visual effects, and it lacks the tragic, the melancholy, the nostalgic, as well as the ecstatic and transcendental tones of the spectrum of emotions,” (2001, 91) which brings me back to Marie for whom old houses trigger feelings of “all kinds of things.” Throughout this chapter, I explore how my interlocutors’ house-visits are emotional-practices of love, desire and melancholy. Then, I argue that looking at their actions as emotional-practices matters, because these create “communitas” (Turner 1967, 96) and lead to taking on new social roles.

A house visit generally unfolds in the same way. Here is an example of a typical visit, which was my first time joining the community to an abandoned house in “Karakul el Druze” in Beirut. My interlocutors dispersed around the house, taking photos individually. They mostly photographed the fractures of the house. Karim and William focused on the ornate ceilings, arches and walls with faint earthy colours as well as windows or objects encrusted with dust. Roy sought the bits and pieces of plants or grass lurking in the darkest of nooks and crannies, growing inside the cracks. Sami remained for five minutes in front of a crevice in the wall, photographing the different layers of coating revealed behind the cracked paint. He scratched the painted crust with his fingernail to show me that it’s a just a wrapping, my heart

dropped and I screamed “No! You’re ruining it!” “This is so satisfying” he said, as he watched the frail outer skin disintegrate into powder unto the floor. They touched the walls incessantly, and it crumbled between their fingers like pastry. I felt their urge; it was contagious. I, too, wanted to touch everything all the time. We wandered around the house in silence, moving from shade into light, light into shade, staring left and right, up and down, while sensing the different textures on our way.

In such visits, inevitably after a while has passed, the dynamic shifts from silence to communicating how one feels to one another. My interlocutors don’t do that directly however, as in, “I, X, am talking to you, Y, about Z.” Rather, while they interact sensorially with the house, they utter expressions out loud often in an exclamatory tone, then others chime in and carry on with the communication. They use “emotion talk” (Sheer 2012, 212) such as “I feel so good here”,” this gives me so many magical feelings”, “this is so beautiful oh my god”, or “I feel sad” and so on. Then they start urging one another to look at particular things, to smell or touch them. They are continually “doing emotions” while nudging me into the process as well with their questions,” Do you feel what we feel?” and prompts. I believe that “regulating” emotional practices form an important aspect of the group dynamic in a typical house visit. For instance, I think that my interlocutors are training me to acquire a sensibility for being an old house lover, which they assume all of them have, by asking me questions about my “feelings”: are you feeling this? Are you feeling what we are feeling? But also through urging me to use my body in a particular way, to do things and “manipulate objects” such as Sami asking me to “scratch it” while I didn’t seem interested, and then reinforcing the behaviour with” this is so satisfying.” They also entice me to use my body to smell, touch, and sit in

specific locations they deem pleasurable. They are guiding me on where to place my attention, and on noticing certain details. They are also guiding me to speak about the house, and to express what I am feeling. Also, when I witnessed their silence, I fell silent. When they expressed themselves, I joined them. When they touched surfaces, I touched the same spots. Of course they are reinforcing these "emotional practices" with one another as well. Sheer argues that the learning of emotional responses is embodied and that "the imparting of the desired emotional response involves imparting the requisite bodily disposition" (216), which I argue is what my interlocutors are doing. Sheer gives the example of aesthetic appreciation classes in schools such as literature, music, art and religion as "regulating" emotional practices. Taking classes on these subjects suggests that one acquires a sensibility or an emotion only through familiarization with certain materials. I find the latter evident when my interlocutors ask me things like "It is so beautiful, right?" familiarizing me with what they perceive as aesthetically pleasing and helping me acquire a feel for it, which is not obvious by the way, since my interlocutors are often interested in details that are not generally considered beautiful like the layers of textures making up a wall. When my interlocutors comment on the houses and on their experiences of them, they reveal to one another what they talk about most easily as beautiful and pleasurable, melancholic and so on. Through their constant circulation of words and movements, they are enhancing the implicit knowledge of the group and the sense of having a sensibility, that may differentiate them from others, who "don't see what they see." This implicit knowledge is in turn regulating my interlocutors' and the newcomers' emotional practices.

However, it is important to note that my interlocutors' earnest attempts at training me are encouraged by the clues I gave that I was trainable. I introduced myself as a researcher that was interested in people's experiences inside old houses. I had time to join them on trips, which not everyone has or is willing to spare, and I was constantly asking them about upcoming trips. My availability for these house-visits is a clear sign that such experiences intrigued me. During house-visits, I was responsive to their urges and I did what they wanted me to do with curiosity and enthusiasm. I expressed neither disgust nor awkwardness at their requests. I was comfortable in interacting with the space. I even took out my phone at times and photographed details I enjoyed. I showed them that I was open to acquiring that sensibility they talk about.

Joining my interlocutors on such trips made me realize the importance of the body in their relationship to old houses. Bodily-sensorial interactions with the houses such as the ones I described in the "karakul el Druze" anecdote are things my interlocutors do to feel pleasure and love. They claim that such interactions make them feel intimate with the house or space. I am calling these and similar interactions emotional-practices of love, even though they are also practices for pleasure and intimacy. However, I think that love covers both aspects. Exploring these "emotional practices" requires that we look at what people are doing, at their bodies and at the artefacts they are engaging with. Humorously laying his chest on the wall, his arms stretched open, Sami said, "When I am inside an abandoned house, I feel like I want to hug its stones and that its soul and mine are meeting." He says that while simultanesouly "hugging" the walls and pressing his hands tightly on the latter. Sami's bodily enactment of a

loving behavior towards the house makes him experience a meeting of souls, and enhances his emotions of love and intimacy. He, like the rest of my interlocutors, is treating the house and not only speaking about it as if it were a living being, capable of reciprocating love. However, my interlocutors' practices of love may not look so obvious. For instance, I observed my interlocutors many times contemplating details which I felt were filthy, such as mould and wet surfaces, and taking photos of structures breaking apart and degenerating. Yara, expressing her love for old and abandoned houses breathed in and said "the smell of stench became poetry to my senses, it is like the scent of an old book." And during another time we were in an abandoned house, she suddenly said "I love to inhale (إتنشّق) everything that's old!" Yara is also doing something to feel love. She's doing that thing with a temporally qualified house. The emotions my interlocutors claim to feel are deeply rooted in the houses' materiality and their bodies' experiences of the latter.

While inside abandoned houses, my interlocutors indulge in details that they don't usually look for or enjoy in other houses, even details that repulse them in a different context. Nature growing inside abandoned houses is not "matter out of place", whereas it is matter out of place in an inhabited house. So the house-ness of the place shifts. The climbing vines for example are considered parasites, infiltrating occupied buildings and coiling up their tendrils around them. However, these vines are an essential component of my interlocutors' fondness of abandoned houses, provoking them to exclaim, "This is so magical, so beautiful, so enchanting" when experiencing a house.

