

ARBC212-f15
Middlebury College

A Thought Exercise
(from Accad's *Sexuality and War*, 1990, p. 1)

Compare the two literary depictions of Beirut, one written by a male author – Elias Khoury in *al-Jabal al-Saghir* (p. 252) - and the other by a female author - Etel Adnan in *Sitt Marie-Rose* (p. 21). Which one do you believe was written by whom?

I.

This city is like a great suffering being, too mad, too overcharged, broken now, gutted, and raped like those girls raped by thirty or forty militia men, and are now mad and in asylums because their families, Mediterranean to the end, would rather hide than cure...but how does one cure the memory? This city, like those girls, was raped...In the City, this center of all prostitutions, there is a lit of money and a lot of construction that will never be finished. Cement has mixed with the earth, and little by little has smothered most of the trees. If not all.

II.

And this city, what is it? A whore. Who could imagine a whore sleeping with a thousand men and continuing to live? The city receives a thousand bombs and continues its existence nonetheless. The city can be summarized by these bombs....When we had destroyed Beirut, we thought we had destroyed it....We had destroyed this city at last. But when the war was declared finished and the pictures of the incredible desolation of Beirut were broadcasted, we discovered we had not destroyed it. We had only opened a few breaches in its walls, without destroying it. For that, other wars would be necessary.