During house-visits, I would sometimes ask my interlocutors individually to describe to me their experience inside the house, or when they encounter one in everyday life. William began by describing the materiality of old houses as "delicious." When he stares at an old house or while inside one, he experiences "depth in its materiality; there's a profundity that you do not experience somewhere else. The texture of the stones makes you want to touch them." Karim becomes very calm whenever he passes an old house in his daily life; he always pauses and contemplates it. He wants to become "intimate with the house", to touch it and smell the stones. My interlocutors described their sensorial interactions and desires in order to convey their experiences inside the houses. They are aware of the centrality of their body in their connection to old houses and their relationship to space in general. They don't just talk about identity and belonging, but extensively contemplate and dwell on their bodily experiences in such spaces, and what such experiences suggest.

My interlocutors repeated "يا حرام" *(ya haram)* as they walked around the houses, staring and photographing. They claimed that they feel "melancholy" (a word they themselves used in French or English) when in the midst of all this transience, which I elaborate on in the section on melancholy. However, they also claimed to experience pleasure, humility and a sense of relief in the decay and becoming with nature. The sense of relief arises from the experience of "things being larger than our control" and in letting things be, as I discussed in the previous chapter. They photographed and stared incessantly at the things they said "حرام" at and claimed to make them melancholic. They wouldn't stop expressing how entranced they were by these houses and delighting in the most random decay formations. They obviously enjoyed the playfulness of it all. My interlocutors indulge in this experience of transience

sensorially and photographically, both of which are “emotional-practices” of love and pleasure. “We love photographing things eaten away by time”, said Youssef. He and others always photograph details, which might look trivial to objective observers they claimed. For instance, Youssef told me:

> We do a lot of close ups, especially myself. I enter a house and I don’t photograph it as if it is a door or an arch, no, I see it as its close ups, its details, the details of the stone, the cracks, the old door handle, the faded and changing colours, the nature that grows within.

In abandoned houses, my interlocutors are in touch with life processes that they are dissociated from in their daily lives. Suddenly decay became interesting to dwell on and photograph**.** It’s not that they want to live in that state, rather, they want to experience it occasionally, or to still have the possibility to do so. My interlocutors’ experiences of the houses’ materiality, as well as their photography of and continual comments on nature and the processes of decay are practices related to the cyclical experience of time, versus the march of progress of the city. My interlocutors have made it clear that engaging in the latter is an emotional-practice of love.

Through these emotional-practices, my interlocutors deepen their intimacy with the houses, but also, even if spatially and temporally bounded, they experience intimacy with the city at large. In her book “*The future of nostalgia”* (2001) Boym discusses the advent of the tape recorder in Moscow, through which people could now create and share their own personal experiences of the city. This was a movement that related to the city on a very intimate level, following pedestrians on their daily urban pleasures and hardships, delving into

the warm corners of urban neighbourhoods. This new relation to urban neighbourhoods, writes Boym, is "reconquering them from the shadow of the Stalinist skyscrapers and larger-than-life monuments." (99) She continues "the inhuman city suddenly acquired a human scale." (99) I am referencing this example because I think that it resonates with my interlocutors' practices, wherein through house-visits and photography they are trying to share but also create their own intimate experiences of the city. Of course, Beiruti and Moscobian experiences and histories are very different, however, in both examples people are trying to connect to the city in an alternative way. When they tell me things like "old houses are more humane than others", "there is a human link between you and the houses" and "old houses are the souls of Beirut", they are also relating to the city on a "human scale" through the house-visits. This clearly shows how house-visits are emotional-practices of love, for both the houses and Beirut. However, it is important to note that this new scale is one over which the users of tape-recorders, or my interlocutors in this case have more control. They have established their terms, and they exclude other people, the urban poor for instance.

Mona Harb, in المساحات العامة و الممارسات المساحية (2015) *("public spaces and spatial practices")* argues that when a city is bereft of public space, there is a loss in the sense of connectedness of people to one another and to their city, along with a loss in a sense of belonging. What I take away from this is that communitas is not institutionalized in Beirut, therefore people form it on their own, as this photography-exploration group does. This is a theme I come back to towards the end of the chapter, as I discuss why treating my interlocutors' actions as emotional-practices matters. This brings me back to Yara's claim that one only feels intimate to a space if they can smell, touch and even lick the stone, which I

don't think is a literal claim, she doesn't really mean that one ought to lick a stone in order to connect to a space. But is rather a reflection on feeling like a space is attainable, reachable, on the possibility of being able to just linger in a space. And what better way to describe this than through the senses. It is simultaneously a reflection on the experience of alienation in most of Beirut, which is inversed once in contact with old houses. Yara is again emphasizing the role of sensorial perceptions in feeling intimate to a space.

Harb references Henry Lefebvre, who wrote a lot about public space in his book *"The right to the city"* (1968). He advocates that the civilians take the space of the city in their own hands, because the city is for every single citizen. This is a particular element my interlocutors do not experience. They don't feel connected to the city, and they don't feel like the city is for them, which is reflected in Ahmad's "Beirut is just not for everyone" and in Dani's "Sometimes I feel like I don't care if all the sea side is privatized and obscured by buildings, because I feel like Beirut is not my city, I don't feel connected to it." Lefebvre argues that people should not only participate in the construction but also in the production of space inside the city, which I argue is what my interlocutors are doing. My interlocutors' house-visits which I claimed were emotional-practices, are also spatial practices for shaping how they experience the city.

Emotional-practices of desire

I listened to Marie as she described the details of houses she loved in Beirut as if recalling a dream "the arcades, the forgings on the balcony, the shades of paint, the feel…".

> The old house makes me imagine. I go back in time, and I imagine myself living there, or walking in between the houses in Beirut. I imagine scenarios on the streets, love stories… *(long pause)* I dream and dream…

"Old houses ignite the imagination", said Youssef, differentiating them from other houses that don't kindle his creativity. Youssef imagines himself living there, he imagines streets with beautiful architecture, and how it would feel like to live in that space. Yara claimed that old houses make her imagine a potential city with a different urban experience. This potential city is one that looks and feels like these houses. My interlocutors spoke about "the feel" of old houses and the feel of walking down a street surrounded by them such as "Gemmayze," "Mar Michael" and "Zukak-el-Blat". This feel according to my interlocutors is an urban experience that is aesthetically pleasing. Some of the words they used to describe it are "warm, pleasurable to the eyes and the senses, humane, friendly, real" and so on. The beauty of old houses is a theme that dominated our conversations. "Beauty. Just beauty. Proportions. Harmony. You cannot compare with new buildings", claimed Marie as she expressed her love for Beirut's old houses. She continued, "They make me imagine that there can be another reality possible for us in Beirut." Marie tries to convey this possible reality in her practices, such as the book of photographs she published of her favourite spaces in Beirut and her popular Instagram account. I think that the practices they do to get excited about this vision are emotional practices of desire. My interlocutors visit the houses and walk in places like "Mar Michael" in order to feel love and pleasure, but also to indulge in their imagination and

desires. Visiting an old house can be a means for my interlocutors to experience the differentness of an imagined Beirut. The old house then, is a liminal zone (Turner 1967, 96) that opens up space for potentiality. However, there are only a couple of these imagination-inducing streets left, my interlocutors claim. Therefore, the experience of gradually losing these houses and watching these streets change is very painful. Bowring (2016, 6) argues that, "The landscape has a role in proffering places of escape, of rebuilding the capacity for contemplation," which I think is also what my interlocutors are arguing for through their emotional-practices of desire, but also of love and melancholy.

Biehl and Locke argue that "one of the guiding principles of Deleuze's conceptual work is that the real and the virtual are always coexisting, always complementary, two juxtaposable or superimposable parts of a single trajectory." (9) My interlocutors claim that when they are in old houses, they are in two places at once, in the lacking Beirut of today and in a Beirut that could have been or could be. They bemoan the situation of Lebanon and Beirut, but they do not want to leave, they want to be part of what the city becomes. My interlocutors are continually reflecting on their own "in-betweenness and multiplicity" (84). This experience renders those non-entities, the lacking Beirut of today (not the real Beirut) and Beirut that could have been as places; it spatializes them and gives them a way to position their bodies in relation to the two non-entities. Biehl and Locke embrace Deleuze's emphasis on the power of "desire" and argue that ethnographic work can explore "the ways people's desires reveal alternative possibilities." (43) Desires and fantasies are very much real and productive, and they should not be looked at as asocial, but rather as agential social acts. Looking at people's desires and flights of fantasy as anthropologists, instead of only focusing

on how they are restrained by circumstances, opens up space for possibility and what could or might be. My interlocutors' desires and fantasies are not inherent and internal, but they are conditioned by the social and physical world and they have consequences in the latter. My interlocutors and others with similar interests started exploring houses on their own. They then either formed a community, joined one or explored houses with a small group of friends. They managed to create Instagram accounts with thousands of followers, publish books such as Marie and Wajdi, they were interviewed on TV about their practices and pursuits such as Roy, William and others. They wrote their thesis or started after-work side projects that are about old houses. They Joined protests and movements for the protection of endangered houses about to be demolished. These are some of the many manifestations of my interlocutors' desires in the social world. I come back to this in the end of the chapter where I conclude why emotional-practices matter.

Emotional-practices of melancholy

Roy, William and Karim spoke to me of **"***huzun*," when I asked them about their emotions upon seeing an old house. This seems at odds however, with "documenting the beauty of decay" they claimed to be the purpose of their trips. In fact, maintaining "the pleasantly unpleasant" in one's aesthetic practices is a common subset of emotional practices, Sheer argues (2010). Their fondness of old houses and photography trips are based in and induced by the pleasurable experiences the latter offer them. This does not, however, mean

that they don't also experience houses with melancholy, grief and fear. Decay hints at the disappearance of old houses and all that they carry, through either collapse or destruction. But also, the experience of transience in the houses' materiality is melancholic for my interlocutors, as much as it is pleasurable. I asked them whether they could describe this "huzun" feeling in detail using their own words. Roy lowered his head and gazed at the floor for a moment, and then softly said:

> Imagine an old lady sitting in front of her house… then imagine her wrinkly face, her tiny teary eyes barely showing from the melted skin. She's waiting for someone to ask about her, but there is no one asking about her… imagine it in sepia …and then imagine that it is raining. That is how I feel when I see an old house.

Roy's "imagine it in sepia" makes me reflect on the role of the camera or phone in their emotional-practices and in conveying their experience of space (spatial affect). My interlocutors are practicing emotions not solely through the act of photographing but also through the effects they use (sepia, black and white etc…). They use a lot of vintage, black and white effects or edit their photos in a way that starkly shows the decay of old houses, or their "wrinkly face and tiny teary eyes barely showing from the melted skin." In fact, Roy's "imagine it in sepia" is interesting because he uses the effect to conjure what old houses make him feel, and he communicates what he feels to me through the effect as well, which is a popular effect in social media. So it is easier for me to grasp his experience when imagining it in sepia. It seems to me however, that this is about feeling both "huzun" and desire. Photography and digital effects are part of my interlocutors' relating to old houses; they aid them even in looking at and examining their own experiences. The filter makes an image

about now and the past at once. Hence, their photographic practices are also reflections on being in two places at once, on their "in-betweenness."

Drifting back to the topic of *"huzun"*, even when Roy describes his melancholy upon seeing an old house, he does it in a poetic, creative way while producing a mental photograph "in sepia." Sami's use of the words "sublime but heart-wrenching old houses" as a description of his favourite old house reflects this conflation of pleasure and melancholy. The feeling of melancholy vis-à-vis old houses, the "heart wrenching" and the "heart chilling", which are expressions my interlocutors write under their photographs on Instagram, are at the same time pleasurable, creativity-inducing feelings, hence their intense passion for photographing old houses. This reflects the "Pleasantly unpleasant" aspect of their emotional-practices. My interlocutors claim that they want to preserve and renovate abandoned houses, and yet they indulge in their decay. There seems to be a contradiction in their desires, or a counter-intuitiveness. The only possibility for them to experience what they do is if the houses were abandoned. "We often love it if the house remains abandoned, because it just looks so beautiful that way, and it is such an experience!", said William. Karim overhearing our conversation, interrupts by asking me whether I am familiar with the phrase, *ruin lust*; and immediately interjects "This feeling exists, because this is how I feel in here". A huge part of their relationship to old houses lies in the ruin aspect of the houses, even when their ultimate desire as they claim is to renovate them, have more houses like them and be able to live in them.

Edensor, like Pallasmaa, claims that today's urban landscape is becoming emotionally barren. He argues against this emotive sanitization of space and writes, "This monumental banishment of the dark and mysterious within such a modern topography leaves little room for gloom and the disordered yet evocative matter which might lurk there." (2005, 135) Abandoned houses according to Pallasmaa and Edensor give the city depth and make urban experience more evocative. The authors argue against the pruning of what feels dark, sad and tragic, because the built environment should embrace spaces of contemplation. I think that this is what my interlocutors are also arguing for through their emotional-practices. According to my interlocutors, old and abandoned houses offer them a space to experience and experiment with the spectrum of emotions the authors mention, but also to contemplate and imagine. I want to note that "gloom" and "darkness" are words my interlocutors have used to describe abandoned houses, and how they make them feel. They are pejorative feelings, and yet my interlocutors find them evocative and creative, inducing them to experiment artistically not just through photography, but also through poetry, like Jad. In fact, many of my interlocutors' photographs seem like a celebration of melancholy. They visit these houses in order to experience the "heart-wrench," along with the other emotional-practices they engage in, and share it with others through their photographs. There are many layers however, to my interlocutors' emotional-practices of melancholy. I am recounting this vignette because I think it helps me convey to the reader another aspect of my interlocutors' "huzun":

The abandoned house in "*Karakul el Druze"* was largely dilapidated. Newspapers from the 1970s and 1980s were scattered around the floors of the subdued rooms, tarnished by dirt and mud. One newspaper was titled *"El-Ahdas"* (the events), journaling the civil war. We

found several decrepit academic books as well as note books with handwriting and sketches. There was also a large drawing of a martyr on the wall of the ground floor. In another house we visited in *"Geitawi",* writings covered the walls. The four photographers and I stood for a few minutes in front of a phrase written in Arabic calligraphy, trying to guess what it was, which turned out to be "بحبك يا شام" *(I love you Cham).* Walls were full of poem verses and quotes about transience and life such as "لا تبكي على الدنيا وما فيها فنحن ضيوف على اراضيها" *(Do not cry over the world and what's in it, for we are but guests on its territories)*, " دع جريان الايام تفعل ما تشاء" *(Let the passing of days do what it pleases)* along with peoples' names, wishes and sketches. My interlocutors would tell each other, "Oh my god, come read this!", "This is so sad!", and try to decode the phrases written on the walls together and then remain silent in contemplation. I relate back to what I discussed in the first chapter, about how the absence of the social is often socially created. Many old houses were left during the civil war, with their owners never coming back, and many others carry their own abandon stories such as familial disputes and so on. My interlocutors on a weekly basis, visit what were once other people's personal spaces. Their imagination is triggered upon entering old houses. "Who were these people living here? What's their story? What was it like living in that time?" Roy asks himself whenever he encounters an old house. Artefacts from previous lives are tossed throughout the houses as if hastily abandoned. My interlocutors would grab whatever damp and dusty objects they found, sharing speculations about their owners. "Whose energy is left lingering on it?" wondered William while caressing a porcelain coffee *fenjan.*

According to my interlocutors, the house is not detached from its past, its inhabitants and their stories. The materiality of the house has also accrued another dimension, wherein it

also carries the human beings which used to live with it. Moreover, the temporary inhabitants (refugees or homeless people) for whom the old house represented a different reality, echo through their writings on walls, their abandoned bedding sheets and the objects they used. An overwhelming sense of transience seems to feed into the melancholy my interlocutors feel inside old houses. The passage of time has materialized on the patina of the surfaces, and abandon has ramified into decay. Hence, the interaction with the houses reifies both "time "and "nature" for my interlocutors.

In *Affective spaces, melancholic objects* (2009), Navaro explores the social exchange that happens between two communities, when one side relates to the other only through the latter's abandoned properties. She discusses the "looting hunts" as an aborted exchange which occurred in the process of appropriating strangers' land. When using abandoned dwellings for their own motives, my interlocutors are also engaging with people's abandoned properties, many of whom left forcefully, and with their "lingering energies." They are also engaged in an aborted exchange. Whenever Yara visits an old house, she reflects on the ethicality of her act. She asks herself "Is it ethical to turn people's intimate spaces, who might have been left due to gloomy circumstances, into a beautiful experience for myself?" Mauss (1925) helps us look at what the abortion of exchange produces. According to him, the objects are not detached from their owners since they carry their energy, so when these objects are exchanged as gifts, they are simultaneously creating social ties between their owners. The abortion of exchange cannot create social ties, in fact, it severs these objects from earlier associations. When something is disconnected from its roots, when it is denied certain connections, it becomes available. The abandoned house then, is a material presence that affirms an absence. This tells us about how

emotional-practices produce communitas without community, in the absence (or rather rejection) of state-sanctioned or socially-structured ways of generating communitas.

My interlocutors experience Beirut as past its prime, therefore, the availability (they can visit them) of these houses affirms many kinds of absences that they grieve. It affirms the absence of the social context in which these houses were made and the "roots" they wish to go back to. Their feelings then, are not purely induced by the house in itself as they tend to claim.

Navaro asks, "Are we to speak of subjectively felt or spatially effected melancholy?" (2008, 5). She then advocates taking into consideration both the force of the object and the subjectivity of the subject in analysing the affect of the environment, asserting "both produce and transmit affect relationally" (2008,14)?" In the case of my interlocutors, the affect of the space also builds from "both-and" material and discursive. One must first look at the contribution of social context to my interlocutors' experiences and relations to old houses. I have already discussed the latter in my first chapter, but here I want to recall it briefly towards grasping my argument. Since the beginning of the 1990s until today, there has been an escalation in the destruction of old houses in Beirut, and the process is very flagrant in our daily lives. One must consider the rapid urbanization of the city, the disfiguration of downtown that left the citizens heartbroken and so on in order to understand how my interlocutors and of course others, relate to old houses of Beirut. Sami recounted how his uncle after witnessing the "massacre that was done" to downtown Beirut, suffered a heart attack and was taken to the hospital. If my interlocutors haven't experienced these events first-hand, they still have most probably grown up hearing about them, looking at photos of

old Beirut and downtown and listening to our parents and grandparents' reminiscing stories. This is great proof for looking at my interlocutors' relations to old houses as emotional-practices. This material is all about acquiring a feeling one finds to be an obligation but hasn't had a personal opportunity to acquire from one's own life. The feelings of loss, grief and melancholy in Beirut such as Marie's "heartache" and avoidance of looking sideways are not one-dimensional clear-cut emotions, but they are accruals of loss.

If I want to understand spatial affect, I also have to have to follow through how my interlocutors became involved in the old houses. Obviously, the reactions and feelings that these spaces will provoke depend also in part on the sensibilities that people bring to them. This hobby of photographing houses every week might be the path by which they're moving forward in opposition to a career they once had. For example, when driving in the car, Roy pointed to a glass tower, and told me "See this hideous building? I was in the architectural team working on it, I made it happen!" Or It can be as simple as William's story of his grandparents' house where he had his most beautiful childhood memories, which was later cut in half due to the building of a bridge. He now has an affinity for houses which remind him of it. We can see that William became involved in the preservation of old houses not just because he views them as national heritage, or because he experiences *"ruinlust",* but because he is intimately bound to them.

While my interlocutors attribute their feelings to the houses as a specific kind of space, I argue that the feelings also come from their discourses and practices, and not just from the affect of materiality. I also believe that spatial affect builds from the "communitas" taking

place in the encounter with a house. My interlocutors carry out emotional-practices together in these particular spaces, and their communal practices are enhancing aspects of their experience while overlooking others. Hence, their feelings also stem from emotional-practices they conduct as a group. Sheer argues that sometimes we are "simply confronted with an emotional setup. The presence of other people, a crowd expressing emotion loudly, or music not of our own choosing can cause us to do an emotion and can lead to other managing practices," (209) which I think is what "happened to me" on the trips, as I was myself confronted with a ripe emotional setup, wherein I dabbled with emotional-practices. Hence, the spatial affect I experienced was largely influenced by my interlocutors.

I want to conclude that seeing my interlocutors' actions as emotional-practices matters because these create "communitas," wherein they acquire the "feel for the game," and this leads to embracing new social roles. As I have already discussed, I felt like my interlocutors were training me to acquire the sensitivity, or "the feel for the game," and the reason why it mattered to train me is because enacting communitas makes us take on new roles. It mattered for them that I become as involved in the cause of protecting old houses as they were. For that reason, looking at emotions as a practice is significant. Sheer argues that emotional-practices "generate and sustain" (216) communities, which also means that they do things in the world. I understood from my interlocutors that old houses lying here and there, create *dissensus*: "a conflict between two regimes of sense, two sensory worlds" (Ranciere 2008, 58). My interlocutors claim that their experiences of old houses were inversions of their experiences outside in several ways, as I have already discussed. Yara described her experience "like being in Alice in wonderland". In fact, my interlocutors initiated every

house-visit with a comment on the other-worldly experience they are having, such as "I feel like I'm in a different world" and so on. This encounter with a house, this dissensus, opens up a liminal space for my interlocutors during which they enact "communitas". According to their descriptions, my interlocutors' senses extend into and merge with one another while inside old or abandoned houses. A shared understanding and experience crystallizes through being together in the houses. Moreover, I relate to what I discussed in the previous chapter about house-visits being ritual zones wherein my interlocutors learn ethical behaviours from the houses. I argued that these visits inform my interlocutors' relation to nature, God and citizenship. This liminal experience shapes their desires and consequently leads them to take on new roles through the projects they undertake in their professional and personal lives. For instance, my interlocutors complain about aesthetic erasure in Beirut, and through their emotional-practices and pursuits they are arguing that aesthetics must have a place in the built environment. The dissolution of aesthetics is one of the reasons why they are also so attached to old houses. Urban space shouldn't all look like a factory, or as my interlocutors would call "cans and boxes." Through their emotional-practices, my interlocutors are seeking alternative relations to Beirut. Old houses then, open up a space of potentiality and possibility for my interlocutors. I even believe that house-visits in themselves are temporary enactments of other possibilities of (being in) space. I claim that my interlocutors are pursuing alternative spaces for shaping how they experience the city. It can be an alternative to public spaces in Beirut, wherein they experience the city bodily and affectively.

CHAPTER 4
OLD HOUSES AND BATESON'S "ECOLOGICAL AESTHETICS"

> I interact with the house as if it were a soul, just like when I photograph the portrait of someone, taking a pause and smiling at me, this is how I feel. I consider myself photographing a soul, not just a stone, it's a spirit, a being.
>
> -Youssef

In this section, I would like to discuss bodily connections that enflesh a shared "soul" between my interlocutors and the houses they visit. From there I will reflect on Bateson's "pattern that connects" to explain their experience. In addition to my interlocutors' claim that "there is a human link that connects you to the house," and that "old houses are more humane than others," they also continually spoke about the houses as "souls." Not just in the sense of "the souls of Beirut" as a metaphor for carrying the essence of what Beirut really is. But they also claimed that "you can feel the soul of the old house" and that "its soul touches yours" and so on. I infer from this that my interlocutors experience the houses as quasi-human. They relate to the house as a being which is "*plus qu'une pierre* (more than a stone)." Listening to my interlocutors' soulful expressions made me wonder why they experience these houses as souls *per se* and other houses as inherently soulless?

To start, let me return to Yara's statement equating downtown with a ghost city, in which she herself plays the role of the ghost. This equation expresses a correlation between experiencing a space as *alive* and being sensorially stimulated by it. Interestingly, whenever my interlocutors described their bodily experiences inside old houses, they also spoke extensively about the soul they share with the latter. They claimed that one can "sense" and "feel" the soul of an old house, in contrast to the "boxes" we are surrounded with today. They were also saying that they could feel themselves more in these old houses. In fact, my interlocutors oscillated between describing their bodily experiences in the houses and how "the soul of the old house touches their own." In other words, their descriptions often conflated body and soul. I want to recall what Sami told us as he hugged the house's walls, "When I am inside an abandoned house, I feel like I want to hug its stones and that its soul and mine are meeting." Such expressions abound with feelings of connectedness and entanglement. From this, and my discussion of the body in the previous chapters, I perceive that old houses enhance the bodily experience of my interlocutors. They bring the body to the forefront, as media theorist Vivian Sobchack (2004, 167) would say. I find it helpful to briefly look at her study on the role of the body in how we experience and make-sense of the world. She criticizes technology's alienation of the body due to its focus on the mind or psyche (cyberspace, hypervisuality of postmodern society of the spectacle and so on.) She gives the example of the different writing implements that replaced the pen and pencil (typewriter, computer…), which made her lose her physical intimacy to her words. Writing by hand, in contrast, allows us to experience embodiment (spirit, mind, body) wherein every part of us is in tune. In short, she explores how certain materialities can "objectify" the body and vice-

versa. This might seem at first glance irrelevant to my interlocutors' experiences of the built environment. However, I would like to return to Roy's assertion that "The beauty of the old house touches your soul, unlike other buildings that only touch your brain, with their use and function," and William's ensuing interjection "The architecture of today has no soul, only geometrical shapes." They and others are also reflecting on materiality's separation of the mind from the body and soul, in addition to their descriptions of feeling physically and emotionally alienated.

Thus, according to my interlocutors, material entanglement triggers their experience of old houses as souls per se (not metaphorically but actually), in contrast to other spaces that alienate their bodies, which they describe as "soulless." I wondered whether building the same houses today, hypothetically, would make them feel the same way. So, whenever I discussed renovation of old houses with my interlocutors, I asked them what they would think if a group of architects today built the same type of houses they liked and sought to preserve, with the same materials and artistry. They had all already answered that renovating a house by making it look "new" depletes its value. Moreover, building the same houses now would be amazing, they averred, but still, it differs from the old ones. Here the relationship to "nature" returns: because "they wouldn't be eaten by nature anymore," new houses in an old style would lack ensoulment. From this I understood that decay is an essential element in my interlocutors' relations to old houses. However, the decay that matters to them leads not to death but to life, kind of like a recycling. When they say that it's eaten by nature, they simultaneously mean that nature is continually bearing life in these houses. Dani added that, "Old houses are so valuable because the stones have a soul, unlike other houses." The other photographers agreed

with fervour, “Yes! hundred percent! Exactly!” The way my interlocutors spoke about both these alternatives suggests that the value of the houses they love is in their “recycled life”, which is also what makes them experience the house as a soul. Recycling suggests not just new life, but new life with old life acknowledged in its belly.

The fervour of my interlocutors’ dedication to “recycled life” suggests a “pattern that connects” is at play. (Bateson, 1979) Gregory Bateson developed this concept. He asked his students, “What pattern connects the crab to the lobster, and the orchid to the primrose and the four of them to me? And me to you?” Before telling readers their answers, Bateson explains, “I faced them with an aesthetic question: ‘How are you related to this creature? What pattern connects you to it?’” Bateson’s question is “aesthetic” because it presupposes a sensibility to a connective pattern, which Bateson calls “ecological aesthetics.” By asking his students the aesthetic question, Bateson is asserting that the patterns we discern in a flower for example, such as colour, symmetries and so on, in some way relates to us and to other beings, and this relation is the “meta-pattern”. (Bateson, 1979) Accordingly, the interaction between us and the flower is ecologically aesthetic. Bateson’s argument relates to why my interlocutors say things such as “there is a human link that connects you to the house”, “its soul touches yours”, “I experience our shared soul”, “it is more humane” and so on. In all of these expressions and many more, my interlocutors are expressing the pattern that connects them to the house, in their own way. Bateson introduces this idea to spotlight the (mainly western) hierarchization of the human self above all other forms of life. The consequence of this hierarchization is the severing of the self from its environment, supporting dominion of the former over the latter and subsequent destruction the latter. Bateson argues that this hierarchization stems from a

false epistemology based on ignorance of a fundamental interconnectedness whereby nothing can dominate because doing so will end in the destruction of all. Underlying Bateson's reasoning is systems theory (and I oversimplify his writings).

For my fieldwork, the context is Lebanon, wherein hierarchy has been and still is flagrant: colonization, inferiority complexes, social stratification and so on. In addition, and very importantly, Beirut is one of the most polluted cities in the world. Public spaces where one can be in touch with nature are few. Most of the sea side is privatized which caused people to put a monetary value on nature. Conversely, it is privatized because we put a monetary value on nature. If I want to go to the beach, I monetize it in my mind by asking myself "is the sea worth paying 30$?" While we discussed our relationship to the city and nature, Dani exclaimed, "I even forgot we had a sea in Beirut! You can't see it anymore due to the fancy buildings, hotels and resorts!" All of these caused the severing of the self from its environment and from other people, but are also manifestations of this separation. Moreover, my interlocutors are very aware of all the latter, they complain and discuss it all the time when talking about the portrait of Beirut and the life inside Beirut. They also often mention how in Beirut's neighbourhoods, one can find ultra-rich buildings and people side by side with very poor people, which makes hierarchy very "in your face" as Samar claimed, and not compartmentalized. Youssef's complaint that, "Downtown is not for everyone," reflects on the stratification of space even, a space that was and is supposed to be the heart of Beirut and its people.

I discuss all the above because it relates to my interlocutors' ensouling experience of old and abandoned houses. Bateson argues that, ontologically, we are related to other forms of life through patterns. Responsivity to these patterns arises from an "ecological aesthetic," which constitutes alertness to our connections to the world beyond the flesh. Bateson's ecological aesthetics is interactional, meaning it is acquired from interactions that take place between beings. Harries-Jones argues that Bateson's "pattern that connects" is "an outcome of relations between species, not only in the tense of past evolution but in the present tense of "co-eval" relations." (2005, 35) What I am discussing here is related to the chapter I wrote about "the naturalness of old houses," wherein I argued that my interlocutors experience old houses as nature. In order to put in words why old and village houses are so valuable, and why he feels so connected to them, William asserted very simply and briefly "They are made of earth," suggesting that this simple fact is enough for explaining the intimacy my interlocutors share with these houses. Recalling Scheid's (2015) argument about nature as an 'imprint of God', experiencing "the house as nature" is significant in my interlocutors' "connection to the houses as souls touching", as they claim. Moreover, their assertions that, "*ce que la nature nous donne la nature nous prend*" or "الأرض رجعت أخدته" (both to say, "the earth reclaimed it "), made while contemplating an abandoned house, treat the house as part of the earth, a carving of nature. Similarly, Dani says, "From Dust and unto Dust you will return," to reflect on our resemblance to the houses' materiality. We**,** like the house are from earth!

I argue that through their habitual encounters with old and abandoned houses, my interlocutors reflect on the Batesonian "pattern that connects" and respond to it. They enact an ecological aesthetic. While other houses are also made of earth technically, they are less

revealing of this earth than my interlocutors' soulful "old houses." The latter then, make visible the pattern that connects, "They are closer to nature."

Roy summarized why he feels that the house and he share a soul when he said, "The colours, the matter, the stone, the designs, the details: It reminds you of humanity, and its soul touches yours." Throughout our trips and discussions, I observed that my interlocutors tend to refer to material details that are fading and decaying in order to talk about the soul of the house. This realization is important for understanding why my interlocutors experience the houses as "souls," i.e. why they are ecologically aesthetic. Aging, decay, transformation and so on are all signs of life, and abandon unravels these signs. Which is why being "eaten away by nature" is significant in my interlocutors' experience of houses as "souls". It is a simple but nonetheless persistent observation that in these houses, my interlocutors experience the passage of time, which they intentionally go there to experience. The decay, the mold, the smell, the changing and fainting of colours. The different textures of materiality revealing themselves, sprouting out of the surfaces. The enmeshment with nature, the breaking apart and so on. Each house has grown in its own peculiar way, with its own processes of transformation and entanglement with nature.

There is a playfulness in forms, a spontaneity in the old house that does not exist in others, which is why they are encountered as "life." This "human link between us and the house," as they repeatedly called it, recognizes a certain similarity, an interconnection. For instance, the patina on the surfaces due to age relates to Roy's description of the old lady, as an analogy to how he feels when seeing an abandoned house: the "wrinkles" on her face, her

skin melting. He anthropomorphized the house in a way that focused on the pattern that connects.

In his article “Dengue mosquitoes are single mothers,” Nading (2012) builds on Bateson’s concept of “ecological aesthetics” to describe the entanglement of Nicaraguan women health workers, Dengue mosquitoes and their shared habitat. These women are *brigadistas*; they search for the breeding spaces of the mosquitoes which cause the dengue fever virus, in order to kill them. However, while searching and encountering these mosquitoes, the *brigadistas* do not view them as their enemy, but they grow to form affinities with them and a kind of knowledge about them that connects them to the mosquitoes, such as the fact that they are, as well, “single mothers.” (585) Nading calls this a form of “exploratory learning” (573), which is a “knowing in the world”, during which you recognize your entanglement with other entities, a recognition he calls “ecologically aesthetic.” Hence, this process wherein women look for and encounter mosquitoes is also bringing into light patterns that connect, to which the women are responsive.

As I already discussed, Bateson’s ecological aesthetics is interactive, and I am referring to Nading’s article because I think that what my interlocutors are doing is also a form of “exploratory learning” and “mutual becoming” (574): “life is the unfolding, often incidental attachments and affinities, antagonisms and animosities that bring people, nonhuman animals, and materials into each other’s worlds.” Through “Urbexing” (search and discovery of abandoned houses), they recognize their entanglement with the houses and nature, but also

animals as I will discuss shortly. They experience life in what many deem as lifeless and dead.

Nading refers to Neves-Grac's research on people who chase whales and writes "“chasing whales” yielded a recognition of the “pattern that connects” humans and cetaceans—a pattern perceptible only in the event of hunting (577). Similarly, the pattern is perceptible for my interlocutors only in the event of discovering and experiencing phenomenologically old (in their materiality) or abandoned houses. This mingling of my interlocutors with the houses is “ecologically aesthetic” also in the way it brings into being experiences of pleasure, beauty and connectedness, which is the most persistent observation I have written through interacting with my interlocutors. Nading adds that Bateson's “ecological aesthetics” are in “the senses of beauty and pleasure that emerge in the realization of our entanglement in the world,” (577) which I claim is a big part of my interlocutors' fondness of old houses and dedication to their exploration and preservation. The latter also explains why they “would love it if the houses remain abandoned,” as many claimed.

There is an important difference, however, between my interlocutors' and the authors' informants' experiences. Nading and Neves-Grac wrote about predator versus prey kind of activity, which morphs with Bateson's thought, about the “transformative recognition” (574) of intertwinement throughout the process. In these houses my interlocutors experience the interconnection they do not experience in the rest of Beirut, and that is why they say it is their refuge in the city. In fact, the concept of the “old house as a refuge” from the predatory and alienating city was particularly evident amongst my interlocutors, a theme they

continually brought up in conversation. While inside there is no hierarchy, no surveillance and control, there is just a house that is becoming together with nature. Bateson argues, “Our loss of the sense of aesthetic unity was, quite simply an epistemological mistake.” (1979, 240) This sense of aesthetic unity which is severed in Beirut, but also in my interlocutors’ daily lives (an important factor) is regained temporarily while in abandoned houses. But also and as significantly, while surrounded, overlooking or just staring at one, such as this example:

“Birds live in it!”

> I love the apartment I live in now so much Mariana, I never want to leave. There is an abandoned house in the back of my backyard, that I can also see from my bedroom window…. Birds live in it! I hear birds Mariana! When I first moved in I wondered, where are all these birds and bird sounds coming from? I never heard birds in Beirut. Then I discovered that they were living in that house. I sit and watch them for forty-five minutes every morning, they continuously go in and out of the house and there are all types of birds!! They fly in and out of the bullet holes, broken windows and even through the pipes! One night I couldn’t fall asleep, so I decided to stay up until the morning in order to hear the birds waking up.. one sound “tuk” (she imitated the bird sound).. a few seconds later another “tuk “then another “tuk” then more and more birds wake up and their sounds come together and it’s just magical!

Samar's story is an example of how abandoned houses are not only cherished while inside, but also if my house overlooks one, if I pass one while jogging (such as Ralph) and so on. Now Samar wakes up earlier than usual just to listen to the birds before starting her day. Sometimes she even wakes up very early just so that she synchronizes her waking up with theirs, and they can begin their day together. She is attuned to when they wake up, when they are most lively and when they are calm and resting. "I learnt so much about birds and their daily schedules. I hear them waking up just before sun. They're very loud when they wake up, they are talking to each other! In the middle of the day they get quiet and they get loud again before going to bed. I can even hear when they fight, I hear "hi hi hi hi" imitating what she feels are angry sounds. She added "I notice that listening to their energy and watching it in the morning also gives me energy, and watching or listening to them calm down also calms me down."

Samar has grown bodily, mentally and emotionally attuned and responsive to the birds, which manifests in various ways. Her "usually agitated mornings" she claimed now consist of laying on her back facing the window, and contemplating the birds. Her sleeping habits changed as her body adapted to waking up around 5,6 am instead of 9,10. Her energy enhances as she watches and listens to the birds' energy, and calms down when they do, she claims. She is in touch with the birds' cycles, to which her own cycles are tuning in. I argue that she is responsive to the "pattern that connects", and that her being-with the birds is "ecologically aesthetic." Moreover, this experience was only possible for her because of the abandoned house next door. She said that it had been so long since she heard birds singing, that the concept of a bird even faded from her consciousness. It was never present in her daily

life. Now that she lives right next to an abandoned house, she got to experience living next to birds, and sharing space and time. Samar added that the house is so beautiful, and seeing it from the windows and backyard gives her so much pleasure and tranquillity. “If this abandoned house ever gets destroyed, it would be a tragedy!” she said. Not only is this house so beautiful to stare at, but it is also housing life. So it is both a tragedy for humans and nature.

According to Samar, this experience of living next to bids is what made her even more fond of abandoned houses and working on protecting them. These birds have nested in the abandoned house according to Samar. No one ever goes there, she told me, so it is a safe place to nest with no human disturbances. In the midst of habitat destruction, hunting, climate change, endangerment and so on, they found a place here to reproduce and bring other birds into being. This abandoned house allowed different types of birds to mingle and reside together in the city, something they might not have been able to do without. The old house then functions as a “watering hole”, offering human beings, birds and nature an opportunity to mingle and find refuge, which relates to my initial claim about the house as a “gap” inside the city.

The fluidity of old houses urges me to think of them as what Biehl and Locke (2017) call, “unfinished,” entities that are not fixed but always in a process of becoming. Considering them in a state of becoming opens them up and allows their different realities to unfold. The encounter with a house adds to the richness of my interlocutors’ daily experiences, they build meanings around them and the house becomes part of their meaning-making processes. Nading writes, “Ingold, like Deleuze and Guattari, sees life as a “becoming,” as something

that happens within an environment where things—animate and inanimate—mingle" (2012, 585) The house, the birds and Samar are all mutually-becoming. Actually, human beings in general, since they are the ones who built the house and caused the abandon but most importantly who caused the birds to seek refuge in the house. Adopting this perspective helps us appreciate our relationality to nonhuman lives and the material environment we live in. It shatters the conception of the human as an enclosed self, and It helps us not to disregard that matter also is embedded in sociological, historical and ecological contexts.

CONCLUSION

My interlocutors often mention the criticism they and others who work in the preservation field receive from people, that they put "حجر فوق البشر"(stones over human beings). They mention it because they think it is "wrong" and "narrow-minded"(words they used). This is not at all how they conceive of old houses and of their attachment to them. They do not relate to the houses as "matter" or " حجر " , but as "more than matter". Destroying old and abandoned houses means finishing off life in its many forms, according to my interlocutors.

They claim that they are also judged by many as "nostalgic, unrealistic, not accepting the march of time." The opening up of concepts and categories such as "nostalgia" however, reveal other meanings and possibilities we foreclose when we look at it pejoratively. I think that concepts such as "becoming" and "unfinishedness" helped me in having my interlocutors as pointing towards things rather than signalling what already is. Through their emotional-attachments to the houses, my interlocutors are also imagining things otherwise.

I tried to attend to my interlocutors' attachment to old houses throughout the thesis, by exploring its multi-dimensionality. However, the dimensions are all enmeshed in one another that it is impossible to detach them into separate blocks, without them meshing. Therefore, I think that it is inevitable that their fusion manifests in the organization of my thesis. The houses are part of our social world, which is dense and conflictual and so they come to be instilled with several consonant, sometimes discrepant meanings.

Abandoned houses don't have to be a dwelling, they don't have to be renovated (only if on the brink of collapse), my interlocutors just want them to be as they are. At the same time, they claim that they want Beirut to return to its real self. This is however, a very unlikely possibility. What they can do, which is easier, is to protect these houses that are left for them as gaps in the city, where they are in touch with the "real Beirut" and "nature", but also where they find spaces of contemplation and escape.

As I have already mentioned, my fieldwork came to an abrupt end with the start of the Lebanese revolution. Since the protests began, there was a lack of enthusiasm for house-visiting and the cause of old houses in general. Many people my age, including my interlocutors were protesting. The cause of old houses receded to the background, no one was talking about it anymore, and my interlocutors were inactive on the WhatsApp groups and Instagram accounts. This "sensibility" or "taste" they talk about wasn't a major part of their identities during these phases. The time and opportunity to acquire, practice and perform this sensibility have shrunk due to Lebanon's aggravating situation, uncertainty, job loss and so on. There were more pressing issues that all of us needed to attend to. I asked myself whether they would experience the indifference they criticized in others, if the houses will be "just a stone" for a period of time. It makes me wonder where this sensibility is going amidst the social, political and economic crisis.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bateson, Gregory. *Mind and Nature: a Necessary Unit*. Toronto: Bantam Books, 1980.

Biehl, João Guilherme. *Unfinished: The Anthropology of Becoming*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.

Bowring, Jacky. *Melancholy and the Landscape: Locating Sadness, Memory and Reflection in the Landscape*. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2018.

Boym, Svetlana. *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books, a Member of the Perseus Books Group, 2016.

Certeau, Michel De, Luce Giard, and Pierre Mayol. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.

Deacon, Terrence William. *The Symbolic Species: the Co-Evolution of Language and the Brain*. Cambridge: International Society for Science and Religion, 2007.

Edensor, Tim. *Industrial Ruins: Spaces, Aesthetics and Materiality*. Oxford: Berg, 2005.

Fock, Niels, Fridolin Weis Bentzon, and Robert E. Hawkins. *Waiwai: Religion and Society of an Amazonian Tribe*. Copenhagen: National Museum, 1963.

Harries-Jones, Peter. 'Gregory Bateson and Ecological Aesthetics: An Introduction'. Australian Humanities Review, 35 (2005). <http://www.lib.latrobe.edu.au/AHR/archive/Issue-June-2005/harriesjones.html>. November 2006.

Holl, Steven, Juhani Pallasmaa, and Alberto Pérez Gómez. *Questions of Perception: Phenomenology of Architecture*. San Francisco, CA: William Stout, 2006.

Kanafani, Samar." Made to fall apart : an ethnography of old houses and urban renewal in Beirut". Phd diss., University of Manchester. 2017

Kohn, Eduardo. *How Forests Think: toward an Anthropology beyond the Human*. Berkeley, London: University of California Press, 2015.

Nading, Alex M. "DENGUE MOSQUITOES ARE SINGLE MOTHERS: Biopolitics Meets Ecological Aesthetics in Nicaraguan Community Health Work." *Cultural Anthropology* 27, no. 4 (2012): 572–96. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-1360.2012.01162.x.

Navaro-Yashin, Yael. 2009. "Affective spaces, melancholic objects: ruination and the production of anthropological knowledge". *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15 (1): 2-5-14. Wiley. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9655.2008.01527.x.

Pallasmaa, Juhani. 2012. *The Eyes of the Skin*. Chichester: Wiley.

Pallasmaa, Juhani. 2001. "The architecture of image: existential space in cinema". Helsinki: Rakennustieto Oy.

Rancière, Jacques, and Kristin Ross. *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999.

Scheer, Monique. "Are Emotions A Kind Of Practice (And Is That What Makes Them Have A History)? A Bourdieuian Approach To Understanding Emotion." *History and Theory* 51, no. 2 (2012): 193–220. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2303.2012.00621.x.

Scheid, Kirsten. "Divinely imprinting prints: Or, how pictures became influential persons in mandate Lebanon," in *Routledge Handbook of the History of the Middle Eastern Mandates*, ed. Cyrus Schayegh and Andrew Arsan (London: Taylor & Francis, 2015): 349-69

Sobchack, Vivian Carol. 2010. *Carnal thoughts*. Berkeley: Univ. of California Pr.

Turner, Victor. 1967. *The forest of symbols: aspects of Ndembu ritual*. Ithaca: Cornell Univ Press.

فواز منى و غربية احمد ,"المساحات العامة و الممارسات المساحية" (2015) "ممارسة العام: عن المساحات المشتركة في بيروت"